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GWADAR'S DISPLACEMENT CRISIS: A CALL FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

The displacement crisis in Gwadar, driven by the development of the Gwadar Deep-Sea Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), highlights a profound conflict between economic growth and the preservation of indigenous identity and autonomy. This paper examines the historical and cultural significance of Gwadar, emphasizing the deep-rooted connection between the Baloch people and their land. It explores how development policies have systematically eroded the traditional way of life of the indigenous Dars, threatening their social reproduction and cultural heritage. The analysis is structured around three "necessities" of indigenous life space, time, and lineage all of which are under threat from current development practices. The paper argues for inclusive and equitable development policies that respect the identity and autonomy of the indigenous population, proposing a distributive model focused on land, time, and sustainable development. The urgency of addressing these issues is underscored by the determination of the Dars to resist further displacement and protect their way of life.

Keywords: Gwadar, Displacement Crisis, Inclusive Development, Equitable Policies, Indigenous Rights, Balochistan, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Cultural Heritage, Social Reproduction, Land Rights, Sustainable Development, Identity, Autonomy, Historical Context, Economic Growth, Indigenous Life, Space, Time, Lineage.

Introduction

There is no issue more salient to identity and autonomy than how we shape the places where we live, and our ability to do so on our own terms (Abbas, 2019). Like all conflicts over place, the displacement issue in Gwadar a district now famous as the burgeoning site of the Gwadar Deep-Sea Port is deeply complex. Central to the tussle is the model Shakespearean conflict of change; a two-millennia-old way of life is pitted against the economic imperative to grow an impoverished region a conflict exacerbated because the system that proliferated this ancient culture is also what led to its poverty. But there

is a particular urgency to Gwadar's displacement crisis. Part of what makes Gwadar's case so unique and urgent from a Dar settlement perspective is that the key conflicts around anti-displacement struggles are about identity (Khan & Bakhsh, 2025). This is a struggle not just against being economically dispossessed, but also against an oppressive form of development that threatens the social reproduction of indigenous life in all its richness. In order to successfully advocate for Dar solutions in developed policy frameworks, there needs to be a better understanding of the nuanced issues being faced by communities. As a start, the framework of such analysis has been structured around three "necessities" of indigenous life: space, time, and lineage all of which are currently threatened by the new development. The analysis of these three interwoven "necessities" leads to a straightforward, yet long-term, proposal for the distributive model, with a focus on land, time, and development.

Since the initial dispossession, each new wave of displacement has relentlessly pushed the Dars further and further inland, into increasingly hostile, unwelcoming, and barren lands. They have been left with nowhere else to retreat, nowhere safe to call home. An eight-thousand-year-old lifestyle hangs by a thread, threatening to fade into oblivion. For sixty long years, both planned and unplanned resettlements have systematically quashed the Dars' ability to maintain their traditional way of life, eroding their culture and identity. But this situation is different. Such a radical change is redefining and outdrawing the very contours of what survival is conceivable for them. This time, they won't take kindly to being forced out of their homes. They are determined to stand their ground against further encroachments.

Historical Context of Gwadar

Gwadar is one of the most significant towns of Balochistan, situated on the eastern coast of the Arabian Sea (Abbas, 2019). This port has existed since ancient times and has seen various periods of prosperity. Gwadar's strategic location has been a major factor in its importance. Being situated at the mouth of the Persian Gulf and next to the Arabian Sea, it achieved worldwide intrigue as it has been regarded as a hot spot for international trade and has the potential to become a focal point for the collection and distribution of goods in the 21st century. Among the meandering and arid mountains, there lies a rich and fertile plain. As the sun sinks at evening, the plain and the rills in it lie subdued in purple shadows (Sattar et al.2023). This is the plain of Gwadar, the plain that is lush and fertile, promising and rich. Six large rivers once flowed from the mountains above. Fed by abundant spring rains, they irrigated the lands below, making the arid mountains and the dry desert blooms. The mouths of these rivers flared in the sun, and the sails of many ships appeared in the spacious estuary, promising wealth and glory. It was then that the original families were settled there. The families who were later forced to take refuge in the interstices of the desert

were scattered to the mountains and plains. Even today, it is the day of a darkening and trembling day (Nicolini2021).

