



**Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan Economic and Cultural Relations:
Implications on Regional Peace and Development**

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Abstract:

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan holds decade's old relationship of peace, close friendship, harmony, and cooperation. Both countries share common history, culture, and religion and have growing political, military, economic and social relations. This paper mainly focuses on economic and cultural relations of both the states. The two states are getting interconnectivity on CPEC. Each country's geo-strategic location is crucial as it is significant from the perspective of economic and trade development and connectivity. Both countries are the gateway of interconnectivity for other regions through CPEC and Gwadar seaport. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are now the source of regional peace and development. Their bilateral relations are mainly focused on economy and trade which would be a breakthrough for international and regional trade integration, cultural development, and interconnectivity. The paper explores and analyzes Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's economic, social, and cultural relations to find out potentials, opportunities, consolidation for future and implications of their relations on regional peace, development, and interconnectivity. The descriptive analytical approach has been used to conduct this research by using the secondary sources for data collection.

Keywords: Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, CPEC, economic relations, connectivity, peace, trade

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have cordial relations that are centuries old. Pakistan was the first country that recognized Kyrgyzstan in 1992 when it got independence from Russia. Both shares a long and strong bond of similar history of religion and culture. In 1995, both established diplomatic relations which are continued without any disruption till today. Both do not share common border therefore

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does not have any border related conflict. Since 1992, both countries are mainly focused to increase and to strengthen political, military, economic, and social cooperation, and relations. At present, both countries are working to get trade and economic interconnectivity on CPEC.

Relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are strategically and geopolitically crucial as these interconnects' different regions through Gwadar seaport and CPEC in trade and economic interconnectivity. Pakistan's geographical location has increased its strategic importance for the world as CPEC and Gwadar seaport connects regions and countries like China, South-Asian countries, the Central Asia, and the Middle East with each other. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan's geographical location is important as it provides short route to Pakistan to sell its products in Eurasian market which comprised 182 million people.

With an aim to consolidate mutual relations, the two states are rapidly increasing its cooperation in fields of farming, economy, tourism, social connections and interactions, education, and scholarships exchanges etc. Both are initiating roads, railway lines, and security cooperation. Pakistan has established the State Bank in Bishkek city of Kyrgyzstan in 1992 which is still working. Moreover, the two are trying to avail equally great opportunities of trade and economy.

At present, both states are connecting each other on mega project of Belt and Road initiative known as China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project connects Kyrgyzstan but also the other states of the Central Asia that in result would increase the production and sale of their trade commodities, economic and trade prosperity and provide them access to the warm waters of Indian Ocean by connecting with Gwadar seaport of Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are members of trade and economic development agreement known as the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA).

This research aims to explore bilateral economic and cultural relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and the opportunities which would enhance their cooperation and development. The strategic location of both the states is significant as both connects various other regions with each other through CPEC and Gwadar seaport. Bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan is increasing. The implications of bilateral relations are being evaluated as both states besides increasing bilateral cooperation, are promoting peace and development towards other countries.

This paper describes and analyzes Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's economic, cultural, and social relations, potentials, new interconnectivity projects and developments. The implications of both growing relations are discussed with regional and international perspective. In conclusion, the summary and findings of the paper are mentioned.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars narrates and evaluates bilateral relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan from aspects of political, economic, trade, cultural, social, and military. Various significant projects and agreements are being discussed like CPEC, QATTA and CASA-100 etc. The work lacks detailed implications of both states' growing interconnectivity and stability over the other regional countries.

Fahim analyzes the historical background and cultural relations of both countries. He argued that both states enjoy social, cultural, religious, and diplomatic relations. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan coordinate in various fields to expand economic and commercial relations and are jointly

cooperating on projects of the Central Asia- South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Program known as CASA-1000. Majority of the Pakistani students are studying medical studies in Kyrgyzstan. At present, CPEC is a great opportunity for both countries to strengthen their trade volume. Both the regions are important for each other and Central Asia cannot ignore the geographical location of Pakistan. Pakistan and Central Asia have common membership in many agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) but due to Afghanistan's situation these agreements remained ineffective. In future all regional countries are trying to reach Central Asia. The writer has elaborated and evaluated in detail Pakistan Kyrgyzstan relations from all aspects and gave valuable suggestions to improve bilateral relations. The writer did identify all fields that usually exists in between the two countries' relations and suggested the areas where both could consolidate their mutual relations and cooperation. But he does not write in detail on many areas where both bilateral relations are getting more strengthened and could be beneficial for other regions like their growing interconnectivity through CPEC and on belt and road initiative and of many other projects that come under these project, the growing cooperation on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and implications of both strengthening relations over other regional countries, and over the regional peace and connectivity.

