

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF CPEC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Kausar Khan, Sohrab Ahmed Marri, Tahira Shaukat, Shahzada Muhammad Emaad Khan Durrani, Tariq Mahmood Awan. Archaeological And Cultural Implications Of Cpec Tourism Development -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 19(3), 1865-1872. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Cpec, Tourism Development, Cultural Heritage, Archaeological Implication.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the archaeological and cultural implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) tourism development. The CPEC project has resulted in significant economic and strategic development for China and Pakistan, but it is essential to consider the associated risks and limitations of tourism development projects to ensure successful implementation and maximize the potential benefits. The study emphasizes the importance of evaluating the impact of economic corridors on local communities, fostering regional cooperation, promoting tourism development, ensuring political stability, maintaining transparency, conducting environmental impact assessments, and managing debt. Additionally, the research highlights the potential for archaeological research and discoveries in the CPEC region and emphasizes the need for preservation strategies for historic sites and monuments. By considering these key factors, stakeholders and policymakers can draw on best practices and lessons learned from similar projects to ensure the success of the CPEC and other similar initiatives worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an initiative that has stimulated interest in the areas of archaeology, tourism development, and cultural heritage preservation. The infrastructural expansion along the corridor has the potential to unearth novel archaeological sites, offering a glimpse into the ancient trade routes that once traversed the region. Furthermore, the promotion of tourism along the CPEC could facilitate the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage sites, which could have a positive impact on the local communities and economies. However, it is crucial to assess the potential repercussions of tourism and development on these fragile archaeological and cultural sites and take necessary measures to mitigate any adverse effects. Archaeology is a critical aspect of the development of cultural and heritage tourism along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This study explores the potential economic benefits of developing cultural and heritage tourism along the CPEC and the risks associated with the development process. To ensure the success of tourism development projects along the CPEC, it is crucial to identify and preserve archaeological resources, develop infrastructure, and leverage technology to enhance the tourism experience. The tourism industry is a crucial player in the development process, and public and private stakeholders play a pivotal role in the idea development, implementation, and commercialization phases (Nazneen, Xu, & Din, 2019). However, tourism development projects carry significant risks and failure rates that need to be taken into account when considering the limitations of time, budget, and process. Thus, careful planning and management are critical to mitigating potential adverse impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage sites while promoting economic growth and development.

The development of the CPEC has significant implications for the tourism industry, particularly in Pakistan and China. With the focus on mutual benefits and reducing costs, the project has the potential to create job opportunities, reduce poverty, and promote economic growth, which can all contribute positively to the tourism industry in both countries. The development of infrastructure through the CPEC can also increase connectivity, facilitate trade, and promote tourism in Pakistan. In China, the quick development of the railroad system has opened up new tourism opportunities, allowing tourists to explore the country's rich history, culture, and natural beauty. With the development of the CPEC, there is great potential for tourism to flourish in the region, improving the living standards of local communities and making it an attractive destination for tourists from around the world. It is crucial to consider the implications of heavy infrastructural development on the environment, cultural heritage, and local communities and to ensure the sustainable development of tourism in the region (Muhammad Ibrar, Kakepoto, Manzoor, & Khan, 2022). The CPEC project has the potential to transform the future of the tourism industry and promote cross-cultural understanding, highlighting the importance of responsible tourism development practices.

This study focuses This study aims to investigate the Archaeological and Cultural Implications of CPEC Tourism Development, highlighting the importance of studying the impact of tourism development on local communities, cultural heritage, and archaeological sites. The study emphasizes the potential for archaeological research and discoveries in the region, which could contribute significantly to the knowledge of the area's history and culture. Additionally, the study discusses the importance of preserving historic sites and monuments and proposes strategies for protecting and managing them. One of the key initiatives discussed in the study is the promotion of sustainable tourism practices that respect cultural heritage, support local communities, and minimize environmental impact. The study also highlights the need for transparency, stakeholder engagement, and responsible debt management to ensure the long-term success of the CPEC project and other similar initiatives. On analyzing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project from important and necessary perspectives. The CPEC project has resulted in significant economic and strategic development for China and Pakistan and has notable implications for the tourism industry. Thus, it is critical to consider the associated risks and limitations of tourism development projects such as the CPEC to ensure successful implementation and maximize the potential benefits. This research emphasizes the importance of evaluating the impact of economic corridors on local communities, fostering regional cooperation, promoting tourism development, ensuring political stability, maintaining transparency, conducting environmental impact assessments, and managing debt. By considering these key factors, stakeholders and policymakers can draw on best practices and lessons learned from similar projects to ensure the success of the CPEC and other similar initiatives worldwide