However, Gwadar has always been Gwadar. The territory and the sea were always connected together. Even in exile they maintained a living bond and formed a mutual covenant to guarantee the unity of a common legacy that protected the territory and the people who inhabited it. For centuries Gwadar has been fertile and has been a source of livelihood. Bygone are the immigrant days when the land promises the reborn. Baloch people have always respected the provisions of the sea and the land. They observed in detail and always protected their traditions. Through these traditions, they developed a deep sense of belonging and protection for their cultural heritage over the years. People here have always respected their land assurances and never participated in the partition of land. There is an implicit contract that the land is affirmed and respected by sowing the seeds (Marri, 2021). In return, the ground ensures safety and a bountiful harvest for all. For centuries, intangible agreements have been agreed; a mix of culture and tradition, and the feeling of shared leaving a legacy. Even for Baloch seafarers, the ocean has its own separate business and community. Long time ago, two tribal leaders challenged each other to fish for a golden turtle. The sea was divided fairly among the competitors. From a distance, the victorious tribes approached the shores of the sea, and the waves of the ocean cleared the peace between the two groups.

The Development of Gwadar Port

The relatively short history of development surrounding Gwadar Port has seen significant commitments, plans, changes, and alterations. The port's commercial operation began in the first month of 2008 as the first cargos arrived. Since 2013, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreement entrusts, accelerates and secures investment and construction of Gwadar Port, thus marking a new stage of development. Gwadar is the main interface in CPEC's construction projects, most needed for connection and enabling other CPEC projects, especially road networks (Abbas, 2019). There are several established, nearly built, or proposed highways linking Gwadar with mainland and neighboring countries. If realized, they might facilitate a dramatic change in trade and investment patterns in Pakistan. For Gwadar itself, triggering the establishment of major platforms is expressly included. There are various on-going and envisioned projects for the area which extend far beyond the actual port premises, but aim at establishing infrastructural, industrial and logistic capabilities supportive of port operations, and thus boosting local economic development.

Simultaneously, CPEC and Gwadar developments in Kirther are associated with losses of property, livelihood, and other economic fixtures, following planned or actual evictions and demarcations. Consolidations, reclassifications or acquisitions of land

and other assets by governmental or private actors partly draw on the envisioned and emerging changed land and land use-value assessments due to CPEC and port developments or (inter)linked investment interests to the area. This, paired with an increased demand for land contributing to real estate speculation, triggers obstructions to trade, less access to certain areas, restricted activities, as well as business-related stigmatization of potential or actual illegal land occupants or encroachers. In considering how areas are or will be developed due to CPEC, infrastructure projects may catalyze or amplify the attracting or lucrative land speculation and investment interest, also spilling over to adjacent areas, like Gwadar. Numerous projects encompass infrastructural multitude within industrial, urban, agriculture, and commercial types, inducing broad planning and policy interactions. Engagements may take the form of trade, industrial parks, logistic nodes or hubs, airports, and more generally industrial and economic zones, with multiple enterprises and branches considered and attracted, like, for instance fishery processing (Ali & Sanauddin, 2023).

Furthermore, a series of suggested, planned or expected milestones and economic growth indicators reveal the creation of infrastructural, industrial or residential facilities, and more general living and working conditions, as stages and components of projected or envisioned area upgrade and development. Trade volume, employment, and population projections or expectations associated with certain projects, areas, or uses tailor conceptualizations of balanced growth based on or relating to distribution of benefits between, for instance, port, town, and contests. Broadening approaches to growth and progress beyond projects and sites to observe wider economic, political, social, and geographical disparities and contrasts highlights the juxtaposition of economic gains and benefits, on the one hand, and less positive impacts and disparities, on the other, between or involving different target or threat groups and as related to various development fields. Subsequently, trade, logistic, infrastructural, and port growth, operation and functionality aspects are expanded into considerations of (geo) political, socioeconomic, or transnational connectivity, territorial resilience, competition and location, and technical or environmental safety and sustainability, as complimentary planning and policy input.

Rapid Urbanization and Displacement

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has significantly transformed the socio-economic landscape of Gwadar, a coastal town in Baluchistan. The development of the deep-sea port has led to rapid urbanization and economic changes. As new towns and neighborhoods emerge, local populations are being affected by mass displacement. Many indigenous populations face difficulties with land acquisition or have been displaced by development plans, leading to uncertain livelihoods and life trajectories

(Abbas, 2019). The area also repeatedly suffered from disputes and natural disasters. The new port developments have sparked a rush for land and real estate growth, causing local land prices and rents to skyrocket. Many local communities feel desperate about their future and are unable to build more durable and expensive houses because of potential future displacement. Furthermore, agricultural activities in the new Gwadar Master Plan have been restricted, leading to lack of occupation and income for local farmers and fishermen.