Muhammad Rafiq in his research article, "Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan Bilateral Relation" has given a detailed information about political, economic, and cultural relations of both the states tracing back to their independence. He described that both have old political and cultural ties. Both are currently engaged in many trade and social development projects like Quadrilateral Traffic and Transit Agreement (QTTA), and CPEC etc. In education field, both are speedily cooperating and initiating new educational programs and have great potentials to explore more opportunities for economic and cultural growth. The writer did the best evaluation of both bilateral relations in sectors of trade, economy, and education and discuss in detail the QTTA project and reasons of its delay. The paper does not explore in detail both growing cooperation on CPEC and its regional impacts, and overall implications on bilateral relations and significance of both economic and cultural ties over other regional countries. It is important to evaluate and discuss the advantages and progress that both bilateral relations transmit to other regional countries.

The research article "Pakistan seeks better economic ties with Kyrgyzstan" published in 2022 presents a detailed note on bilateral economic and trade relations of both the states. The article states that after CPEC connectivity both states' economic relations would boost. Regarding this, Kyrgyzstan location would be ideal for other regional countries. Both states have the field of pharmacy, agriculture, food etc., where they could get opportunities to expand their trade. The writer has evaluated bilateral relations of both states, but mainly focused on two aspects of relations like connectivity on CPEC and growing cooperation opportunities in various fields. The article does not cover many other essential aspects of their relations like connectivity projects under CPEC and Belt road initiative, QTTA agreement, direct flights facility, and culture relations which promote cooperation in media, cultural and educational development, and people to people contacts etc. The article does not talk on implications of both countries relations in detail over other regional and global countries. Without Implications, it is difficult to critically analyze the importance of bilateral relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Jafry (2016) in his article "The emerging, geostrategic and economic importance of CARs"

described the geostrategic and economic importance of Central Asia. He also examined the geographical location of Central Asia which increased the importance of CARs because it shares borders with World's great powers. This region is enriched with natural resources and its economy is improving rapidly. So, if Pakistan is succeeding in improving their economic and strategic relationship with CARs then it will receive more benefits from Central Asia. The writer has focused only on the regional strategic and economic significance of entire CARs. He did not write intensively on Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan bilateral relations, strategic significance, and values etc.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach has been used for this research that includes the method of data collection from the secondary resources including books, journal articles, newspapers, websites, reports, documents, and magazines etc. The descriptive analytical approach has been used for this research. The qualitative approach is used to get understanding to the bilateral relations and policies of both countries towards bilateral development and prosperity. Moreover, to evaluate the implications and impacts of their growing relations and interconnectivity on regional and global level sufficient data is available relevant to this research. The limitation of this research is limited work done on Pakistan Kyrgyzstan relations by researchers, scholars and field experts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

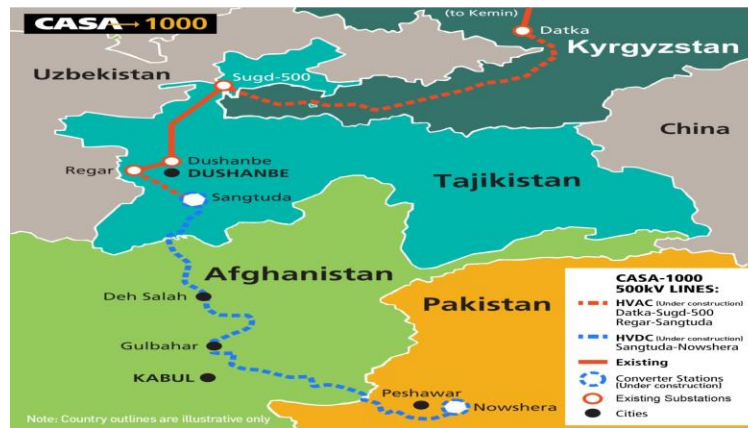
Relationship between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan is completely based on theory of neo-liberalism. The theory of neo liberalism focuses on developing cooperation, that cooperation can be economic, political, cultural, and social- among the world. It talks that the states are promoting free trade and globalization through cooperation, and growing interdependence (Saleh & Danwanzam, 2019).

The relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan also emphasizes free trade and they joined many agreements and organizations for economic growth and expansion of free market and free trade agreements. It also focuses on creating peace in the world by avoiding wars and conflicts. It tries to diminish clashes and wants to boost up the economy. Friendly relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan aims to cause development and both the states coordinate with each other in every sector and signed agreements to achieve economic development. Both the countries pay official visits to each other's state to develop political relations, and enhance trade, exchange scholars, students, and tourists to develop social and cultural relations (Fahim, 22).

Both countries try to solve international issues to avoiding world wars and conflicts and to maintain peace. This mutual relationship will create new market opportunities like CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor). This project will bring economic and regional development along with connectivity. While all these cooperation, linkage and development is based on theory of neo-liberalism.

PAKISTAN-KYRGYZSTAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Both states are cooperating with each other in almost all sectors for the improvement and advancement of economic and trade ties. With this purpose, Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) has been signed between the two in 1995. Some Pakistani citizens are doing business in Kyrgyzstan in pharmacy, hoteling, and tourism (Fahim, 2020). About three hundred and thirty companies of



Kyrgyzstan is a crucial member of the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) basic purpose of which is to give access to the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and China to Gwadar seaport (Fahim, 2020). QTTA is a treaty between Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, and Kazakhstan to build regional trade corridor between Pakistan and the CARs through China. This route would ease the transaction of traffic through CPEC. Moreover, this would give CARs and China an access to the ports of Pakistan. This route is an entryway for the landlocked states of the Central Asia towards seaports, Arabian Sea, and the South Asian region ("SCO states may," 2015). The CPEC connectivity would enhance the trade of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan towards South Asia, the Central Asia and Europe. This connectivity would increase defense cooperation between them as well ("Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan fraternal relations," 2021).

This route is ideal for the CARs as it would increase their trade to other regions, and would provide safety to their trade transaction. These countries' previous trade towards other countries was through Afghanistan which remained interrupted for long due to war (Khwaja, 2005). Moreover, Pakistan helps Kyrgyzstan greatly by providing it connectivity on CPEC as it is a landlocked country with no direct access to sea ("Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan fraternal relations," 2021).

To increase bilateral trade, both states jointly established commissions and launched programs etc. Islamabad has developed Joint Economic Commissions (JECs) to enhance economic and trade cooperation with the CARs. All CARs are its members including Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, in 1992 to 1993, Pakistan and other CARs jointly initiated the Special Technical Assistance Program (STAP) to increase their mutual trade and economic development. The purpose of this program was also to launch learning and skills development programs particularly in fields of banking, English language etc., (Khwaja, 2005). Pakistan is helping Kyrgyz republic under the Technical Assistance program in the field of finance, teaching, mediation, English language, and mailing facilities etc.

Pakistan also support Kyrgyzstan in several ways as in the year of 1993, it had given financial support for the establishment of pharmaceutical plant in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan capital) worth 10 million US dollars. But when due to some economic crisis the state of Kyrgyzstan was unable to repay it, Pakistan understood the problem and postponed it twice, firstly in 1994 and secondly in 2000 (Fahim, 2020).

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan being members of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) encourage and support each other on several world and regional issues. The two successfully got the status of EU GSP Plus. In addition, Kyrgyzstan is an integral part of the Eurasian Economic Union where it could benefit Pakistan. Unfortunately, however, despite all these collaboration and support, the trade volume of both countries has not increased to the level where it should be (Asian Development Bank, 2022).

Main Exports and Import between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan

The comparative study has been conducted even on the economic growth of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan during three years from 2014 to 2016. The results of this study show that Kyrgyzstan economy is smaller, and its per capita income is low than Pakistan's economy. Though, the exchange currency of Kyrgyzstan Sum is better against the US dollars as compare to Pakistan currency of rupee. The entire reserves of gold and forex of Kyrgyzstan are only nine percent of Pakistan's total reserves. Kyrgyzstan GDP mainly (50percent) is based on the service sector, due to the mountainous terrain agricultural sector which has never been developed but being rich in mineral especially Gold, is the big advantage of the country. Gold reserves are the major export of Kyrgyzstan. In 2016, its entire export of gold was ten percent of total GDP (Pakistan Business Council, 2022).

