

OBOR: MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHINESE INITIATIVE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to highlight the Chinese multidimensional One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) Initiative. Therefore discussion on its economic, social & political dimensions is pertinent. Challenges that OBOR will face domestically and on international level have been discussed. This mega initiative that has six corridors was revealed by the China's President Xi Jinping in 2013. It is generally believed that OBOR is the revival of ancient Silk Routes. CPEC is one of the six corridors of OBOR. Since CPEC is directly connected with China and Pakistan, both will reap the benefits of OBOR. The cultural and historical background of the ancient Silk Road with old civilization has been briefly focused. In the political dimension and scope China has tried to establish brotherly relations with its neighbors, European States and African States. This article has highlighted China's intention for the regional integration through OBOR. A detailed analysis of all corridors of OBOR is the main research problem. The qualitative research method on the topic was adopted by reviewing secondary literature available. The content analysis has been given primal importance because significant theoretical portion of this research has been taken from books, online and printed journals, web resources, and newspapers, through media channels and seminars. OBOR is being viewed as China's grand ambition to dominate Asia though mainly it is trade and economic integration but political and security challenges have strong implications.

Keywords: OBOR; Silk Road; Trading Routes; Cultural Exchange; China, Pakistan; CPEC.

INTRODUCTION

One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) is a multidimensional Chinese initiative. It is a combination of the land-based Silk Road and the Sea-based 21st

century Maritime Silk Road. OBOR is an initiative to create a shared future for mankind that would link China to the rest of the world as the idea was put forwarded in 2013 by the Chinese president Xi Jinping. Although the OBOR was initiated by Xi Jinping but it was promoted by Premier Li Keqiang while on the state visits to Asia and Europe. It could be achieved by full use of domestic and international markets by establishing one unified huge market that would entail major cultural exchange through mutual understanding. Contribution of capital, talent and technology will give it innovative shape. Chinese culture is based on the philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. They totally differ and oppose the values of monotheism. For the revival of community of common values along Silk Road civilization will be established on Chinese philosophy of having strong humanitarian grounds. It will connect the populous and countries of different ideologies.

OBOR is the largest initiative of the present history mainly in the context of infrastructure gap and other investment projects. The world leaders gathered in Beijing to hear China's plan for global trade One-Belt-One-Road Initiative. "Nearly 70 countries and international organizations have signed for the mega infrastructure project" (Huang, 2017). OBOR would connect more than 65 countries that would encompass 62% of the world's population, around 35% of the world's trade and over 31% of the world's GDP (Brown, 2018). It will take the form of a series of highways, railways, ports, facilities for energy, telecommunications, healthcare and education.

It was proposed that China will be connected with the world through new roads, ports, infrastructure and development of railways. OBOR initiative is to revive ancient Silk trading routes. It would bring connectivity, economic and social cooperation along OBOR routes, will be between China and the rest of Eurasia. OBOR is the combination of six trade corridors that mainly cover Eurasia and periphery of Pacific, North and East Africa.

According to the proposal given in the 13th five year plan by the Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CCP) that One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) was considered to be constructed in three phases (Xiguang, 2016). The central committee in the plenary meeting of the 18th Congress was held at Beijing in November 2015. The Central Committee targeted two main goals to be achieved: Firstly, an active participation in the global activities and provision of goods to facilitate public institutions

for this purpose of interests; Secondly, to embark work for the enhancement of strategic plan through One-Belt-One-Road with active cooperation among the countries along OBOR and in the regions to achieve maximum benefits. “President Xi has set five goals: It is meant to serve as connection of policy, road trade, currency, and especially meeting of hearts” (Xiguang, 2016). China thought that OBOR along with investments would establish a region of shared destiny, consisting of countries along the routes. This region would likely form a new belt of civilization through shared values and interests.

A leading group for the achievement of One-Belt-One-Road was formed in late 2014. These committee reports composed by several political heavy weights were directly submitted to the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli is also a member of the 7-Men Politburo Standing Committee (Wikipedia, 2018). It has been envisioned that OBOR has worthwhile potential to accelerate economic growth and infrastructure investment across the Asia Pacific including Central and Eastern Europe.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

OBOR is still in initial stage. Countries along OBOR projects have expressed their political concerns, reservations and interests. A detailed analysis of OBOR corridors is the main research problem. Nature of the OBOR problems has been categorized into the fields of politics, economic and social phenomenon. No research has been done so far on the consequences of OBOR on the states directly linked with it. This research has been undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining the effects of OBOR on the domestic and international level.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To discuss the nature of economic connectivity among the states which is OBOR, s one of the main objectives.