Displacement introduces complex challenges for recipient communities, analyzed through a host-investor model highlighting population influx dynamics. The term "host community" emphasizes the transformative effects of development and displacement on local residents and their institutions. While often viewed positively, host communities can experience disenfranchisement, facing intensified challenges similar to those of the displaced. If not addressed, these issues may fracture social cohesion, increase conflicts, and lead to cultural alienation among displaced individuals and host populations. The necessity of preserving social unity, inclusivity, and cultural identity is emphasized, as current development practices may inadequately address these aspects. Strategic recommendations propose multi-scalar micro-interventions to honor complex social landscapes. Common misconceptions that label certain communities as poor or unproductive are challenged, advocating as need for a contextually aware, locally embedded approach to avoid the commodification of communities (Selzer, 2023). This research stresses the urgent need to reframe engineering and legislative practices, prioritizing the needs of both displaced and host communities in development processes. It highlights policy gaps and trade-offs that, if overlooked, could have severe repercussions for both displaced and host populations. Moreover, it suggests alternative strategies to meet the diverse needs arising from infrastructure development, prioritizing human rights and well-being over abstract notions of progress and modernity.

Impacts on Indigenous Communities

Gwadar is an essential node of CPEC, hosting a major deep-sea port and numerous associated projects, including the Gwadar Free Zone (Abbas, 2019). These components will significantly change the physical, economic, social, and cultural landscapes of Gwadar and its broader region. As the city undergoes rapid transformation, displacement crises are emerging alongside long-standing development and land use challenges often faced in provincial Balochistan. This brief provides an excerpt of the full length examination of these challenges and how they relate to broader themes of large-scale development and mass dispossession in Pakistan, with a particular focus on the impacts on indigenous communities.

Displacement resulting from various development initiatives has had profoundly transformative effects on the indigenous communities residing in Gwadar. These communities, which belong to centuries-old tribal lineages, constitute the fundamental social structure of this region. They possess a rich and distinct cultural heritage, alongside a strong social framework, and maintain a deep-rooted connection to the lands that they inhabit. This land is not only where they live but also where they derive their livelihoods, enabling them to sustain their unique social fabric. Despite being displaced, these communities have bravely endured the overwhelming repercussions of such changes, drawing on their historical ties to confront a multitude of challenges. Furthermore, the increasing trend of market-oriented commodification of their land has destabilized their traditional support systems, making them increasingly vulnerable to the shifting climate and environmental changes that affect Gwadar. The impact of these developments continues to ripple through their cultural identity and way of life, posing significant threats to their long-established customs and practices (Khan & Bakhsh, 2025). The struggle for survival in this rapidly changing landscape remains a testament to their resilience and commitment to preserving their heritage and community bonds..

However, it is important to bring these stories to the fore. Indigenous voices and experiences are essential to fully understand the gravity of these impacts. But these communities are amongst the most marginalized in all conversations surrounding development in Gwadar. The loss of traditional livelihoods and social structure has immensely dented their identity and belonging to a place. They are finding difficulties in conforming to the new economy and losing their traditional ceremonies which compelled them to migrate and caused initiative to new threats like influence to their distinctive oral tradition. These also have huge ramifications for the resilience of the communities and their ability to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. There is an urgent need to put indigenous communities at the center of inclusive development frameworks. There is also very little comprehensive research on the conditions of these communities and the impacts of the transformations in Gwadar they face the focus on that and examine these themes in depth to better advocate and document the need for their futures to be included in efforts towards a more equitable and just "New Gwadar".

Challenges in Addressing Displacement

This note seeks to explore some of the challenges that need to be considered in developing a response to the displacement crisis in the Gwadar region. The responses to displacement are often characterized by complex bureaucratic hurdles and unclear governance structures (Abbas, 2019). In the haste to meet fast-paced development objectives, questions of who should coordinate responses and how have not yet been

adequately addressed. In the Gwadar context, the roles and responsibilities of central and regional government authorities, especially the Balochistan provincial government in the context of the 18th Amendment devolving powers to the provinces, are unclear to stakeholders.