Pakistan exports Kyrgyzstan medicines and other products related to pharmacy, games items, rice, oranges, surgical machines and other related products, textile, and garments etc. Moreover, it exports fresh fruits and vegetables of winter season when Kyrgyzstan face shortage of these items ("Pakistan seeks better economic ties," 2022). Moreover, it exports raw material to Kyrgyzstan for construction purposes. It exports plastic, leather, cosmetic, metal, surgical tools, sports, garments products, machinery, oranges, rice, vegetables, pharmacy items, and equipment. Pakistan has introduced mango fruit in Kyrgyzstan through exhibitions as this fruit is rare and people are less aware about it. In winter, Kyrgyzstan faces shortage of fruits and vegetables. Kyrgyzstan exports fish, beans, preserved meat, leather, and wood items etc. ("Pakistan seeks better economic ties," 2022). Pakistan imports machinery equipment, products of non-metal material, plastic items, preserved meat and fish, wood products, leather products and lamp oil etc., ("Pakistan seeks better economic ties," 2022).

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan could gain many opportunities for investment and trade in the sectors of pharmacy, agriculture, education, tourism etc. Kyrgyzstan is not so developed in pharmacy sector, so Pakistan has a good opportunity to invest. Both are enriched with natural resources and human resources which are the best opportunity for both to enhance their production, exports, and investment ("Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to better use," 2021).

The main exports from Pakistan to Kyrgyzstan and main imports from Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan are as follows:

Main Exports (From Pakistan to Kyrgyzstan)	Main Imports (From Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan)
Pharmaceuticals Products	Dairy Products
Base Metals Tools & Implements	Meat and meat Products
Fruits & Vegetables	Cow & sheep Skins
Rice	Medium Oil & oil Products

Tea & Coffee	Jet Fuel
Organic Chemicals	Mechanical & Electric equipment's
Furniture	Aluminum alloys
Textile Products	Natural Honey
Tobacco Products	Optical, Photographic , surgical & Medicals tools
Sports Goods	Wood & Wood Articles

Both countries are enriched with mineral resources and both have skilled labor. Both could enhance cooperation in the field of agriculture and industry. They could increase their foreign investment and production of goods and services. In 1994, both jointly initiated Kyrgyzstan-Pakistan commission to enhance their trade and economic relations (Rafiq, 2020). Both states are needed to strengthen the commission by increasing their trade ("Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan fraternal relations," 2021). Pakistan is selling its products in Kyrgyzstan market with good quality at reasonable prices which competes other products in the market (Rafiq, 2020). Kyrgyzstan is also selling its products in Pakistan's markets with reasonable prices and these products compete the other products in the market. Moreover, in 2019 both countries tried to get the status of EU GSP PLUS as Kyrgyzstan is a significant member of Eurasian Economic Union. Now, both the countries have the status of EU GSP PLUS through which both could export their goods to European market under free trade. In spite, all these steps by both the states for increasing their mutual trade and economic cooperation, the trade magnitude of both states is still poor which is around \$ 4 million and Islamabad's financial investment in Kyrgyzstan is \$ 3.5 billion. In 2019, in side-lines of SCO meetings, Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Soronbay Sharipovich Jeenbekov pledged to increase their trade to \$ 10 million dollars.

The direct flight has been started in between the two countries which improved trade and people to people relations and contacts. The high officials of both countries appreciated these steps by both countries to strengthen their relations and cooperation and pledged to be taken in future ("Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan fraternal relations," 2021). Pakistan is linking Kyrgyzstan and other CARs through roads and railway routes. It has already restarted Air facility from Tashkent to Almaty. The smooth relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are also dependent on the peace, economic and political development of Afghanistan.

In future, Pakistan may connect Kyrgyzstan and other CARs with Chaman-Kandahar railway project which was introduced by Pakistan and Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission. Once, this project is developed and make connection among these countries resultantly this will boost the regional trade and stability (Khwaja, 2005). In addition, the two countries are dependent on each other for energy needs and trade development and prosperity. Pakistan has shortage of energy resources and Kyrgyzstan is enriched with energy resources like oil, gas, and hydropower etc., ("Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan fraternal relations," 2021). Moreover, to give pillar to the strong trade ties between the two friendly states, a Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan trade house would be established. Both Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan must establish strong trade ties and must provide mutual collaboration in educational and

agricultural sector to gain development. First, trade house⁴ was announced by the ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic Ulanbek Toluiev at a consultation on “30 years of Pakistan Kyrgyzstan Relations: Progress and Prospects” organized by the embassy of Kyrgyz Republic, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic studies and Riphah Institute of Public Policy and International University. The concept in collaboration with Kyrgyzstan embassy was started by Global Business Alliance (a growing trader’s network).

