

Implications of The New Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan: A plan for the Rights of Local People?

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Introduction

Gwadar City has been a lynchpin of the Government of Pakistan's plans for modernizing its economy and projecting its economic and military power into the Persian Gulf region since the start of work on Gwadar Deep Water Port Project in 2002. Gwadar caught the attention of Pakistani and Chinese policymakers due to its pivotal location near the entrance to the Persian Gulf through which one third of the world's oil supplies pass and for its potential as a terminal for North-South transportation of oil and gas from the landlocked Central Asian countries and western parts of China.² Since the early 1990s, Pakistan has considered Gwadar a cornerstone of its strategy to increase its economic and military clout in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. US\$ 248 Million were spent in building the first phase of Gwadar Deep Water Port Project with technical and financial assistance from China (Government of Pakistan 2005). The first phase of Gwadar Port was completed in 2007 and its operation and maintenance were handed over to the Port Authority of Singapore (PSA) through an open international bidding process. Its operation was subsequently handed over to China Overseas Port Holding Corporation (COPHC) on Build Operate Transfer (BOT) basis in 2013 as a precursor to the signing of China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Following the launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2015, the development of Gwadar received a further boost and the Governments of Pakistan and China are undertaking several ongoing and planned infrastructure projects in Gwadar worth more than USD 1.62 Billion (China Daily 2015). These include the establishment of a 300 MW Coal Power Plant (USD 550 Million), Construction of Gwadar East Bay Expressway (USD 150 Million), Construction of New Gwadar International Airport (USD 220 Million) and the Development of Phase II of the Gwadar Port (USD 550 Million). In addition, the two governments plan to spend another Rs. 200 Billion (approximately) on building dual-carriage highways along the Western Passage of CPEC (Gwadar-Quetta-DI Khan-Islamabad route) to connect

Gwadar Port with upcountry junctions. With the setting up of a Free Trade Zone, an Export Processing Zone, and an Industrial Estate, Pakistani policymakers expect Gwadar to serve as a terminal to transport oil and gas from Central Asia, and a transnational hub port for maritime commerce passing through the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf (Little 2006: 5).

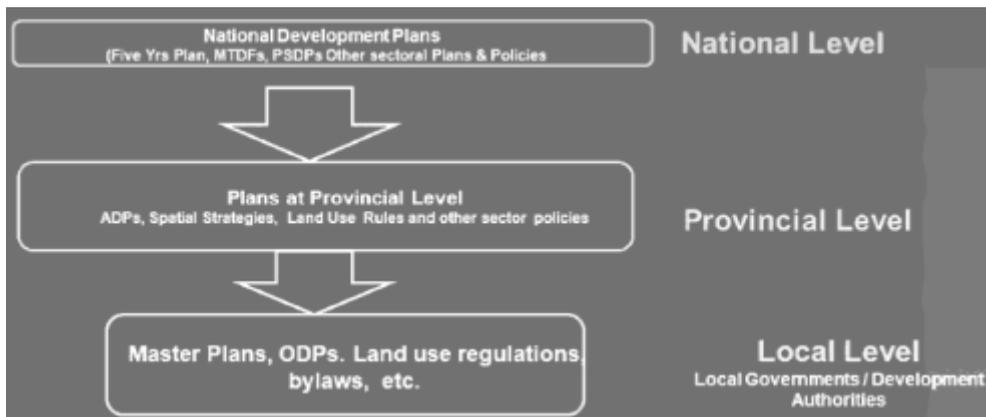
Despite the optimistic plans of the Government of Pakistan, local Baloch political leadership in general, and the fishermen of Gwadar in particular, have consistently complained that they have been excluded from key decisions over the development and future use of Gwadar Port. As a result, the Port and other infrastructure projects in Gwadar have increasingly become sites of contestation between Baloch political leaders and social activists on the one hand and the federal and provincial government authorities in Gwadar on the other hand. People of Balochistan, especially from the Baloch ethnic group, have maintained historic grievances against the central government since the country's inception in 1947, giving rise to four armed insurgencies in the last 60 years (Harrison 1981; Salim 1993; Grare 2006). Within this context, the threat of displacement of local fishermen from their lands and fishing waters, lack of access to basic civic amenities, and the lack of opportunities in the newly emerging port city have increasingly fed local people's disillusionment with the Gwadar Port Project. In addition, local residents' concern about the influx of migrant labor from elsewhere in Pakistan and from China have generated anxieties about their future. These processes have also contributed to an ongoing separatist insurgency which has claimed hundreds of lives (Jamali 2012).