The lack of available data and of transparency relevant to the scale and nature of the displacements constitutes the next challenge. Displacement is a multidimensional and complex issue with social, economic, and cultural underpinnings that might not initially be evident from data based on surveys of displaced populations only. Concerns are shared about the confidentiality of the data that has been shared so far and the lack of community consultation on this matter. In this context, the communities affected by the relocation process can provide valuable insights into the broader effects of some of the more immediate construction activities. The confidentiality of the data does not excuse the omission of basic facts in the public domain (Squire et al., 2022). The lack of prerequisite mechanisms and resources on the part of the affected populations to claim their rights and benefits and to advocate for assistance from relevant authorities is important to address. This points to a need for complementary social and economic support measures that enhance the legal literacy and capacity of displaced households. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure that appropriate legal and institutional frameworks exist to safeguard the rights and entitlements of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Whatever the response, it is imperative that it is coherent and that it is at the very least respects the fundamental rights of affected communities. Efforts to harmonize the grander policy landscape within which the responses to these questions are formed, with a view of ensuring that it better respects the rights and needs of the displaced, are overdue.

International Legal Frameworks and Human Rights

The displacement of populations under the guise of development projects, and resulting processes of forced evictions, generate a complex set of rights violations. The net social, physical, and economic well-being of affected communities is threatened, and they are often rendered vulnerable to a worsening of living conditions. Mass displacement perpetuates jobs, markets, and livelihoods, while also undermining familial and social support systems. International legal conventions and treaties nonetheless can be and are used against development agencies, land developers, and authorities to hold them accountable for particularized actions during the planning and implementation of large-scale projects that result in involuntary displacement. The Guiding Principles therefore exist to inform and affect how relevant international and national actors perceive their obligations under international law. They were conceived as being based on, respelling out, or reproducing what are considered existing rights, guarantees, and prohibitions within customary international law (F. Martin, 2017).

Although they do not possess the same force or legality as a human right convention or an international treaty, they are nonetheless official international recommendations. In order to be credible such international standards should be authentic expressions of international law or should derive from it (Asima Sahu, 2016). Anything less would risk rendering international law a potentially apolitical, arbitrary, and subjective tool. It is also partially for this reason that the Guiding Principles have proved so contentious. Clearly delineating the rights and responsibilities of various parties is vital to the resolution of disputes and conflicts over large development projects that impel displacement. Moreover, ensuring that national practices adhere to international norms is an important step in securing a minimum standard of protection for vulnerable and disenfranchised communities. There is mounting evidence of a gap between humanitarian and human rights norms at the international level and the actual conduct of national governments. This gap is compounded by the lack of effective international mechanisms for ensuring compliance, which is why attention is needed to the role of the United Nations and other international agencies. In addition, the adaptation of international guidelines to local practices and perspectives must involve a dialogue that is transparent and inclusive (Barron et al.2022). The creation of such a dialogue can offer a bridge between those who possess power and resources, broadly defined, and those who require protection and redress. This is regarded as an implementation gap and is construed as having several dimensions. On the one hand, national governments will often fail to adhere to agreed international norms; on the other, multinational corporations, financial institutions, and development agencies will adopt a means-end calculus so as to evade such norms. Focusing the argument on the underlying tenets and principles of human rights (dignity, protection, redress) serves as a reminder that rules alone are insufficient, while also allowing for a critical evaluation of the extent to which, and the ways in which, these rules are applied.

Inclusive Development Policies

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Gwadar port projects stand out prominently as critical components of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative. These initiatives are transforming lives, reshaping landscapes, and creating a multitude of new opportunities within the complex socio-economic and political spheres of Pakistan. Gwadar, serving as one of the principal nodes in the CPEC, has experienced astounding growth since the construction of its port began, burgeoning from a modest population of under 100,000 in 2010 to an astonishing estimate of over two million people today. The city now presents itself more as an extensive construction site rather than a conventional urban settlement with settled communities. The ongoing projects related to transport infrastructure and energy development in Gwadar hold remarkable potential to provide substantial economic benefits, effectively creating opportunities

to alleviate underdevelopment and poverty in the region. Nevertheless, achieving these benefits will necessitate exceptionally careful management to avert a broad range of negative consequences that could arise as side effects of rapid development (Chohan and Chandio2022).