Speaking on this occasion ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said past year’s mutual interest in relations of both countries proved that in future both Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan will be ready to do any type of cooperation with one another. He also talked about projects which were in progress especially project of connectivity. He also highlighted about the large number of Pakistani students studying in Kyrgyzstan. Both Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed to explore the possible air ways to start direct flights from both sides. President of Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies Farhat Asif spoke on both countries’ historical relations and trade. The ambassador of Kyrgyzstan also appreciated Pakistan for providing fresh water sources from Glacier Mountains to the Kyrgyzstan in the disaster of monsoon (Khan, 2022).

Recently, Kyrgyzstan Ambassador visited PBIT (Punjab Board of Investment and Trade) to discuss opportunities for enhancing commercial cooperation between both states in Punjab. The two countries officials have discussed the opportunities to increase bilateral trade, investment, employment development, tourism, technology transmission, energy cooperation, industrial cooperation, agricultural and industrial cooperation, and regional connectivity through CPEC and other routes etc., (“Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic visit PBIT,” 2021).

Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan on CPEC

China wanted to give the socio-economic benefits by connecting with the rest of the world, so to fulfill this dream in 2013, the president of China, Xi Jinping came up with a speculative plan “Belt and Road” initiative. Thus, the CPEC is a vigorous part of the “Belt and Road” initiative (OBOR) which is the restoration of the Silk Road, later renamed the Belt and Road Initiative. This provides a way to China to get access of the other regions including Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. Moreover, this allows China to improve their trade relations in a cheaper way, that is why China intent for the success of CPEC.

In the history of Pakistan, CPEC is a first significant economic activity which is truly considered a “game changer” because after the fall of Dhaka Pakistan was continuously struggle to attain its own position on the economic front, but due to some internal and external issues the policy makers were unable to make this long strategic economic policy practical, which could be beneficial for Pakistan who already lost its economic development due to war on terrorism (Farooqui & Aftab, 2018).

⁴ A business that focuses on facilitating trade between one country and another is known as a trading house. A trading house purchase and sells products by following name of other countries. These do multiple work like these exports, import, and do trade to sell and purchase the products.

CPEC is a “fate changer” for many countries, especially for Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan due to Gwadar seaport. The CPEC route grant tremendous opportunities to Kyrgyzstan, who became independent after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, to increase economic and commercial ties towards Islamabad and particularly with other states as well (“Kyrgyzstan keen on joining,” 2021). Under CPEC project, Kyrgyzstan has offered Pakistan’s businessmen an opportunity to invest in its own country that offers market of about 180 million individuals (Anum, 2020).

Looking at vast transit trade and investment opportunities, Kyrgyzstan is interested to show cooperation in the joining of CPEC. Because it is a land locked country and through this project the shortest sea route would be available from Gwadar Port to Kyrgyzstan. Having abundant natural resources like coal, gas, oil, and gold, Kyrgyzstan has great potentials to invest in CPEC related projects in its industrial zone (“Pakistan seeks better economic ties,” 2022). As currently, trade and economic cooperation is going very low and both states are failed to utilize their available capacities. The CPEC would boost their bilateral trade and prosperity. The CPEC also connects other CARs as all are also willing to join. This connectivity would boost regional trade, development, interdependence, and peace (“Kyrgyzstan wants to Join CPEC: Envoy,” 2021).



CPEC plays an important role in the context of Pak-Kyrgyzstan ties because it offers an alternative solution to link both countries with each other (“Pakistan seeks better economic ties,” 2022). Kyrgyzstan connects CPEC through land route that passes through Karakoram Pass to enter Pakistan that is more feasible way to connect. This road link passes through Kyrgyzstan mountainous passes like in north it is Torugart pass and in south it is Erkeshtam pass. These two passes are 200 km away from Kashgar border (“Kyrgyzstan wants to join CPEC: Envoy,” 2021). The other way of connectivity is through Afghanistan via Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan or Tajikistan (“Kyrgyzstan country profile,” 2011).