1. How the social integration will take place i.e. people to people contact will come into being once OBOR is established.
2. To investigate the political repercussions keeping in view the anti OBOR policies of US, India and other states.
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As far as the research method is concerned, it is a qualitative research. Material has been extracted mainly from secondary sources such as, books, articles in journals and newspapers. Original sources include the policy statements of the President of China, Prime minister of China. The statements of the Minister-in-charge of CPEC in Pakistan. Policies of other major states like US and India who are directly concerned with OBOR or who will be directly affected by novel initiatives have been analyzed as content analysis instrument.

LITERATURE REVIEW

OBOR Initiative was proposed by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in the year of 2013 therefore no sufficient literature on this specific topic is available as yet. But it would be worth mentioning that important data for the current study has been collected from the books, journals, articles, and newspapers. An economist Tufail (2017) has contributed valuable insight of Chinese initiative on the One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) with discussion on the annual trade scope and regional connectivity of China. He has discussed in detail all the OBOR corridors. Xiguang (2016) has dissipated the information about China's OBOR implementation phases and major goals. According to Xiguang that China wants the participation of other countries in this project through a dynamic civilization approach. CPEC as a main component of OBOR initiative will act as a connecting bridge among China, Central, South Asia and the Middle East countries through Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. CPEC of OBOR would expand economic and trade expansion benefits for the people of these regions. Review of historical analysis of diverse nations; their cultural similarities, and dissimilarities promoting cultural bond among them. Similarly, Huang (2017) has highlighted the event of the Summit held at Beijing about Chinese plan for global trade generally and for the One-Belt-One-Road Initiative specially has been overviewed. Hong (2017) presented China's rise in the global scenario through infrastructure, development, and connectivity. The major financial contribution of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is to facilitate through capital loans and other services. It would accelerate infrastructure development work under OBOR initiative. It will also provide investment channel for Chinese companies to enhance their manufacturing capacity. It has been reviewed that China's OBOR initiative is exceptional traditional economic operation concept. Compare to other such models in the region to bring

infrastructure connectivity. China is trying to adjust its strategies and policy coordination with the countries that have concerns and reservations. There is a need to build trust at political level with the countries along OBOR (Hong, 2016). A brilliant review on the China's 21st century Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI) identifies Chinese narratives along MSRI, its features objectives and challenges affecting its implementation. That can be political as well as economic level to achieve benefits. Distinctly, Beijing analysis the MSRI promoting diverse objectives at their sub-national level. This review disregards the multi challenges to Beijing grand MSRI and suggests some of the negative interpretations are unwise. China has to make sure that it must implement MSRI scheme fully and plan a head what will be the consequences of MSRI and political and economic scenario. As there are multi-cultural populous along MSRI (Blanchard, 2017).

Some researchers like Cai (2017), has opined that OBOR ambitious economic policies would strengthen Beijing's economic leadership. It will be done through the means of infrastructure in the region. One of the objectives is to upgrade and cater China's underdeveloped areas. She has to utilize her excess production for the development of under developed areas. Researcher views that Beijing's desires to export China's technological and engineering standards by using OBOR initiative are viable whereas Chinese policy makers are rejecting this idea of upgrading the industry. Another researcher Brown (2018) clearly identified the general information about Chinese belt and road initiative. He has highlighted goals which China wants to achieve through OBOR initiative. He has deliberated about OBOR Corridors, key port cities, countries involved in the initiative and the financial support expected from world institutions (Brown, 2018).

Moak (2018) presented the analysis of critics Mendis and Wang have concluded OBOR as a 'debt trap' for the stock holders of developing countries particularly for Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Number of other critics like Wells, Tonga and Vanuatu, who have the similar viewpoint about China's OBOR investments that will be spent on building 'useless houses' and 'roads to nowhere'. On the contrary, many major economies are supporting OBOR initiative except India and Australia. The European Union has not endorsed the unified policy towards China's OBOR initiative. European countries are confused as some are perceptive to Chinese investors whereas some are cautious demanding guarantees from

China (Corre, 2017). However, Winter (2016) advocates OBOR vision will transform the political and economic scenarios in Eurasia and Africa through infrastructure development network, energy, and latest technology. One of the OBOR's core aspects that are cooperation and people –to–people connection has been hardly discussed. The complex roles of culture and history play for the implementation of such mega initiative. It is being ignored by the media and experts too.