Since the onset of this century, significant debate and extensive research have emerged concerning the repercussions and management of displacement that can occur as a result of such large-scale development projects. Often, displacement can result in consequences that are far more severe than the hoped-for benefits, leading to negative impacts that can persist for decades after the displacement event itself has unfolded. In Pakistan, a country grappling with poverty and ongoing development, the complex interplay of dynamics surrounding industrialization and urban growth makes the challenges related to displacement particularly acute and the policies required to address these issues even more critical. It is very conceivable that the planned and, at times, unplanned displacement associated with the CPEC and Gwadar port projects could precipitate a crisis, one that the government, as both policymaker and implementer, may find challenging to resolve effectively. In order to alleviate tensions and conflicts that may arise, any such approaches must entail a deep and thorough understanding of the underlying social, economic, and political causes of displacement (Amna, 2024). Moreover, Gwadar has also transformed into a hub characterized by a diverse population encompassing various ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, which originate from multiple regions of Pakistan, and even some from China. This rich heterogeneity presents a unique challenge and an opportunity; for any sustainable, effective, and fruitful discussions about public perceptions and policy implications, it is essential that such diversity be comprehensively addressed and meticulously analyzed. Engaging with this multifaceted demographic reality will be critical in the movement toward establishing policies that are equitable, inclusive, and ultimately conducive to fostering lasting development and stability in the region.

Equitable Resettlement Practices

Displacement is an unavoidable aspect of development. However, the forced displacement of peoples is a grave consequence that can deeply disrupt communities if not addressed appropriately. As Pakistan moves toward countless development initiatives linked with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it is important to underscore the significance of inclusive and equitable development policies. In regions like Gwadar, the level of displacement is staggering due to an array of infrastructural projects. Against this backdrop, this paper proposes a transformative framework for inclusive, equitable, and humane development practices in Gwadar (Abbas, 2019).

Priority is given to the significance of equitable resettlement practices and development-induced displacement. It is argued that the principles of fair, transparent

and participatory resettlement practices will guide an appropriate course of action. The challenges of displacement and resettlement practices are vast due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and inadequate planning. Drawing on multiple geographical contexts, case examples of effective resettlement initiatives demonstrate a range of successful practices. The significance of appropriate compensation and alternative livelihoods are centrally positioned and it is emphasized that this should be premised on protecting affected people's rights and dignity. Further, the framework encourages continuous dialogue with communities. Critical to this framework is an underlying assumption that resettlement should be a beneficial, or at least a neutral, event for affected people and that the lives of communities accomplished as a result of displacement should be significantly better, as opposed to worse (Singh and Muhuri2024). Built on these principles, the framework is structured to encompass all dimensions of the development specter: from resettlement preparation through to community regeneration and livelihood enhancement. Given the depth and breadth of displacement due to the CPEC plan, it is anticipated that these guidelines will better equip local and regional planners in dealing with development-induced displacement.

Community Participation and Empowerment

One of the most common arguments that emerge while discussing a displacement crisis is the need for supporting inclusion, particularly of affected community members. In capitalist society, streets, public squares, and social media are filled with the narratives of continuous protest on displacement for varied reasons, including neglect against displacement-attached instruments of cultural identity, services, livelihood, and habitat. However, Gwadar's unique situation can neither control the contested and raged political economy of contemporary displacement nor resolve it under a generated intervention in view of the description provided in the previous paras. It is surprising that among a few displacement-affected individuals, a number of employed persons and civil society partners deeply engaged with the formation of social capital, disputes, accomplishments, or making claims versus changes afterward, underpin the displacement crisis equally stumbling upon the interpretation of cultivation and transfer of this knowledge to personal and professional advancement, public work, multiple coping strategies, and coping aids (Health Organization, 2022).

Smart education, proactive tenure security, indigenous alternative livelihood creation, care for vulnerable groups, preservation or restoration routes to cultural heritage, on the one hand, and cultural activities for intra and cross-community interaction and opinion formation, and enhanced ownership and trust of the remedy or developers on the other, are considered more important but hitherto neglected aspects of the uplift, dignity, well-being, resilience, and sustainable involvement or way forward in a pro-poor growth strategy. Settlements of the displaced migrants or people are repaired to

more of a spatial aspect in which less fortified or dismaying buildings built with temporary material are quickly raised, or concrete buildings are reserved for dignitaries, and there is neglect of other attachments and necessities endangering self or mother Earth from micro to macro level.