Kyrgyzstan’s strategic location among all the CARs is important as it provides a short route to Pakistan towards other CARs, Europe and Eurasian states that includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Russia. It gives great opportunities to Pakistan to enhance its trade towards above regions. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan could also increase its trade towards other regions and to Eurasian market. It could increase its investment through construction, businesses, and hoteling. Kyrgyzstan is a member of Eurasian Economic Union. The Eurasian market has provided a great trade surplus as it has 182 million populations (“Pakistan seeks better economic ties,” 2022). Kyrgyzstan has pledged to connect CPEC with Europe and Europe and Eurasian Economic union. This connectivity is a new source for making both relations more cordial (Kyrgyzstan can play,” 2019).

Both countries would benefit from the platform of CPEC. Thus, Kyrgyzstan can launch trade and, build energy corridor through this project (Ahmad, 2018). CPEC provides a great chance for Bishkek to get more benefits by connecting Gwadar port to access the international market. Through this important port the cooperation and trade connection of both states would help to increase peace and prosperity at regional level (Noor, 2021). Kyrgyzstan has rich resources of hydroelectric power than other countries of the central Asia due to its sufficient water resources. Pakistan wants to achieve 1300MW electricity from Kyrgyzstan ("Pakistan seeks better economic ties," 2022). CPEC and Gwadar seaport connectivity delivers a great development opportunity to Kyrgyzstan. This project would increase industrial and agricultural cooperation among the both. The increasing cooperation between both states would develop peace and prosperity in the region (Bo, 2021).

CPEC is a broader connectivity project that connects the regions as besides Kyrgyzstan other CARs are eager to join this project and expand their trade towards other regions. As these states are enriched with gas and oil reserves hence their exports could be increased by this connectivity. This connectivity would build a strong strategic bond in between Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and the other CARs. Resultantly, peace would be increased which is essential for economic development and social prosperity. Moreover, the pending projects would be accomplished like gas pipeline project Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran (TAPI) and railway project (Junaid, Mustafa, & Nadeem, 2022).

Under ECO, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and other CARs have been pledged to initiate transportation facility and make joint production, trade, and investment projects in field of cotton and textiles etc. Under CPEC, many common projects are under process like the Central-Asia-South Asia 1000-megawatt (CASA-1000) Power Import Project and TAPI gas pipeline project that initiates from Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. CPEC and these projects bring more interconnectivity, cooperation, and peace among the countries. Afghanistan is also willing to establish peace in its country through connectivity with CPEC. This connectivity is engaging the regions in mutual interdependence and cooperation.

In terms of trade and economic benefits, CPEC provides great advantage to the CARs which due to landlocked geographical location, do have a limited physical access to the regions that are across sea. Due to this reason, their economic growth and trade linkages are restricted. Now CPEC is a great blessing for these states that connects them to the entire world. These economic growth and development would be increased. This connectivity would bring prosperity and long-term reliance upon each other. Moreover, CPEC connects the regions of the Central Asia and South Asia through rails, roads, corridors, economic and development projects. It is strengthening the historical, cultural and trade relations of the two regions. This connectivity would bring financial constancy of both regions. Their mutual investment and social prosperity would be increased. Infrastructures would be developed. CPEC connectivity in between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan benefits all the surrounding regions. Besides the Central Asia, Middle East, Europe also want to be a part of this project (Khetran, 2020).

SOCIAL AND CULTURE RELATIONS

In 1991, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement to promote and expand cultural and economic relations. Both the countries have also signed an agreement on the control of drug

trafficking. Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan both shared the similar cultural and social norms. Their envoy has expressed his views in a ceremony of museum (where some art and other cultural pieces were kept) that Kyrgyz people appreciate these cultural similarities and give importance to relations with Pakistan despite geographical proximity (Fahim, 2020).

A collaboration in education is remarkable because at present nearly twelve thousand Pakistanis are studying in Kyrgyz Republic educational institutions, on the other hand Kyrgyzstan students are also acquiring education in Pakistan ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan share friendly," 2023). In 2022, the number of Pakistani students studying in Kyrgyzstan reached to about ten thousand ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan have rich," 2022). Currently, there are eight thousand Pakistani students studying in medical colleges and universities of Kyrgyzstan. Pakistan Medical Council has allowed Pakistani students to preferably study in four universities of Kyrgyzstan. Both countries are interested to extend their cultural relations (Rafiq, 2020). Both are speedily increasing educational and cultural cooperation. The students of both countries promote their cultural values while staying in other country. Both the countries try to explore the possibility of more tourist and cultural exchanges which facilitates the culture of one another. The Kyrgyz leaders have determined to develop mutual cultural cooperation and people to people contact by establishing sister city relationship with the cities of both states; Quetta and Bishkek and Osh with Sialkot (Fahim, 2020).