DATA ANALYSIS

Social Aspect: Civilization Belt along OBOR

For a comprehensive study of this multi-dimensional project, we have categorized it into social, economic and political aspects. By this method, OBOR will be understood in all its dimensions. A discussion will start with social aspect.

China's objective along OBOR does not only focus on its economic power but also as the cultural power. In the historical context, the "Silk Road empire had its own cultural sphere of governance and transportation to the farthest frontier areas to achieve trade benefits. Alexander the Great ruled the Silk Road from Greece, all the way to today's Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Xiguang, 2016). History witnessed the great presence of Hellenistic Kushan Empire in the western region of China through Gandharan art and Buddhism. The prosperous history of Silk Road began with the era of The Great Tang Dynasty, which had military power in Central Asia and had established religious, education and cultural networks with neighboring countries. The Chinese Buddhist students got the great opportunity of travelling through the Wakhan Corridor, the Karakorum Mountains and along the Indus River to their important religious places in Swat, Peshawar and Taxila (Xiguang, 2016).

China's OBOR initiatives are routed in history and inspired by the historic Silk Road, an extensive network of maritime and land routes for trade, communication and cultural exchanges that once linked China with the countries of Asia, Middle East and Africa to Europe (Hong, 2017).

China through OBOR initiative wants to establish brotherly relationships with neighbors and with European States by playing active role to shape the New World Order. China would achieve goals through development approaches, geopolitical and geo-economic cooperation. CPEC is hub of the OBOR. It is a region of ancient Silk trading routes.

This region has witnessed its rise and fall. The region where CPEC runs has five world's tallest mountain ranges, where the Amu and Indus Rivers sources exist. The western part of China is linked through trade routes of South Asia and Central Asia augmenting the great connectivity of social and cultural aspects in the region.

In this circle, many countries would have developed social and trade relations with China through tributaries. Wakhan Corridor had an ancient history; it was situated in between Karakoram and Hindukush mountains leading to China. The great number of monks, caravans, adventurers was used to travel.

The eminent scholar of Chinese history further elucidated that in the old Chinese and Confucius classic text *Yu Gong* has portrayed that the ancient Silk Road civilization encircles countries that include Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. This study shows that Pamir was the area of great trade route. It passed through mountain ranges and the crossroads of the Silk Road from Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia and China. The Silk Road culture and nationalities have been maintained since ancient times. Initiative to establish Maritime Silk Road was not the reason behind the decline of Silk Road overland routes. Actually, in mid 1900s, Russia and England started expansion, concentrating on Western Asia, Central Asia and South Asia. Both countries started getting their influence in the Silk Road areas. This resulted in the blockage of the Wakhan corridor which was the busiest route of the Silk Road, linking China, the British India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and West Asia.

With the broad regional scope of OBOR initiative, China foresees re-establishing regional cultural relationship and political alliances. It is a commercial economic zone channel that will accelerate the human social interaction and would encircle the multi ethnic, religious, racial and cultural fusion. It has more of cultural zone platform than an economic zone.

Win-win cooperation along OBOR nation is must as it would bring mutual caring, development, and coexistence. These principles are entangled in the One-Belt-One-Road initiative. This novel idea about the OBOR would guarantee common prosperity, development and respect for social system of all nations in this initiative.

The German geographer Ferdinand Von Richthofen coined the term

Silk Road in 1877 on a map of the ancient Han dynasty. The trade routes that he used to propose from a new China to Europe rail road. In launching the OBOR in 2013, Xi Jinping invoked the same ancient Afro-Eurasian Silk Road linked by industry, information technology and rail road. The phrase ‘Maritime Silk Road’ only emerged in 1980” (Kuo, 2017).

The five major goals have been set under China OBOR initiative. The fifth one is people to people bonds. A successful geo-economic initiative deeply relies on the important mechanism of people to people bond to achieve multilateral cooperation and connectivity along OBOR routes and infrastructure development. It is widely acknowledged but hardly discussed by experts, scholars, and media. Many countries having a stake, including China in OBOR initiative, somehow miss the complex role of history and culture in this initiative. Role of Silk Road history and culture should be promoted on international forums. Chinese government is significantly playing its role through organizing festivals, exposing its heritage through museums and archaeological cultural surveys. UNESCO has recognized such thirty-four sites as outstanding universal value and worthy of its prestigious world heritage list (Winter, 2016).