Gender Dimensions of Displacement

Women and men experience displacement differently, but in Gwadar, women are particularly invisible. Like elsewhere, women in Gwadar suffer greater threats than men to their physical security, including the likelihood of being more exposed to sexual or gender-based violence in their households or at a distance from them. Skewed power relationships limit women's coping capacities before, during and after displacement also in Gwadar. This includes the probability of experiencing additional restrictions to their mobility and visibility, which is reported to seriously compromise their ability to access aid or relief services in camps or elsewhere. In the very same refugee camps, women are particularly exposed to increased risks of detention, including on suspicion of harboring terrorism-related activities that is aggravated by a general militarization of those settings. Compared to female long-term refugees, women acquitted from their charges tend to face more harassment and divorce from their husbands after their release (Kaya & Bond, 2019). Those separated or soon divorced usually shoulder the responsibility of the children, thus becoming more vulnerable as they typically lose their economic independence and face additional difficulties in retaining access to land or other productive resources. In order to mitigate backlash within the household or the wider community, previously detained women may resort to mechanisms of social invisibility whereby they refrain from seeking assistance or redress, even when in need of medical or legal support. This entails that her concerns are not voiced or accordingly addressed by those intervening in the field.

Special attention to the disproportionate vulnerabilities faced by women during displacement must be integrated into efforts to include a gender perspective in policies for internally displaced persons (IDPs). There is a demand for wider adoption of gender-sensitive strategies in policies and programs that address the experiences and protection of IDPs. Recognizing that women and men experience displacement differently is crucial and necessitates promoting the involvement of women and their organizations in decision-making on these policies at the local level. The discussion emphasizes women's potential role in enhancing community resilience and recovery, while also acknowledging the risk that harmful pre-existing gender dynamics may worsen during displacement. Immediate action is needed for policies targeting the specific needs of displaced women, including legal protection, health services, psycho-social support, education, and income-generating opportunities (OHirsi, 2024). Particular attention must also be given to widows and older women in need. The

experiences of girls in displacement must be carefully addressed as well. A systematic approach is essential, recognizing that displacement experiences vary significantly among different individuals. Intersectional factors such as age, socio-economic status, and ethnicity influence how gender shapes these experiences. Consequently, strategies for addressing the needs of displaced women must be based on a comprehensive understanding of these complex intersections. Ultimately, the goal is to promote cohesive strategies that fully integrate gender considerations into inclusive and equitable displacement policies and practices.

Education and Healthcare Provision

Access to quality education is considered a basic human right by the United Nations, and is crucial in fostering resilience and recovery, especially in times of adversity. This section argues that with displacement, children and adults living in Gwadar risk being denied their right to education, and have a right to enforce policies that ensure access to education for all. The challenge of ensuring such access constitutes a lens on the broader dispute about what the "right to education or health" implies, and why it is defensible to take it as a fundamental human claim. Moreover, Gwadar's host communities also face barriers to access and enjoyment of education and health benefits, which integration and well-designed development projects could help overcome. The building of a health and education infrastructure beneficial to all communities, including displaced and host communities, represents a more sustainable and long-term investment in Gwadar's overall stability and development, over the much-criticized security-focused initiatives and investments currently being pursued (Mikulak, 2018). The provision of poorly functioning healthcare and education facilities by the government and the absence of any initiatives to involve citizens in their ownership, governance or improvement exacerbate rather than diminish this crisis. In these conditions, displacement can deepen divisions, stigma and discrimination against those forced to move, and foster environments hostile to any future return or integration. Particular attention is needed to create mechanisms that recognize and address such stigma, and actively involve local populations in the design and implementation of investment, health or educational programs.