Most of Kyrgyz Students prioritize Pakistan's study and learning institutions for getting education in different fields like information technology, engineering, English language, and business administration. There are facilities in Pakistan to train Kyrgyz Civil servants. Most of the Pakistani students are studying in medical colleges of Kyrgyzstan. The scholars and students of the two countries visit each other country and promote their cultural values. Both the countries try to explore the possibility of more tourist and cultural exchanges to promote their culture. Regarding this, both are connecting their cities with each other for culture and social development like Quetta with Bishkek and Osh with Sialkot which are also entitled as sister cities of both states (Khwaja, 2005).

For maintaining high quality education, the higher educational commission of both the states are cooperating for making educational quality better. The two side's educational institutions are cooperating in field of medical, biotechnology, agriculture etc. Pakistan has a great experience in agriculture field therefore it offers agriculture training to Kyrgyzstan students. In 2018, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Tariq Banuri held meeting with all Vice Chancellors of Kyrgyzstan universities, academicians, scholars, and research experts to explore fields and to promote joint research between the higher educational institutions of both countries. On this occasion, Ambassador Beishembiev has said that these educational interactions strengthen the bilateral relations of both states. The youth of both countries have a great talent and capabilities which could change the society.

Banuri said the HEC wants to learn about the issues of Kyrgyzstan and work closely with Kyrgyz institutions. He said the higher education institutions of the two countries need to share their expertise with one another. He maintained that both sides can collaborate in various academic fields including agriculture, micro-biology, biotechnology, medical and other areas. He said Pakistan has expertise in the agriculture sector and can offer trainings to Kyrgyz agriculture students ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan to collaborate," 2018).

The campaigner of Kyrgyz Republic Totuiave Ulanbek has said to the founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmad that the cultural heredity of both countries is almost same which results in providing great opportunities of tourism. Both countries should exploit and take joint collaborations to increase these opportunities. Further he added that in last year of 2021 around twenty-three hundred sightseer and explorer visited Kyrgyzstan to see beauty of the land. Trade and Business forums in Kyrgyzstan gave opportunity and support to almost 200 businessmen of Pakistan to participate in Kyrgyz trade.

Most people of Kyrgyzstan are nomadic, so the ambassador pointed out that Gilgit Baltistan is pleasing for these tribes. About two nomadic tribes are still present in the high mountains' regions in Pakistan. He further highlighted that both countries have traditional paths of tourism and trade, which must be resuscitated and reviewed to get more socio-economic advantages. The founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmad directed the Kyrgyz ambassador about mountain climate change and importance of mountains since 2002. He highlighted climate as a foe to all the living creatures on earth. Especially climate effects on economy of developing country and on marginalized communities of mountains ('Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan have rich,' 2022).

Implications

Both states have cordial relations and have great potentials and opportunities to avail. The implications of their bilateral relations on regional peace and interconnectivity are as follows:

- Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan depend on each other. Kyrgyzstan has a lot of natural resources like gold, coal, gas and oil. Pakistan needs these resources, so Pakistan tries to make relations friendlier. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country and to reach ports of Pakistan and to use these ports Kyrgyzstan must build friendly relations with Pakistan. Since the time of independence of Kyrgyzstan up till now both Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have very good, smooth, and friendly relations.
- On various organizational platforms like Shanghai Cooperation Organization etc., both are cooperating to increase mutual development in trade, media military, defense, and education sectors etc. Both are making efforts to increase their trade to \$ 10 billion dollars which is currently low despite having all the capabilities. Kyrgyzstan has pledged to play its crucial role for Pakistan's membership in Eurasian Economic Union.
- Both has pledged and warmly expressed willingness on joining the CPEC and Gwadar seaport. Pakistan could get access to Kyrgyzstan via China's border through Kashghar city which is 200 miles away from Kyrgyzstan border. Further, it could access the markets of other CARs, Europe and Eurasian Economic union which includes the states of Russia, Belarus, Mongolia etc. Kyrgyzstan provides the best opportunity to Pakistan to expand its trade market, economic development, and social prosperity. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan could access China and Pakistan markets on the same route and further it could get access to other states of South Asian region through Gwadar seaport. CPEC and Gwadar seaport are the great opportunities for Kyrgyzstan and other CARs which are landlocked, and these countries did face secure trade transition issues via Afghanistan during US-Afghan war. This connectivity delivers equal and similar benefits to its all partner states. These states' infrastructures (roads, railways, airports, transportation vehicles etc.), living standard, poverty rate, unemployment ratio would get better and would go for more progress. Trade among these states would greatly grow while peace, interdependence and cooperation would be increased immensely.
- Pakistan through CPEC and Gwadar seaport connects other regions and countries of the

