

CPEC

Policy Paper Series

National Job Portal for CPEC -Connecting Skills with Opportunities

Dr. Shahid Rashid
Executive Director, CoE-CPEC
Muhammad Muzammil Zia
Policy Head: Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC
Amina Munir
Research Assistant, Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC
Fatima Liaquat
Research Assistant, Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC



Ministry of Planning,
Development & Reform



Pakistan Institute
of Development Economics



A PUBLICATION OF
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR



www.cpec-centre.pk

GET MORE

National Job Portal for CPEC - Connecting Skills with Opportunities

By

Dr. Shahid Rashid¹, Muhammad Muzammil Zia², Amina Munir³ and Fatima
Liaquat⁴

The mega CPEC project aims to connect western China with Gwadar through the network of infrastructure including highways, railways, and pipelines. This corridor is an extension of “Belt and Road initiative (BRI) an idea emerged from East Asia viably changing the notion of “Globalizaion” into a more reliable practice to connect the world. With an investment of \$62 billion, CPEC is a ‘flagship project’ which is heading towards closure of its ‘early harvest’ projects including infrastructure, energy projects, Gawadar port and industrial cooperation. In this regard, the establishment of CPEC Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is a growth strategy for promoting employment, trade and uplift economic growth of a country⁵. According to ILO, CPEC is estimated to create 400,000 jobs to the country while Applied Economic Research Centre (AERC) has estimated that the mega initiative would provide around 700,000 direct jobs. The Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform shows even more promising results, with CPEC generating around 800,000 jobs in the next 15

¹ Executive Director, CoE-CPEC

² Policy Head, Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC

³ Research Assistant, Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC

⁴ Research Assistant, Job Growth and HRD Division, CoE-CPEC

⁵ Khan, K., & Anwar, S. (2016). Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and CPEC: Background, Challenges and Strategies. *The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*, Retrieved Sept 3, 2018 12:40pm <http://www.pide.org.pk/psde/pdf/AGM32/papers/Special%20Economic%20Zones.pdf>

years. Pakistan is about to gain a lot from these opportunities as there would also be a noteworthy increase in the annual economic growth of the country⁶.

In 2018, the unemployment rate in Pakistan has been reported as 5.9%, out of which 10.4% youth is estimated to be unemployed, resulting in poverty, economic crisis, corruption, and declining socioeconomic status. CPEC is not only providing job opportunities but also transmitting a trickle down effect to the lower strata of the economy, hence, improving its living standard sustainably. However, it is documented that policymakers have been finding it challenging to integrate low-skilled workforce into the labor market because of high risks in unemployment, economic, and social exclusion. Furthermore, the economic crisis makes it difficult for the low-skilled workforce to find employment especially in advanced economies⁷. Skilled human capital is arguably the most valued asset for the development strategy of any country⁸. The exemplary economies like Japan and other Asian economies shows the significance of human capital in the process of economic growth⁹. Given the enormous economic and developmental changes being experienced by nations in the Asia-Pacific region, South-East Asian, Pacific Rim countries and the related migration of people between and across countries, it is critical to understand the role of human capital in the economic development of the nation and related challenges. As the global economy becomes increasingly knowledge-based, the acquisition and

⁶ Shahid, S., Zia, M. M., Waqar, S. (2018). Employment Outlook of CPEC: A Meta Analysis. Centre of Excellence-CPEC (CoE-CPEC).

⁷ CEDEFOP. (2012). Rising unemployment hits low-skilled adults the hardest. European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Retrieved Sept 5, 2018 from <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/statistics-and-indicators/statistics-and-graphs/rising-unemployment-hits>

⁸ Sinha, V., & Thaly, P. (2013). A review on changing trend of recruitment practice to enhance the quality of hiring in global organizations. *Management: Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*, 18(2), 141-156.

⁹ Varma, A., & Budhwar, P. S. (2013). *Managing Human Resources in Asia-Pacific*. Routledge.

development of superior human capital with related skills appears essential to the country's viability and success¹⁰.