One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR): Economic Aspect

The economic aspect of One-Belt-One-Road is a vision initiative of Chinese leaders. It is mainly economic initiative, which is based on Chinese ambitious foreign policy. It depicts China’s larger role in global affairs and trading network. It is meant to fill infrastructure gap along OBOR route, it ushers regional connectively and cooperation at all levels. The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) (land-based) and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) (ocean-going) are collectively known as OBOR.

According to Cai, the Chinese visionary leaders encourage to participate in the process of regional economic integration and speed up the process of building up infrastructure and connectivity. He put forwards their view that the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st century Maritime Silk Road create a new regional economic order (Cai, 2017).

These are OBOR’s five main goals: 1) the purpose of Policy Coordination is to encourage participating global corporations; 2) Financial Integration is to enhance the financial cooperation to face challenges, monetary risk, and settling currency exchanges; 3) OBOR intends to expand trade and investments among the countries for economic

cooperation; 4) OBOR is designed for greater connectivity among countries through building land corridors and Sea Ports; 5) Cultural Exchange is the most important goal along OBOR is to promote people-to-people bonds for better understanding corridor routes.

An authoritative voice about OBOR was heard from the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui who at the Chinese Development Forum on 21st March 2015, said that “The OBOR initiative is an economic cooperation proposal, it is not a tool of geopolitics”, and “it is not directed against any specific country or organization, but is a useful compliment to the existing international and regional institutions” (Hong, 2016).

Our emphasis on social aspects of ‘OBOR’ maintains that without deliberating history and culture of the countries in the region any success of OBOR is doubtful. OBOR cannot succeed without giving due importance and weightage to the role of history and culture.

Economic Infrastructure Corridor Networks

New Eurasian Land Bridge. It will be an international railway line, which includes 30 countries and is expected to be 11, 800 Km long. It will run from Western China to Western Russia through Kazakhstan. It will start from Chinese Xinjiang province in a horizontal line and ends up in Rotterdam in Holland, passing through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany. These are freight train routes. China has designed one policy along these routes.

China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor. This corridor would start from the Northern China to Eastern Russia. It has two main routes and three countries, China, Mongolia and Russia. In September 2014 and in July 2015 in a summit, the heads of states of these countries agreed on to upgrade railways, highways besides renovation and transportation networks among the nations. After building up this corridor, the regional connectivity and economic growth would tremendously increase in the region. Also this would largely impact on the China’s economic ambitions at the global level.

The China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor. It would start from Western Chinese Xinjiang province to Turkey. This corridor would mainly cover Central Asian Countries through railways passing along Mediterranean Coast to Arabian Peninsula. Turkey is in the West Asia.

Seventeen countries are in the same region. In June 2015, a joint declaration was passed by China and the five Central Asian Countries to build the Silk Road Economic Belt. In the next year, the AIIB approved a loan of US\$ 27.5 million for Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road improvement project in Tajikistan and in 2017 Nurek Hydropower Plant in Tajikistan was also announced to build (Brown, 2018). This corridor has the same route as that of ancient Silk Road.

China-Indo-China Peninsula Economic Corridor. This is ASEAN member countries corridor, who have already established economic integration. This corridor will start from Southern China to Singapore, through expressway and high-speed railway. It will connect China to the Indo-China peninsula, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Malaysia. China wants to deepen ties among the countries along the corridor. These countries are being connected through cross-border motorways, roads, high speed rail network projects. Some projects within China have been completed and some are underway. The ASEAN and China have considered air route expansion by offering use of gateway city airports. The ASEAN countries are rich in oil, gas and coal resources, which will be used for energy generation hydropower projects.

Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The corridor comprises of four countries, Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar. It will start from southern China to Myanmar. Its route is Kolkata-Dhaka-Mandalay-Kunming which covers. It will be connected through motorways, rail, air and seaways and digital communication networks. It was proposed by China and India in May 2013. Working group of all four countries met in Kunming in December 2013, and signed agreement of cooperation for the completion of economic infrastructure corridor. Bangladeshi government has proposed vision 2021, which would improve relations with neighbors' other projects will include railway, energy, agriculture, and telecommunication. In 2015, China and India had signed a £17.7 billion trade agreement with focus on renewable energy, steel, transport, infrastructure, and estate sector. China based Wanda Group is building an industrial park in Haryana near Delhi (Brown, 2018). In Myanmar, a gas pipeline project was opened in April 2017. Kyavkpyu special Economic Zone, Deep-sea port and power energy projects are other proposed projects.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In April 2015, China and

Pakistan had signed a joint declaration for CPEC project and 52 MOUs in the sidelines. It is 3000 Km long route, which starts from Kashgar and connects Silk Road Economic Belt in the north and ends at Gwadar port. This corridor would connect 21st century Maritime Silk Road into the South along the Arabian Sea. CPEC is a mega economic project, which carries US\$ 62 billion Chinese investment. On a 43 year lease, Pakistan has granted Gwadar deep seaport to China with hope to make it New Dubai. China's land locked Xinjiang province in Western China will be linked through China Pakistan Economic Corridor along the Arabian deep sea water Gwadar Port. Gwadar Port has already been operational since November 13, 2016. First Chinese cargo was transported through CPEC corridor to Gwadar Port, for onward maritime shipment to Africa and West Asia.

Successful execution of CPEC is significant for OBOR. It is being considered pivot to OBOR and occupies central location. China will be benefited heavily, as its transportation time and distance for the import of oil from Gulf Countries will be reduced to the great extent. China signed US\$ 46 billion investment initially in Pakistan that would include major infrastructure projects development all along the CPEC corridor and a new Gwadar International Airport. Main focus will be for setting energy project on priority, to meet the major short fall of energy in Pakistan. It will include "8 Coal Fired power plants, 3 Hydro power plants, 4 Wind Farms and 2 Solar Park" (Ghori, 2017, p.26). Almost more than half of the investment amount will be invested on energy projects in Gwadar. In addition, development of Gwadar Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which will have oil and petroleum refining zone, mineral extraction, industrial zones, CPEC's other main projects are agriculture, textile Industrial sector development, tourism and digital telecommunication system. CPEC routes will be connected by construction and upgrading the network of railways, high ways, motorways, roads and bridges. Along the CPEC routes, Special Economic Zones will be facilitated with residential projects, Education, Hospitals, business and retail markets. According to Lehman Brown, there are plans for Gwadar-Kashgar pipeline and transport network. The oil pipeline would cover 17% of China's oil imports. It would be financed by China and built by Pakistani Frontier Works Organization (PFWO) (Brown, 2018).

Maritime Silk Road

The Maritime Silk Road is the sister initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt. It is recognized as the 21st century Maritime Silk Road. OBOR is combination of the two initiatives. Maritime Silk Road initiative

comprises of maritime transport route. Through this route China's east coast will be connected with Europe by using South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is a large-scale network of rail and maritime links. Its main objective and aim would be to bridge cooperation in South East Asian Ocean and North Africa through investments.

There is a plan to setup fast speed railway track system in Africa between Mombasa to Nairobi situated on the Indian Ocean. It will be long, and includes passenger as well as freight trains. First overseas rail route is planned between China and Laos, with the length of. This longest rail network will connect China with the south eastern Asian countries. Another project which will connect Chinese border with Thailand ports is long fast speed railways track. It will be a trading zone for Chinese exports to Southeast Asian markets. Kumport is Turkey's third big port; it has significant strategic location between the Belt and the Road. China's three state-owned enterprises have bought this port (2017). Chinese Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will lend money for infrastructure development project. Its aim is to expand infrastructure, economic developments, regional connectivity and provision of social services.

Political Aspect

CPEC is the shining example of the success of economic aspect of OBOR. The success of CPEC will at credibility to the whole initiative OBOR. The role of Pakistan is the success of CPEC cannot be ignored. OBOR initiative is China's grand vision, a part of China's foreign policy as proposed by the key Chinese leader. It is the most ambitious initiative, which will bring foreign policy connectivity, economic trade, finance and infrastructural development and at socio-cultural interaction between people-to-people contact. The Chinese president Xi asserted that China's neighbors were of extremely significant value. He wanted to improve relations between China and its neighbor strengthening economic ties and deepening security cooperation. China believes in key objective of Peripheral Diplomacy therefore it always gives priority to maintaining stability, strengthening economic ties, and deepening security cooperation in its neighboring countries (Cai, 2017). But this mega ambitious initiative will face external political risks, domestic risks and challenges as well. OBOR is not just a strategic policy but it also improves China's economic influence beyond Asia to Eurasia. Chinese population is hugely supporting OBOR initiative as it is also a part of China's economic growth and social domestic reforms. For China it is must to turn this popular support for

Chinese to see material benefits of OBOR. Chinese people are raising objection on the \$160 Billion, loan granted by China Development Bank. China's commitment of \$900 Billion to fund the initiative for the subsidizing project of railways and ports in Africa and Asia is also being criticized. Firstly on low profit return, secondly, why not the Chinese government doing the same for development in China. The basic reasons are, in China there is a great social inequality and unrest, many provinces are facing below poverty level conditions and are dissatisfied.