Planning and Governing Gwadar

Urban planning and governance in Pakistan is generally a multi-layered and top-down exercise involving several levels of government with overlapping jurisdictions (See figure 1). In the case of Gwadar, the Government of Pakistan created two new entities to manage the new port and city in Gwadar, namely, the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), who work alongside the existing provincial government departments, district administration, and local government set up. Gwadar Port Authority is an attached department of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs tasked with developing and managing the port whereas Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) is an attached department of the Planning and Development Department, Government of Balochistan, with the mandate of planning, developing,

and regulating urban development. Each of these entities had different jurisdictions and came up with different development plans to manage their activities. In order to harmonize land-use and development activities in this emerging port city the Government of Pakistan unveiled a Gwadar City Master Plan in 2003 which had been developed by National Engineering Services of Pakistan (NESPAK), a private consultant firm with deep ties to the official development sector. The provincial government also created an independent entity, the Gwadar Development Authority, which had the mandate to implement the Master Plan. However, the 2003 Master Plan was criticized by urban planning experts and stakeholders alike for its use of faulty data, unrealistic projections, and lack of transparency. Beyond popular criticism, one of the main flaws in the planning of Gwadar City was that there was one Master Plan for the city and another for the Gwadar Port area, thereby creating potential for conflict.

Figure 1: Planning Hierarchy in Pakistan (Khurshid 2019)



In the wake of the launching of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2015, Government of Pakistan felt the need to bring city planning under one umbrella. Accordingly, the development of Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan was entrusted to Fourth Harbor Design Institute (FHDI), a Chinese engineering and design company, which presented its report to the Government of Pakistan in 2018 (Government of Pakistan 2019). This Master Plan, envisaging a planning area of 1193 KM² has been approved by the concerned federal and provincial level planning authorities and is expected to be formally unveiled by the end of 2019 (See Land-use Plan at Annex II). This new Master Plan is much more comprehensive in scope, socially progressive in its outlook, and incorporates some of the lessons learned from the failures of the 2003

Master Plan. As part of the plan development process, FHDI had presented four (04) options for the future development of Gwadar to the Government of Pakistan. Out of these, option D, envisaging a modular and flexible city development framework, was adopted by the provincial and federal governments because it had a lower development cost and did not require a heavily developed downtown core (Interview with Mr. Hassan Daud Butt, 2019). The cost of financing the short and medium-term city development requirements is estimated at Rs. 100 Billion, approximately.

Nevertheless, it has significant drawbacks in terms of the process of developing the plan document, substantive aspects of land-use planning, and the institutional mechanisms proposed for implementing the plan. Predictably, it has come under criticism from the elected political representatives of Gwadar District as well as fishermen and social activists for excluding them from the planning process and placing insufficient emphasis on the development and uplift of the existing population of Gwadar (Express Tribune 2019, August 23; Dawn 2019, August 11). This critique assumes greater significance when we compare the rapid pace of work on infrastructure development projects related to the Port and CPEC with the relative neglect of the development of basic health, education, and civic infrastructure in the old town area (Iftikhar et al 2019).

Research Scope

The purpose of this research study is to critically analyze the implications of the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan for the social and economic rights and wellbeing of local people. Drawing on critical urban theory (Harvey 2003; Brenner et al 2012) and policy-relevant literature on the relationship between urban design and safeguarding the civic rights of inhabitants of cities such as quality of life, access to housing and urban public space, and participation in city planning (Ellis and Roberts 2015; Iftikhar et al 2019), this paper seeks to understand the extent to which the new Master Plan is able to balance the requirements for an economically competitive port city with the need for protecting the rights of the local people and giving them a stake in the prosperity of Gwadar. In particular, the study seeks to examine whether the land-use planning and development strategy envisaged in the new Master Plan respects the rights of the local people to their land and fishing waters and what measures it envisages for their present and future wellbeing.