To fulfill emerging demands of human resource, employers venturing in other countries are benefiting from various sources of recruitment like online job portals, social media (LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) besides traditional methods (e.g., job advertisements, employee referrals programs, headhunting agencies, etc). Research shows that 45% of job seekers search for jobs daily on their mobile devices, furthermore 63% use the company website, 20% are using outbound campaigns like email, and only 9% use Search Engine Optimization (SEO), followed by online job boards at 37%, and 92% of recruiters use social media to find high-quality candidates and 80% executives believe that artificial intelligence can improve productivity and performance¹¹. Over the last few decades, the recruitment process has changed significantly with various changing trends including the use of technology in the recruitment process for fast, timely, and effective hiring, talent sourcing, and its impact on the leading global organizations is interesting to observe. It is concluded that a shift is being made towards the modern and innovative talent sourcing channels due to various factors like quality, cost, availability, and time.

The idea to have a platform of job portal in Pakistan for vocational jobs evolved when HR Manager of Sahiwal Coal Power Plant observed inability to find 3,770 approx 58% workers during the constructional phase and 38% in the operational phase of Sahiwal coal power plant under CPEC project. Right from the beginning, it was found critically important to have a database of vocational jobs as it was felt much needed in first phase venture of China Gezhouba Group Co. Ltd. (CGGC). The unbalance of

¹⁰ Crook, T. R., Todd, S. Y., Combs, J. G., Woehr, D. J., & Ketchen Jr, D. J. (2011). Does human capital matter? A meta-analysis of the relationship between human capital and firm performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 443.

¹¹ Talent Works International (2017). 8 Social media statistics you need to know if you're in recruitment – Infographic. Retrieved Sept 1, 2018 11:45am <https://www.talent-works.com/2017/09/27/social-media-recruitment/>

workers was found in non-availability of skilled labor and resulted in high operational cost (e.g., wages, insurance, work hazard, pay, travel and accommodation).

Employers belonging to the informal and formal sectors have always felt a huge gap to connect with vocational job seekers. At present, most of the manpower-consultants use existing job-portals, which have very little focus on vocational staffing space. The traditional use of Middlemen or Placement Agencies are costly, complex and proven to be ineffective as reason is not only these middlemen or agencies but lack of creation of right sourcing channels, skill match, and education.

Typically employers coming from parent countries search to choose right job portal as the most popular and widely used tool to gracefully keep the flow of recruitment method within the competitive world¹². In this fast-paced business world where many transactions are internet based, Chinese managers have also shifted to online recruitment tools after guanxi (personal connections) for fast, low-cost, and effective recruitment¹³. E-recruitment, is also termed as cyber recruiting, or internet recruiting, and used as fast-growing source of recruitment in developed economies to quickly reach young and qualified applicants¹⁴.

In this regard, e-recruitment may transform CPEC projects' recruitment process as literature supports it expediting in time efficient manner, giving space, and independence to many public and private sector organizations to use job portals to post jobs, accept and shortlist resumes and other facilities¹⁵. With growing demands

¹² Holm, A. B. (2012). E-recruitment: Towards an Ubiquitous Recruitment Process and Candidate Relationship Management. *German Journal of Human Resource Management: Zeitschrift für Personalforschung*,

Mansourvar, M., & Yasin, N. B. M. (2014). Development of a Job Web Portal to Improve Education Quality. *International Journal of Computer Theory and Engineering*, 6(1), 43-46. DOI: 10.7763/IJCTE.2014.V6.834

¹³ Mulholland, X. Y. G., Turner, J., & Simpson, E. (2018). The Role of Guanxi on Chinese Leadership Innovation —The Pilot Study on the Electric Motor Sector. Scientific Research Publishing, *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 6, 309-319.