The main issue stands that local government have not been taken into full confidence and guidance from the OBOR economic opportunities. China's is a vast country, has diversified social condition and cultural needs adjustments. But the local governments do not have that level of capacity to support One-Belt-One-Road central government of China demands and expects every province also has a challenge for their resources capacity to meet the demand. Provincial governments mostly focus on their own provincial regional issues and events. China has been facing political unrest in their provinces. The Uyghurs are the Turkic ethnic group in the Xinjiang province of China. They are Muslim ethnic group demanding autonomy and more religious freedom. Besides many other separatist movements of ethnic groups have been challenge the China's central government. To control the political tension, the central government is emphasizing to frame the strategy for better integration and regional cooperation to resolve the grievances of less develop provinces and backward areas of China. These China's domestic political factors may adversary influence the OBOR initiative.

The OBOR initiative is the rejuvenation of historical ancient trade belt and road routes. It can be said that such mega economic project may influence in the region under the fact that China stands second largest economy in the world. Various countries along OBOR have acknowledged social, political and economic strategic connectivity and development through China's proposed initiative but have reservations also. India's role is vital in the context of Indian Ocean for the accomplishment of economic, social, political and strategic interest of China. India has serious concerns 'to build OBOR is vague and does not give surety as to how serious Beijing is about opening up trade and cultural exchanges along the Himalayan barrier. Secondly, China is countering the strategies of India and promoting its greater presence in the North-East region of India, part of which China claims as its own territory' (Nataraj & Sekhani, 2016).

India has security concerns over China's naval aid of submarines to Pakistan. India sees that this as an arms race and rivalry from the China's side in the Indian Ocean. India thinks that China would gain military and political influences in the Indian Ocean. The countries along OBOR, due to Chinese aid and investment would be obliged and serve to protect Chinese interests. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through Kashmir area in Pakistan and will be linked through railway route over which India has shown serious concerns as it thinks Pakistani Kashmir as disputed area. The CPEC would facilitate both the countries China and Pakistan against India.

India will have economic concerns with the completion of OBOR and sea ports in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka. Politically it will reshape the economic trading pattern in favor of China in the Indian Ocean, which is worrisome for India. India besides reservations, has acknowledged the utmost important of OBOR Initiative. US has shown have great concerns over China's rising geopolitical influence in Asian and Eurasian countries with increasing military capabilities. The United States sees this, as a security and economic threat to its global dominant position and US policy pivot to Asia (Cavanna, 2018). Beijing's maritime road in East Asia with mega investments in the poor Eurasian countries will push the US toward the periphery of the Eurasian rim land, it will be a challenge for US geo-strategic policy. Due to US naval presence along China's southern side, China has designed maritime Road East Asia and the South China Sea to counter balance the US military. To achieve such task China has to have stable state economy and mega financial reserves. In the long-run OBOR will be able to challenge the strong foundation of US hegemony in the region. China has emerged as a near-peer competitor and began to project geo-economic influence beyond its vicinity. This strategy has started to yield results in key region of Eurasian (Cavanna, 2018). As European, Asian and African economic zones and infrastructure developments are going to be cohesive one economic zone under China's OBOR, it would become economic power in the region. China's another economic zone will be the dominant force in the Eastern Hemisphere. It would be America's greatest economic rival in the region. The United States has offered no solutions in response. Besides China's OBOR is an obvious challenge to US. It became evident at the conclusion of US China trade deal between Trump and President Xi Jinping at the summit, it was announced by the United States on 4th May 2017. According to US China