The scope of research is limited to Gwadar District and thematically it is limited to socio-economic aspects of the Master Plan. There are important strategic dimensions of the development of Gwadar as the lynchpin of CPEC and numerous strategic analyses and newspaper articles have been written about its place in the regional security architecture of South Asia and the Persian Gulf (Daniels 2013; Ahmar 2014). While these aspects are very important, these have been excluded from the scope of this study because these could not be adequately addressed here. In addition, the transportation, logistics, and security arrangements for Gwadar City proposed in the new Master Plan have only been discussed where they touch directly upon the issues of mobility and access for the people.

Research Questions

In particular, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the land-use planning envisaged in the Master Plan make adequate room for residential, livelihood, and other socio-economic needs of the local population?
2. What was the extent of the participation of various segments of local society in the process for developing the new Master Plan?
3. What significance does the Master Plan accord to the uplift of local people, especially the fishermen of Gwadar, in its overall development vision and strategy? Does the Master Plan include for ensuring the transition of local population from a traditional fisheries-based economy to a modern industrial economy?
4. What are the implications of institutional mechanisms proposed for managing Gwadar Special Economic District (SED), and related CPEC authorities, for responding to current and future concerns of the local population?

Literature Review

Urban Planning and the Right to the City

Beginning in the 19th century, urban planning and design was considered the purview of municipal and state authorities whose main focus was ensuring an efficient supply of civic services while creating a distinct aesthetic reflecting the aspirations of the ruling elites.¹ The paradigmatic example of this type of planning was the renovation of Paris through the building of wide avenues, boulevards, squares, and public parks, fountains, and aqueducts under the supervision of Baron de Haussmann in 1855

¹Urban planning and design has much older pre-historic and historic roots. There are examples of planned cities that were designed on the orders of medieval emperors such as Granada (Spain), Al-Mansura (Sindh, Pakistan), Agra (India), and Isfahan (Iran). However, this discussion concerns itself with the modern period since the Industrial Revolution and is focused on the wave of urban design and re-design in the wake of globalization since the 1990s.

(Harvey 2004). This approach to planning, however, has been criticized by scholars and practitioners alike for privileging a state-centric perspective and ignoring the aspirations of the residents, especially the working classes (Scott 1998). In his seminal critique of planning, James Scott has pointed out how the state-centric exercise of planning during the 1960s led to the creation of planned cities that excluded a majority of their residents. For example, Scott points out that the new capital city of Brasilia in Brazil was planned and built on the assumption that all the residents will have high-paying jobs and have their own cars. This led to the building of a city with little regard for pedestrians and inadequate provision for public transportation, especially for the working classes and junior public servants (Scott 1998: 119). As a result, very few people wanted to move to the new capital city and even the elite bureaucrats living there went to other cities to spend their weekends. In the Pakistani context, we have the example of Korangi Township in Karachi that was originally built as a planned satellite city for Urdu-speaking migrants displaced from India and industrial workers in Karachi in the 1960s. However, despite a lot of fanfare and public relations exercises by the Ayub Khan government, the project ultimately failed to take off because it was located too far away from the city limits and did not cater to the basic needs the people it was meant to house (Daechsel 2011).

The multi-disciplinary critique of urbanization and urban planning narrated above is generally referred to as Critical Urban Theory (Brenner 2009), and there has been an increasing emphasis on participatory planning and sustainable development in the literature on urban design. This critique of planning has become even more urgent and relevant in the case of newly built cities that are being promoted by central and regional government as hosts to free market style development in the form of Free Trade Zones and Special Economic Zones in the 21st century (Davis 2011; McMahon 2012 quoted in Iftikhar et al 2019: 49). Despite a continuing over-emphasis on engineering and economic aspects of planning, critical urban theory has managed to highlight that urban planning is directly linked with the exercise of social and political power and affects the distribution of civic amenities and facilities (Forester 1982; Harvey 2003). This academic critique has been joined by a growing chorus of social movements around the world, especially in Latin America, that have opposed this type of one-sided planning and demanded greater participation of local communities in the plans and policies that affect their lives (De Souza 2006). Therefore, there is a growing

consensus among urban theorists and practitioners that urban planning can no longer be left to the discretion of bureaucratic authorities, specialist planners, and engineers but requires participation by the citizenry because it has important consequences for the rights of citizens and residents.