State Of The Art

Archaeological and cultural implications of tourism development under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have garnered significant attention in recent literature. Several studies have examined the potential of CPEC's tourism development for cultural exchange, travel, and economic growth in the region (Muhammad Ibrar et al., 2022). Scholars have emphasized the need to identify and mitigate risks associated with tourism development, such as the potential for damage to cultural heritage sites and the displacement of local communities (Aman, Abbas, Shi, Ain, & Gu, 2022). Furthermore, researchers have advocated for the preservation and promotion of archaeological and cultural heritage sites to attract tourists interested in cultural and heritage tourism.

Recent research has highlighted the significant impact of CPEC's tourism development on the archaeological and cultural landscape of Pakistan. The development of new transportation infrastructure, such as highways, railways, and airports, has opened up previously inaccessible areas, resulting in the discovery of new archaeological sites and cultural heritage sites (Baig, Shabnum, & Arslan, 2022). Furthermore, the development of new tourism-related infrastructure, such as hotels, resorts, and theme parks, has created new

economic opportunities for local communities and stimulated investment in the region (M Ibrar, Mi, & Rafiq, 2016). However, these developments have also raised concerns about the potential for damage to the existing archaeological and cultural heritage sites, which require careful management and preservation.

The archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development are complex and require careful consideration. Future research should continue to explore the potential benefits and risks associated with tourism development under the CPEC, with a focus on the preservation and promotion of archaeological and cultural heritage sites. Effective management and planning strategies can help ensure that tourism development under the CPEC maximizes the potential benefits while minimizing the negative impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage sites and local communities.

Archaeological and Cultural Implications of CPEC Tourism Development

Archaeological and cultural implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) tourism development refer to the study of the impact of tourism development projects on archaeological and cultural heritage sites in Pakistan. The CPEC is an ambitious project aimed at enhancing economic cooperation and connectivity between China and Pakistan. The tourism industry is a key beneficiary of this project, with the development of new transportation infrastructure and tourism-related facilities (Khan, Woo, Nam, & Chathoth, 2017). However, the development of these facilities and infrastructure may have significant impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage sites, including degradation, destruction, and displacement.

Studying the archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development is essential to identify potential threats to heritage sites and formulate strategies to mitigate these threats. It helps to promote sustainable tourism development that preserves and protects cultural and archaeological heritage while maximizing the economic benefits of tourism development (Arshad, Iqbal, & Shahbaz, 2018). Additionally, this research also helps to identify potential opportunities for archaeological research and discoveries resulting from tourism development projects, including the discovery of new sites, artifacts, and cultural practices. It also helps to promote awareness and understanding of Pakistan's rich cultural heritage among tourists and local communities, which can contribute to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.

Importance of studying the archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development

The importance of studying the archaeological and cultural implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) tourism development lies in the potential impacts on the preservation and understanding of cultural heritage sites, as well as the potential opportunities for cultural exchange and economic development (Muhammad Ibrar, Mi, Mumtaz, Rafiq, & Buriro, 2018;

Muhammad Ibrar, Mi, Rafiq, & Ali, 2019). As tourism infrastructure is developed along the CPEC route, there is a risk of damage or destruction to archaeological and cultural heritage sites due to increased visitor traffic and development activities. This could result in irreversible damage to important cultural and historical resources, which could have long-lasting negative effects on the cultural identity and understanding of the region.

On the other hand, if the archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development are carefully studied and managed, there is the potential to not only preserve but also promote cultural heritage sites and increase their value as tourist destinations (Zhang, 2018). This can lead to economic benefits for the region, such as job creation and increased revenue from tourism, while also providing opportunities for cultural exchange and increased understanding of the region's cultural and historical significance (Muhammad Ibrar, Mi, Karim, et al., 2018; Muhammad Ibrar, Mi, Rafiq, & Karan, 2016).