¹⁴ Ramkumar, A. (2018). E-Recruitment through Job Portals and Social Media Network: Challenges & Opportunities. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, 9(6), 143-148.

¹⁵ Kapse, A. S., Patil, V. S., & Patil, N. V. (2012). E-Recruitment. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology (IJEAT)* ISSN: 2249 – 8958, 1(4), 82-86.

of the business world, there is a need to focus on the design of e-recruitment websites, perception of applicants about career website, and system design¹⁶.

This policy brief highlights how an integrated and efficient network is not only a pre-requisite to benefit employment opportunities but also for the social and economic development of the country. In Pakistan, for the hiring of vocational jobs, provincial vocational institutes have a direct link with their graduating students and hence may provide direct local and international employment opportunities and all important employment services through a national job portal to decrease the unemployment rate. In this way, it may serve sufficient employment opportunities to a labor class of the country, who otherwise cannot access employment opportunities because of lack of education and resources¹⁷. The significance of this policy brief also relates to the idea about replacing traditional manual recruitment process comprising publishing job advertisement in newspapers with technologically supported, time-saving, fast and more convenient recruitment process¹⁸. A collaborative job portal comprising the data base of skilled/unskilled labours can be designed so that the demand from the Chinese firms can be forwarded to the suppliers of the labour market including, NAVTTC, TVETA, HEC etc. In this manner this job portal can bridge the Chinese companies with their relevant demand of labours.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

To practically implement the idea of CPEC job portal, following are some of the policy recommendations which can be considered;

¹⁶ Selden, S., & Orenstein, J. (2011). Government E-Recruiting Web Sites: The influence of e-recruitment content and usability on recruiting and hiring outcomes in US state governments. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 19(1), 31-40. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.2011.00532.x>

¹⁷ Khan, M. (2015). Analysis: Trade through Land Routes. *Dawn*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1202356>

¹⁸ Kapse, A. S., Patil, V. S., & Patil, N. V. (2012). E-Recruitment. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology (IJEAT)*, 1,(4), 2249 – 8958.

- Job growth under CPEC projects across Pakistan may mitigate the unemployment rate by providing employment opportunities to domestic labor while fulfilling labor demands of international employers venturing in CPEC SEZ (Special Economic Zones). For this purpose, a well planned online job portal facility needs to be developed and implemented at a federal and provincial level to accomplish related goals. Keeping in view the current developments under CPEC portfolio, the federal and provincial policymakers ought to consider professional interventions to connect Chinese employers with the domestic labour through related vocational and training institutes in the country via CoE-CPEC. This can be practiced by implementation of reliable and efficient national job placements through various recruitment sources like online national job portal, social media (LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and traditional methods (e.g., job advertisements, employee referrals programs, headhunting agencies, etc).
- China has established energy power plants that are based on ultra-supercritical technology in their country, likewise, NAVTTC may also commission such technologies for skill transfer to its domestic labor. This can further reduce unemployment of surplus talent in our labor market and hence can benefit at large under CPEC.
- As the labor agents exist in developed countries to overcome the job placement issues, Pakistan may portray the demand of developing national job portal which may offer centralized unique data set of vacancies and parallel availability of the skilled human resource to build a very strong labor market position with a sophisticated data of job advertisement.
- A nuance-free online analysis of vacancies with actual placements is crucial for timely statistical analysis. Also, use of other languages besides English, and Urdu, with regional languages should be supported by language translation facility.

- As per context, CPEC-CoE may harmonize job placements through online National Job Portal while coordinating with Chinese employers by providing compiled job information sought from NAVTTC and TEVTA from federal to provisional level to ensure timely job postings, talent hunting, and talent placements services in fast and time efficient manner.
- At the same time, there's need to stay abreast of market change through quality training, updated curriculum and skill standards especially for the low and semi-skilled workforce to balance oversupply of the workforce in the country as its prime dilemma faced by employers on the other side of this opportunity venture.