These redefined dimensions of planning are reflected in United Nations Human Settlement Program's definition of urban planning:

A wide range of complex processes involved to streamline physical (spatial & infrastructural), social and economic growth and development of urban areas to enhance livability, productivity and social wellbeing of inhabitants both in short and long run. (UN-HABITAT 2005 Quoted in Khurshid 2019, p4)

Social Inclusion and Quality of Life

One of the ways in which urban planners and practitioners have responded to the critiques of planning discussed above is to propose inclusive urban design that emphasizes the elements of social inclusion, local identity and senses of place, and environmental sustainability, beside the commonly accepted criteria of economic success in planning. For instance, Planning Institute of Australia's definition of urban design incorporates elements of an inclusive urban design as follows:

“Urban design aims at the creation of useful, attractive, safe, environmentally sustainable, economically successful and socially equitable places in a city. Good urban design pursues local identity and sense of place, cultural responsiveness and purposeful environmental innovation.” (Carmona 2013 quoted in Iftikhar et al 2019: 50)

Social inclusion refers to the process of increasing the participation of marginalized segments of society such as the minorities, women, the poor, and disabled through greater opportunities and voice in the development of the city (United Nations 2015 quoted in Iftikhar et al 2019). When we look at the design of urban spaces and infrastructure in Pakistani cities, including planned cities such as Islamabad and Gwadar, they are characterized by a lack of social inclusion for disadvantaged groups. For instance, the NESPAK Master Plan of 2003 completely ignored the rights of fishermen of Gwadar by proposing the construction of an expressway along the East Bay without providing any access to the sea across the road. Similarly, the fishermen displaced by the construction of Gwadar Port in 2002 were not provided alternate land

and housing until after vigorous protests and sit-ins (Jamali 2014). This apathy and neglect of local needs was on display during the advent of Cyclone Phet in 2010 which dumped so much rain that the low-lying areas along Gwadar's East Bay were submerged in 4-5 feet of water. During a routine visit of the affected areas, local youth who were trying to clear a channel for draining water, responded to the presence of this author in the following words: "Come see the future Dubai, brother!" Later in the evening, another local interlocutor summed up the situation of the town in the wake of the cyclone in the following words: "The government could not build its planned city and the old town is drowning!" (Jamali 2014, 83).

Cultural Responsiveness and Senses of Place

An important consideration in urban planning is the respect for local culture and identity that inculcates a sense of belonging to a place among local people and newly arrived immigrants. Social geographers and anthropologists have used the concept of 'sense of place' to define these intangible aspects of urban life. Sense of place refers to the special meaning that places in a city hold for its residents that have developed over a time and are embodied in the way people relate to the city (Massey 2012). Urban planning tends to reorganize cities and social spaces in a way that makes the city unrecognizable to its inhabitants and they develop as sense of alienation. For instance, this sense of place in Gwadar was described by a local fisherman, Nakhoda Dad Karim, to the author of this paper in his response to a question about fishermen's relocation from old town quarter of Gwadar and their resettlement in a planned neighborhood with proper civic amenities in 2010. He replied that he could not go to sleep without the smell of fish and the moist sea-breeze that blows by the beach. Even if the government were to provide him with a nice house in a planned neighborhood, it would make him sad (Jamali 2014: 134).

Similarly, rapid urbanization and commercial development tends to disrupt the rhythms of everyday life for long-time residents of a city and they feel disoriented and excluded from the social life of the city. In the context of Gwadar, this is reflected in the residents' discomfort with the sudden influx of people from outside the town and outside the province, the culture of corruption that took root in the wake of the real estate bubble of 2005, and the apathy of governmental authorities to the needs of the townsfolk (Jamali 2014, 25). In order to avoid these alienating effects of planning, it is important that local people are consulted extensively in the design and re-design of

living areas, conscious efforts are made to protect socially significant spaces such as bazars and cafes, and the planning process respects the cultural heritage of the city.