trade deal US beef and liquefied natural gas will be exported to China. China has committed that its domestic regulatory agencies will consider providing the licenses and patents to ensure market access for US financial services and biotech products (Meltzer, 2017). This trade agreement includes major concession for example, the US recognition of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the acceptance of leadership role for China in Asia. Europe is reflecting mixed views on OBOR initiative. There is an uncertainty because there is no unified EU policy towards China's OBOR Initiative. Europe has reservations about the OBOR initiative. China hosted an international summit at Beijing when it vowed to share growth, development, connectivity, and collaboration more closely on concrete projects with the EU. In response, European Commission was of the view that any scheme connecting Europe and Asia should adhere to a number of principles including market rules and international standards, and should complement existing networks and policies (Corre, 2017). There is a continuous market economy status battle, as Roads and Belts desired connectivity with the world, to the largest and the richest strong EU consumer market. In Eastern and Central Europe China's presence is quite apparent. China established "16+ mechanism in which Chinese PM meets with sixteen countries leaders including EU members once a year. This mechanism has become launch-pad for the OBOR Most countries have signed OBOR MOUs with China, but the European Commission was showing reservations. Two major infrastructure OBOR projects are now taking shape: One is high speed railway line between Belgrade and Budapest; the second one is Athens's Piraeus Harbor. Both are being constructed by one of China's top state-owned enterprises, China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) (Corre, 2017).

Moak (2018), elaborating the European countries' policies towards OBOR, states that France being a developed country and an important EU member has its own position on the China's OBOR initiative. The French leaders promise that his country would be a cheerleader for the OBOR in the EU, recognizing the economic and geopolitical benefits. It has brought and will likely continue to bridge to the world. The Great Britain has called OBOR 'golden era' of Sino-UK relations. While indicating moral support from world institution, UNO has assured that building the road is the first step towards prosperity (Moak, 2018). In 2016, UNDP and China had signed MOUs on strategic cooperation over OBOR, in the subsequent year an Action Plan for OBOR was decided to put into practical. Thus, the

countries yearning to become more integrated with the global economy, it (OBOR) can promote access to markets. The World Bank Group president Jim Yong Kim in May 2017 announced monetary support of (US\$86.7 Billion) for OBOR projects. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recognized China's position on the global economic stage and has given Renminbi status of 'Special drawing rights' in Oct 2016. Now OBOR countries can use and rely on the credibility of Renminbi (RMB). The European Union (EU) has acknowledged OBOR as a connectivity platform that needs cooperation and investment for OBOR projects (Brown, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and Maritime Silk Road (MSR) together form the great vision of President Jinping's OBOR initiative. It is a vision to bring Social, Cultural, Economic and Political integration of all Asian and European countries including Russia through land corridors. It is a vision of shared destiny through Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf and Mediterranean. Along the OBOR, there have been great civilizational zones, of Turkic, Persian, Arab, Russian, Indian and Chinese cultures. These cultures co-existed peacefully with the different ideologies, at the same time for centuries. Cultural diversity still exists and national ideologies can never be challenged but through the New Silk Road civilization along OBOR routes, diverse cultures in the spirit of peaceful coexistence, people to people contact, tolerance, a win-win cooperation and trade friendly policies will continue to exist. This will reshape China's geopolitical, geo economic and geo-civilizational ambit of influence. Through commercial channel it will provide the platform of human social interaction. OBOR will be a channel of multi-racial, ethnic, cultural and religious coalition. Though, OBOR is an economic zone but it also has cultural and social zones. The OBOR does not promote one particular ideology and religion but supports multi polar policies, culture, history traditions and tribes. One of Chinese slogans is to create a shared future for mankind and OBOR is mega multidimensional step in this direction. Its huge economic ambit would bring trade, economic zones, and infrastructural development in the regions through China's US\$ 4 trillion investments, bank loans and institutional funds. OBOR is a vision of economic cooperation offering full potential to all participating countries, but the time frame for China's heavy investment has not been given. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), a China's key national organization which has set five priorities for OBOR initiative;