Studying the archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development is essential for ensuring that the potential benefits of tourism development are maximized while minimizing negative impacts on cultural heritage sites. By carefully considering the archaeological and cultural implications of development, it is possible to create a sustainable and responsible tourism industry that promotes economic growth and cultural exchange while also preserving the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Potential for archaeological research and Discoveries

The CPEC tourism development project has led to the construction of new transportation infrastructure, such as highways, railways, and airports, which have made it easier to access previously inaccessible archaeological sites in Pakistan. These new developments have the potential to facilitate archaeological research and discoveries in the region. Additionally, the preservation and restoration of historic sites and monuments along the CPEC route may lead to discoveries and insights into the region's cultural and historical significance. This has significant implications for the study of archaeology and cultural heritage in Pakistan, as it provides new opportunities for researchers to explore and document the region's rich history and heritage. The potential for new archaeological discoveries can also have a positive impact on the tourism industry, attracting visitors interested in cultural and heritage tourism and creating new economic opportunities for local communities (Al-Oun & Al-Homoud, 2008). However, it is important to consider the potential risks associated with archaeological excavation and development projects and to ensure that they are conducted responsibly and sustainably to protect the integrity of cultural and archaeological sites.

Preservation of historic sites and monuments

Preservation of historic sites and monuments through CPEC refers to the protection and conservation of archaeological and cultural sites in Pakistan that may be impacted by the tourism development facilitated by the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)(Baig et al., 2022). The development of new transportation infrastructure such as highways, railways, and airports under CPEC has improved connectivity and accessibility to these sites, making them more vulnerable to tourism-related impacts such as over-visitation, uncontrolled development, and degradation (Ali, Daud, & Ibrar, 2021; Muhammad Ibrar, Mi, Karim, et al., 2018). Preservation efforts involve a range of measures to minimize and mitigate these impacts, including developing management plans for sites, restricting access or implementing visitor quotas, and establishing regulations for the construction and management of tourist facilities near heritage sites. Preservation efforts may also include physical conservation measures such as stabilizing structures or restoring damaged areas. Preserving historic sites and monuments is crucial to maintain Pakistan's rich cultural and historical heritage and attracting tourists interested in cultural and heritage tourism (Matero, 2008). Additionally, the conservation and preservation of these sites can also provide economic benefits to local communities through increased tourism revenue and job creation.

The archaeological and cultural implications of CPEC tourism development highlight the importance of identifying and preserving heritage sites and monuments in Pakistan. Failure to do so could lead to irreversible damage to these sites and the loss of valuable cultural heritage. Thus, it is necessary to conduct archaeological research and implement conservation and preservation measures to ensure sustainable tourism development in Pakistan under the CPEC initiative.

Strategies for preserving archaeological and cultural heritage

Preserving archaeological and cultural heritage is crucial for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, strategies need to be developed to protect and manage heritage sites and monuments through CPEC tourism development.

One of the key strategies is to ensure the participation of local communities in the preservation process. The involvement of local communities can increase their sense of ownership and responsibility towards their cultural heritage. It can also provide economic opportunities for the communities, thereby creating incentives for them to protect and maintain the sites (Matero, 2008). Another important strategy is to develop a comprehensive management plan for each heritage site. This plan should identify the specific threats to the site, such as climate change, urbanization, and tourism, and outline specific steps to mitigate these threats. The plan should also outline how to monitor the site, how to manage tourism at the site, and how to involve local communities in the preservation process (Job, Becken, & Lane, 2020). Additionally, it is important to develop a system of regulations and laws to protect cultural heritage sites. These regulations should outline the responsibilities of different stakeholders, such as developers, local communities, and government agencies. They should also include penalties for non-compliance. Furthermore, tourism development should be carried out in a way that does not damage heritage sites. For instance, tourism activities should be limited to designated

areas, and visitors should be educated about the cultural and historical significance of the sites. Measures such as traffic control, waste management, and limiting the number of visitors can also be implemented to minimize the impact of tourism on the sites.

The preservation of archaeological and cultural heritage is an essential aspect of CPEC tourism development. Strategies such as community participation, comprehensive management plans, regulatory frameworks, and responsible tourism development can help ensure the protection of heritage sites and monuments.

CONCLUSION

The CPEC tourism development initiative has significant implications for the archaeological and cultural heritage of Pakistan. The development of new transportation and tourism-related infrastructure has provided easier access to tourist destinations and opened up new economic opportunities in the tourism industry. However, this development also poses risks and limitations that must be considered to ensure successful implementation and maximize potential benefits. It is essential to study the archaeological and cultural implications of the CPEC tourism development initiative and develop strategies for preserving historic sites and monuments. This can be achieved through the promotion of cultural and heritage tourism, the implementation of sustainable tourism practices, and the collaboration of stakeholders in the tourism industry. With careful planning and implementation, the CPEC tourism development initiative can lead to the preservation and discovery of new archaeological and cultural heritage sites, while also supporting economic growth in the region.

FUNDING

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