Central Asia, Europe and Eurasian Economic Union with China, Afghanistan, and the South Asian region. This is a major regional development that connects four regions with each other that includes South Asia, the Central Asia, Europe, Eurasia, and Middle East. Though, there are many other alternative routes available through which these states connect each other like Arabian sea and via Afghanistan etc. But CPEC route provides more safety and bilateral opportunity to each state to participate more independently.

Recommendations

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan need to improve bilateral relations towards more cooperation and development. Both states could increase their bilateral cooperation through endorsing the following measures like, both should make flexibility in Visa regime which would increase people to people contacts. Both should build trade houses in each other cities to promote, trade and to expand economic market. To promote tourism, the security should be provided to tourists as this measure will increase tourism, which is a part of economic trade. Traders should be treated well, there should be no delay in payment, security policies should be kept in mind, and products should be of better qualities. Different geologist's experts and policy experts of both countries should help each other, to take more advantage from natural resources. Both should jointly cooperate to stop terrorism to secure and safe the foreign investment. The two states should enhance their cooperation in fields of tourism, culture, pharmacy, and defense etc. Both countries should arrange time to time exhibitions to show services and goods of the state on International level, which would increase trade volume.

- To increase trade, the State Agency on Investment and Export Promotion of the Kyrgyzstan (SAIEPKP) and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) should need to form a close coordination. Moreover, a commission called Inter-governmental Kyrgyz-Pakistan Commission (IKPC) was established in 1994 with the aim to promote economic relations and trade. This commission should be activated for further betterment.
- QTTA is an agreement which will make these relations friendlier. This agreement will increase regional trade. Due to this agreement Pakistan will become a transit for landlocked CARs. Implementation of QTTA should be made necessary.
- The railway line project which is signed under CPEC should be completed in time. This railway line will connect Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and China to Afghanistan and Pakistan. If peace prevails in Afghanistan, only then rail and road connectivity will be achieved. Electricity transmission and gas pipeline transmission between CARs and Pakistan can only be done if Afghanistan's peace is maintained. On the other side if instability is maintained in Afghanistan no connectivity and transmission will occur.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan relations are significant as both are strategically important countries, that makes old, cordial, and friendly relationships. The two countries growing relations are causing very positive impacts on regional peace and development. Through CPEC, Gwadar seaport, and Belt Road initiative both are interconnecting the regions of South Asia, the Central Asia, Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East towards common security and development. Kyrgyzstan is the gateway for Pakistan towards the Central Asia, Europe, and Eurasia. Pakistan is also a gateway for Kyrgyzstan, other CARs, Europe and Eurasia towards China, Afghanistan, and South Asia. These connectivity

projects are promoting regional peace, cooperation, interdependence, development, and prosperity. These binds the regions in common interest and benefits which endorse new world trend of peace and cooperation. Most importantly, the growing relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are opening the land lock Central Asia to the world and give comparatively safe trade route. The relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are going to get more consolidated and open as both are increasing bilateral relations by initiating speedy cooperation in various fields like agriculture, industrial, pharmacy, education, and media etc. Importantly both are enhancing cooperation and interdependence by connecting through CPEC and Gwadar seaport. History of both relations is marked by frequent high-level visits and agreements. Both depends on each other due to natural energy resources. Both are agreed to connect each other through CPEC otherwise without cooperation, it is difficult to connect the global regions with each other like the Central Asia, Eurasia, Europe, the South Asia etc. CPEC, Gwadar Port and Belt Road Initiative are the main initiatives that accelerated cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. This connectivity will complete many other energy projects that would benefit both like CASA-100 and QATTA etc. Both countries' cordial relations are significantly important for promoting and maintaining interconnectivity, peace, cooperation, and development among the regions. The regional solidarity and peace is now getting depended on bilateral relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

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