Research Methodology

Research Methods

This study relies on a mixed methods approach to answer its research questions, although it leans more heavily on the use of qualitative methods such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and informal discussions. The choice of a mixed-methods approach has been dictated by the limited availability of data on the subject that is still shrouded by a veil of official secrecy and confidentiality, and for reasons of convenience. Neither the main plan document entitled “Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2017-2050” nor the official policy documents nor records of the proceedings of the relevant Steering Committee and Technical Committee were publicly available. Since the study author had participated in some of the relevant forums for discussing the new Master Plan, he was granted access to a limited number of documents. Similarly, the data required for an extensive quantitative analysis was not available and could not be collected in the limited time-frame for this study. At the same time, the quantitative data and forecasts available in the official documents was too valuable to be set aside.

The emphasis on qualitative analysis is justified because answering the research questions of this study requires a deep understanding of the socio-economic context of the infrastructure development activities in Gwadar, in addition to the business and commercial aspects of development activities emphasized in official discourse. This social and economic context can be understood more fully by obtaining the perspectives of the stakeholders from the local community, who are the main beneficiaries or affectees of the Master Plan, through qualitative methods.

The secondary data analysis carried out for this study is quite extensive and include reports and proceedings of the Senate Special Committee on CPEC, the minutes of Technical Committee on Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan, various briefings and presentations of the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) and Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), and official press releases and journalistic reports on the proceedings of Steering Committee on Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan. In addition, newspaper coverage of the statements issued by local community and elected

representatives from Gwadar about the Master Plan have been used to understand arguments for and against the plan.

This secondary data has been supplemented with a limited number of semi-structured interviews with important stakeholders such as government officials, civil society members from Gwadar, and urban planning experts in Pakistan to deepen the understanding of issues arising out of the proposals contained in the plan document (See Annex II). Due to constraints of time and distance, the sampling is not systematic or representative and, instead, it can be categorized as opportunistic sampling. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted to obtain more wide-ranging and contextually rich information. Each interview was 30-45 minutes long and most interviews were conducted over the phone due to limitations of travelling and time constraints. The information gleaned from these interviews were complimented by the author's previous published work and interactions with both the planning authorities and the residents of Gwadar, especially the fishermen community, to arrive at contextually informed conclusions. The author has drawn on his prior understanding of the problems facing the local community, especially the fishermen, based on his earlier fieldwork and published research on the development of Gwadar (Jamali 2014, 2013).

Limitations

Due to these sampling biases, time and resource constraints, and lack of access to some plan documents, the study may only provide partial answers to the research questions. In this sense, the conclusions or key findings of this paper may be viewed as exploratory answers to the research questions rather than providing definitive answers. In addition, the implementation mechanism of the new master plan is yet to be finalized and it would be premature to arrive at any firm conclusions before the proverbial rubber hits the road, that is, the ideas and strategies contain in the plan are put to a practical test.

Findings and Discussion

Careful analysis of the plan document and available evidence indicates that the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2017-50 developed by FHDI is a significant improvement over the previous master plan developed by NESPAK in terms of its overall development vision, coverage of land-use, economic and demographic forecasting, identifying socio-economic needs of the population, cultural

responsiveness, and environmental sustainability. There are two key differences between NESPAK Master Plan and GSPCMP. The previous master plan was predominantly a land-use plan, developed by an engineering firm with little experience in developing port-related infrastructure and understanding of how a port city functions. In hindsight, it was based on unrealistic and linear population projections, did not have a clear socio-economic development strategy, and lacked the attention to the details of urban design that were required for catering to the demands of the residents. The GSPCMP takes these broader concerns of urban design and experience into account and provides a modular and relatively flexible framework for urban development that can be scaled up or scaled down based on the actual growth of the city. Secondly, the NESPAK Master Plan suffered from dichotomy and fragmentation of plan activities due to the existence of a separate Port Development Plan developed by Arthur De Little and the issue of two separate planning and implementation authorities was not resolved. The current GSPCMP resolves this issue by bringing both the Port and the city under a unified planning framework. However, the process of developing the new Master Plan, the lack of transparency in sharing the plan proposals and deliverables, and inadequate consultation with the local stakeholders raise important question marks over the future of plan implementation.