Access to health, much like education, is considered a fundamental right for all residents. Yet, just like education, access and quality of health facilities significantly differs across regions and areas of Gwadar. Just like government schools, hospitals and clinics are widely considered to be too dirty and understaffed to be functional, posing serious health risks to the residents rather than providing care. In comparison, the pharmaceutical shop is clean and appears to be much better equipped, and the man working there is very knowledgeable and can give specialist advice. Lack of access to healthcare is compounded by security barriers, with women often being denied access

because the waiting areas for patients are indoors but not accessible from the street, and I think there is no doctor here (Ali & Sanauddin, 2023) they just write the medicine and nobody really checks you. Likewise, a government-run school for Afghan children, established by trading communities on the periphery of the settlement, is reportedly one of the few that is functioning reasonably well. In contrast to both formal healthcare and presumably educational facilities, jhuggi households are involved in some decision-making about the school such as the decision on establishing the school in the area, and school teachers act as mediators in meetings with the police, effectively operating as ombudsmen for the community and increasing their safety.

Livelihood Diversification and Skill Development

Income diversification, unfortunately, hasn't really experienced from the local economies and this weakness was subconscious. In secondary economy, local people were not easily getting their goods outside of the town up until 2011 because of undeveloped highway infrastructure. After adopting export oriented strategy, local people from many businesses had the opportunity to gain reputation in their business field such as M. Farooq who gained reputation on fish business at export level, which was an initially a small business at the port town of Gwadar. Diversity and informalization of economy is attribute of port led development reducing opportunities in formal sector, and developing informal opportunities for employment and income which are accessible mostly to host population of Gwadar town (Abbas, 2019).

Livelihood vulnerability is high among the poor urban planning, policy associated with eradication of Katchi Abadies, and transport bottleneck restrict the access to work of livelihood opportunities. Strengthening of safety net through social protection and rural development may reduce the livelihood vulnerability (financial and natural resources, human resources, physical assets, social capital and access to formal and informal safety net). Despite of improved intercity connection, transport cost were still high and inconvenience. The social capital structure of a Katchi Abadi of Gaddani were enhanced by the conflict emerged after the arrival of the Chinese company. Enhancing export oriented and investment opportunities of fish led the establishment of boat building firms in Gwadar town. Depending on the economy structure of cities (primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary economy), the level of income in CPEC stakeholder cities were varied. This reflects that income opportunities are potentially linked with the economy type of cities (Roy et al., 2024). This is a good omen to develop related planning and strategy that how each type of economy of cities will be involved in transport and infrastructure development initiated under CPEC. Integration with digital economy in CPEC provides opportunities to home based business run by women. Home based garment businesses of Pakistani women at formal and informal level is

successfully functioning. Generally, SMEs and rural businesses are struggling to link with the development induced opportunities like CPEC, and international market links. But those who successfully linked with the formal or informal opportunities, are rapidly involved in export and import at informal level.

Conclusion

A perfect storm is brewing in Gwadar, and it has the potential to obliterate the world's oldest coastal Indian Ocean community who has lived here for centuries. While the town is being transformed through ambitious development plans led by both the government and countless private actors, mega infrastructural projects are exacerbating challenges in providing basic services and resources, as Gwadar's population is expected to grow by 5-10 times its current size. Basic resources, including healthcare and education, are insufficient to meet the population's existing needs. Funding models necessitate funding from multiple levels of government, none of which is currently feasible in the present-day construction and political contexts. Unprecedented pressure on the town's already inoperable sanitation systems and scarce potable water supply is projected. These challenges are further exacerbated by the demographic shifts occurring as a result of city expansion and inward migration towards the new planned towns. This tidal wave of contemporaneous, multilateral, and interconnected challenges risks the obliteration of community structures, resilience, and livelihoods that have thrived on the coast for centuries unless immediate and comprehensive strategies are put into place.

In light of the analysis presented here, a few recommendations are put forward for stakeholders. Prioritizing broad, community-driven investments in services provision, such as potable water supplies, sanitation services, food security, and basic healthcare and education, is paramount. Facilitating large-scale windbreak plantations as a means of diffusing the threat of desertification and filtering airborne soil particulate is also broadly recommended. Export-led government initiatives should consider redirecting profits towards foundational community-driven services infrastructure. These behaviors are encouraged to be accompanied by openly sharing financial data transparently and maintaining transparent, cooperative relations with local holders to facilitate a pluralistic approach to problem-solving. Contours of a proposed 99-year, community-led development strategy are enclosed and will be considered further in partnership with local representatives, experts, and activists. Finally, stakeholders are invited to participate in discussions aimed at finding innovative and trans disciplinary solutions to preserving the cultural and ecological heritage of Gwadar's communities, structures, and land toward a profitable and sustainable future for all stakeholders alike.

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