these are policy coordination, connectivity, trade, financial integration and people to people bonds. In order to implement policy coordination, over 30 countries and international organizations have signed a letter of intent with the UNESCO for the Asia and Pacific in 2016 to promote the implementation on OBOR (Zhao, 2017). Asia, Europe and Africa will get connectivity goal through road, highways, railways, air, and sea networks. It includes major projects of energy, oil and gas pipelines and IT networks. To achieve trade integration, 14 free trade agreements have signed, to increase and promote trade. China is looking to reduce trade barriers. But it seems difficult because countries along OBOR have their own trade and custom clearance policies. To achieve financial integration goals China needs to enhance monetary policy. China needs regional cooperation to minimize financial risks. China has established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) a Chinese state-owned Silk Road Fund to finance OBOR projects. These banks have been engaged in domestic lending therefore these have less experience in cross-border and international transactions on large scale. They will need to frame risks regulations for investments before taking any investment decision on contracts for typical multi-national finance. For the amicable completion of OBOR, government and people to people contact strategy would enable China to share information. Countries along OBOR have different legal and regulatory systems. Hence many infrastructure projects were suspended due to incomplete paper work. This created additional shut down cost and political conspiracies (Jenkins, 2017). Mismanagement would create hurdles in the timely progress of OBOR. Along OBOR, there are many countries facing political instability. Particularly in Asia, Pakistan has been subjected to Talebanization, domestic and international super powers conspiracies. China - Pakistan long-term friendly relation is a cause of concern for some countries like India. CPEC has given China accessibility to Gwadar port at Arabian Sea. USA and India have serious reservations. They consider that CPEC will damage their political interest in the region. They blame China for increasing political, military and economic dominance in the region. Indian has territorial conflicts with China on Ladakh and Pakistan on Kashmir dispute. It sees CPEC as a security challenge and aggression from Pakistan. Many banks in China have shown concerns about the overseas loan pointing political instability in the neighboring countries and the economic viability of the projects. They are more concerned about the feasibility of OBOR projects and risks. Chinese bankers can play positive roles for determining the success of OBOR. They are cautious and taking

challenge by supporting Xi's grand vision OBOR. China is facing political instability in its western province, Xinjiang has majority of Turkic speaking Muslim population. Economically, this province is far behind compared to the rest of China. Poverty rate and under-development are the causes for rise of terrorism and militancy with increasing demand of greater autonomy. To tackle the grievances of Xinjiang province, China wants success of CPEC bordering with Pakistan through infrastructural and economic development in neighboring province Xinjiang which will be connected to Gwadar Port. China is also revitalizing its other economically under developed provinces also. Chinese are supporting their national project as a golden opportunity. There is not much resentment within China except at little level on OBOR. China's Security Research Institute and analysts reveal that all provinces are competing fiercely against each other for OBOR-related projects and want to play significant roles in the national strategy (Cai, 2017). One criticism is that China wants to gain political hegemony as a regional leader through economic and infrastructural development investments and easy loans. Underdeveloped countries may not be able to return loan repayments in time; they will be under strain and stress of their financial system, and may not be productive. But to some extent they would pull people out of present poverty level. OBOR is the first ever Eastern nation's mega geo-economic, geopolitical and geo civilizational worldwide initiative, if it is implemented successfully, it would be a challenging factor for the Western Origin Models. Despite all criticism, many countries are joining the OBOR initiative, including UK, France, Japan, Canada and US. They have taken OBOR with positive attitude. It would bring regional inter connectivity, development of economic trade access and infrastructure. Only India, Russia and Australia, among the major economies have shown negative attitude to join OBOR for domestic and geo-political reasons, than economic reasons. EU Commission also have reservations for member countries violations of EU transparency requirements. The OBOR would provide greater connectivity through economic potential to lower the trade costs with infrastructure development and competitiveness among the OBOR regions. As it is very difficult to satisfy all the stake holders along the OBOR, it is not an easy task. For this China has to take policy measures at all social, political and economic levels, to be agreeable to all the OBOR countries. China's economic progress is not hidden; it must have calculated the measures needed to be succeeded. In order to achieve success China needs to remove ambiguity for best results.

China needs to cultivate trust and confidence among the countries to which OBOR passes. This will be in China's national interest. Neighboring state will show positive response to OBOR once they are convinced that China is not playing games with them. If they are convinced with the benefits of Chinese policies, they will ultimately cooperate with China.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To make this ambitious program a real success all the countries that desire to improve regional integration, must increase trade among themselves. They are advised to stimulate the agenda of economic growth.
- Heavy burden lies on the Chinese government which coined the phrase One Belt One Road to accelerate its geopolitical cum economic program.
- A regime of friendship, cooperation, coordination and economic integration must prevail if OBOR is to succeed.
- The Chinese government must initiate this process and bear heavy financial burden- and last but not the least appease the hostile powers to accept this novel phenomenon.
- CPEC should serve as a beacon light for OBOR. China and other countries should learn lessons from the success and the failure of CPEC.

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