Planning Process and Stakeholder Participation

According to the existing laws and regulations, Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has jurisdiction over the planning and land-use of Gwadar Town. However, interviews with GDA officers and analysis of relevant official documents reveals that the federal government, through MPDR, exercised tight control over the development of the master plan. For instance, MPDR not only developed the detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) document, but also invited the submission of bids which were opened and examined in the office of Member Infrastructure and Regional Connectivity, Planning Commission of Pakistan, in 2015 (Government of Pakistan 2015). Subsequently, a Steering Committee for Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan was constituted under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Planning, Government of Pakistan which steered most of the deliberations concerning the evolution of the new master plan. This was a clear intervention into the mandate of the provincial government which had the primary responsibility for this purpose and had constituted the GDA with the necessary mandate and authority.

Interviews with government officials and local stakeholders reveal that while FHDI engaged in consultations with stakeholders across a broad and representative segment of local people, the quality and depth of consultation was poor. Local fishermen point out that while their fears concerning displacement and access to fishing waters have been addressed, they have not been taken fully onboard as to the future of their livelihoods along the East Bay of Gwadar due to industrial development. Similarly, the local shopkeepers fear that the planned shifting of the center of downtown to the West Bay of Gwadar would adversely affect their businesses and the government will eventually forget about the problems they are facing such as lack of proper drainage and sewage disposal facilities.

The lack of transparency and overt secrecy concerning the sharing of plan documents has meant that even local elected representatives, including the MNA and MPA of Gwadar, received final plan documents when these were close to being finalized. Indeed, the local MPA, Mir Hamal Kalmati, openly accused the federal government of trying to take over Gwadar from the provincial government (Express Tribune 2019, August 23). In addition, the Government of Pakistan's announcement of the establishment of CPEC Authority through an ordinance and proposed establishment of a National Coastal Development Authority have engendered additional fears among local people. However, when this issue was discussed with Mr. Hassan Dawood, former Project Director for CPEC Secretariat in MPDR, he defended the government's position of not making the plan documents and consultations public due to unfavorable political commentary and media speculation. While this is a genuine concern, it does not take away from the harm inflicted by the government's lack of engagement in broad-based consultation.

Social Inclusion and the Rights of Local Population

Unlike the previous master plan, GSPCMP clearly acknowledges the development needs of the local population and outlines a conceptual framework for safeguarding the rights of the fishermen. In the chapter 4 of the plan document entitled Social-Economic Planning, the plan document clearly states the building of a livable Gwadar as one of the objectives of the plan and includes respect for the rights of local fishermen as one of the pillars of the plan objective of building an equal and productive economy in Gwadar. This part of the plan also outlines some directions for achieving these two goals. These steps are as follows:

1. Reserve land for education, health, and housing needs of the local people
2. Build and improve the water supply and sanitation infrastructure of the existing town
3. Improve facilities for fish-landing and provide loans/credit to fishermen to enhance their income.
4. Conduct professional trainings for fishermen and introduce high value-added fisheries activities such as aquaculture

When seen against the backdrop of the government's decision to provide access to sea for the fishermen on the East Bay, these suggestions will indeed contribute to protecting the rights of the fishermen. However, the real test of these official pronouncement is the development of a specific set of programs for these activities. In other words, the federal and provincial governments have to put their money where their mouth is. Otherwise, these plan objective will be no more than pious pronouncements. It will also be important to see what kind of priority the government attaches to these objectives in the order of the plan implementation.

Governance and Implementation Structure

One of the key obstacles in implementing large-scale national plans and projects in Pakistan, such as the Kalabagh Dam, has been the lack of trust between the federal government and provincial and local level stakeholders. Seen in this light, the governance framework proposed for implementing the GSPCMP raises important concerns for plan implementation and the rights of the local fishermen. First, the plan envisages the status of Special Economic District (SED) for Gwadar along the model of Shenzhen in China as indicated in Chapter 9 titled “Institutions and Supervision” (FHDI 2019, 50). According to the plan, the chief executive and other members of the SED will make major decisions pertaining to the development of Gwadar in the light of guidelines provided in the plan document. The justification for this is to replace the existing multilayered and overlapping governance framework with a more efficient governance regime appropriate for an SED. However, the unwanted result of this arrangement will be to concentrate power in the hands of unelected officials who will not be responsible to the people of Gwadar. While the exact structure of the SED governance has not been outlined yet, this will have a negative effect on the rights of local self-government of Gwadar residents, unless the federal and provincial governments come up with a mechanism to ensure their due representation in the SED governance structure. Similarly, the creation of a CPEC Authority at the federal level

to streamline the implementation of CPEC projects, while important in efficiency terms, has negative consequences for the representation of the provincial and local governments in decision-making related to CPEC and Gwadar.

Culturally Appropriate Development

The socio-economic section of the plan document clearly mentions respect for local social and cultural norms as an important component of land-use and development activities in Gwadar (FHDI 2019, 28). The plan proposes the urban renewal and development of the old town quarter of Gwadar as a place to experience local culture and lifestyle. This is a very welcome development. But it is important to outline a specific program towards this end and ensure its implementation in letter and spirit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the new Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2017-50 is a comprehensive document that has a progressive outlook concerning the rights of the local people. The GSPMP includes improvements in the livelihoods and respect for the rights of local people as specific objectives and guiding principles in the plan document. In a significant development over the previous master plan, it does not envisage the displacement of the local population from the existing town, especially in the old town quarter. Instead, the plan emphasizes the improvement of civic services in the existing township, urban renewal of old town quarter to make it a place to experience local culture, and gradual transition of the local fishermen population from traditional fishing to modern value-added fisheries activities and careers in port-related services.

However, both the process of plan development and the governance structure proposed for its implementation tend to undermine the promises for respecting the rights and culture of the local people contained in the plan. This approach of the federal government has already raised a few eyebrows among elected political leaders and social activists from Gwadar and Mekran region. Therefore, the real consequences of the progressive ideas contained in the GSPCMP will become more apparent once the implementation mechanisms are put in place by the federal government and priorities for specific development activities and proposals outlined in the plan document are announced.

Recommendations

In the light of foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are made to safeguard the rights of the local people and ensure the ownership and success of the GSPCMP:

1. The entire plan document should be made public as soon as practicable and input on its main recommendations be sought from local social activists and urban planning experts. MPDR and GDA should take the lead in this exercise by organizing a series of consultative workshops and seminars at the provincial and local levels, preferably in academic settings and with the participation of well-known planning experts. The GSPCMP should be treated as a living document that establishes a baseline for guiding socio-economic development in Gwadar. It should not be treated as a fixed documents whose recommendations are set in stone.
2. Provincial and federal governments need to engage in extensive and frank dialogue with each other and with the elected representatives of Gwadar in order to ensure that the governance structure of the proposed Special Economic District is representative and reflects the genuine concerns and aspirations of the people of Gwadar. The quality of this dialogue and consultation ought to be better, more open, and more extensive than the consultation during the formulation of the GSPCMP.
3. MPDR should carefully examine the proposed structure of the newly constituted CPEC Authority and ensure due representation of officers from Balochistan in it so that the concerns of the people of Balochistan, especially Gwadar residents, may be reflected in CPEC plans and projects.
4. The Gwadar Development Authority has neglected the infrastructure development needs of the existing township on the pretext that it does not have jurisdiction there. Now that all of Gwadar Town has been brought under a unified planning framework, GDA should redirect its focus on urban renewal and provision of civic services to the old town area on urgent basis. This service infrastructure includes water supply, storm drainage, sewerage, and lining of streets. In addition, GDA may launch a multi-stage urban renewal and heritage conservation project, along the lines of Lahore Walled City Urban Regeneration Project, through financing from the provincial PSDP. Technical Assistance may be sought from Aga Khan Trust for Culture and United Nations Development Program in Pakistan who have worked on similar projects elsewhere in Pakistan.

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