

Chinese western region's development programme

Anjum Saeed*

Keep a cool head and maintain a low profile, never take the lead, but aim to do something big.

Deng Xiao Peng

China has started its development programs for its ethnically diverse western region, which consists of six provinces, namely Gansu, Guizhou, Qinhai, Shannxi, Sichuan and Yunnan, five autonomous regions, which are Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Xinjiang, and one municipality, Chongqing. The region covers 6.57 million square kilometers, which is 68 percent of China's territory, and has a population of 357 million people, which accounts for almost 27 percent of the country's total.¹ This western region is home to most of China's poor, and shares borders with 14 countries, with the borders covering a distance of 12,747 km.²

China is divided into eastern, central, and western parts. After economic reforms, the government mainly focused on the development of the eastern region, which is usually called the coastal region.³ In 1999, it took the initiative to develop the western region of the country as well, which is very poor when compared to the coastal and other developed areas.

As far as the strategy is concerned, the main component is the development of infrastructure including hydropower plants, energy, telecommunication and transportation. Efforts have also been made for the protection of the environment, promotion of education at the grassroots, creation of new jobs, and provision of better lifestyles for the citizens. The Chinese government has accordingly made a 50 year development program divided into three parts.

The first phase of this program lasted from 2000 to 2010. In this phase, the primary focus remained on development and structural adjustment, construction (roads, railway tracks, and dams), environmental protection (reforestation), education, creating a friendly environment for foreign and

* The writer is Research Associate, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI).

international investment, making industrial zones for creating employment opportunities, and enabling the native population to get government jobs and services.

The second phase describes the strategy that the government will make in next 20 years, that is, from 2011 to 2030. In this phase, there are plans to speed up developments on the basis of the achievements made in the first phase, and make efforts to maintain a stable and relatively fast economic growth. The second phase will also see the enhancement of social construction and make mechanisms that will cover both urban and rural residents for raising education levels, while also attempting to speed up the development of the cultural industry.

The third phase, which will last from 2031 to 2050, will be based on the promotion of modernisation and efforts will accordingly be made to increase the ongoing development projects in rural areas. Fast and safe communication linkages will also be promoted in the region in order to bring prosperity to the people.

Territorial overview

Gansu Province

Gansu Province, which is located in the upper reaches of the Yellow River, covers an area of 455000 sq km and has a population of 26 million.⁴ In the old times, Gansu provided an important strategic and communication link for China. The province is located on a natural hazards line, which frequently affects the region in the shape of earthquakes; famines and droughts have also played a part in hampering its economic growth.

It is an agricultural area that produces raw cotton, maize, wheat and wild herbs. However, its economy is based on mining and extraction of minerals of chromium, coal, copper, cobalt, gypsum, iron, lead, nickel, mercury and zinc. It has the country's largest nickel deposits covering 90 percent of China's nickel reserves.⁵ Gansu Province mostly relies on hydro energy resources; annually, it produces 17 giga watts electricity. More than 8 billion tons of coal reservoirs have been discovered in recent years and it is also suitable for solar and wind power generation. A number of development projects have been started here, including highway construction projects, airport renovation, expansion of railways, and oil and gas transmission pipelines.

Guizhou Province

Guizhou Province in southwest China covers an area of 176100 sq km; in 2007, it had a population of 37.6 million.⁶ This is a hilly area with and 80 percent covered by mountains; it is hence unsurprisingly a great attraction for tourists. In addition, Guizhou is the fourth largest province for providing varieties of biological resources for traditional Chinese medicine.⁷ Guizhou is linked with the rest of the country through railways and roads. During the 10th Five-Year Plan, the two key routes of Guizhou, the Chongqing-Zhanjiang highway and Shanghai-Ruili highway sections have been successfully completed and opened for traffic.⁸

Guizhou is a poor and economically undeveloped province, but it is rich in natural resources such as coal. It has suffered from poor economic growth, but in recent years, agricultural production has improved gradually and a large number of people came out from poverty.

completed and opened for

Guizhou is demographically one of most diverse provinces in China. Major minority groups are Miao, Yao, Yi, Qiang and Dong, which account for more than 37 percent of the population.⁹ The province also ranks first in fertility rate in the country.

Guizhou is a poor and economically undeveloped province, but it is rich in natural resources such as coal. It has suffered from poor economic growth, but in recent years, agricultural production has improved gradually and a large number of people came out from poverty. The main marketable crops are cured tobacco, rape seed, vegetable, pig, cattle, sheep and woods.¹⁰ It is considered the third largest producer of tobacco in the country, and is home to the well-known brand Guizhou Tobacco.¹¹ Its reserves of coal are the highest among southern Chinese provinces, and are the fifth largest in all of China. Guizhou is also rich in natural resources for hydro-electricity generation.

Qinghai Province

Qinghai Province is situated on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau; it has an area of 720000 sq km, which makes it the fourth largest area in China. It has a population of 5.18 million, and is famous for the Yangtze and Mekong rivers that originate from Qinghai. It is considered among five

major grassland areas in China and is also prominent for yak and Tibetan sheep.¹²

More than a hundred mineral reserves have been discovered in the province, including petroleum, lead, zinc, copper, chromium, cobalt, nickel, iron, gypsum, lake salt, potassium, coal and magnesium salt. It has more than thirty salt lakes and proven reserves that are close to seventy billion tons, which are the largest reserves in China.¹³ In addition, the area is rich for hydro energy resources and 178 hydro power stations have been installed with the annual generation of 77 billion kilo watts.¹⁴ The major sources of earning for the Qinghai Province are related to agriculture, salt chemical, hydropower and oil and gas exploration.

In recent years, the provincial government has paid attention to construction and infrastructural projects, such as the renovation of highways and spread the road network at every village level. As a result, transportation facilities have improved greatly. The Chinese government and the provincial government are both taking keen interest in the development of infrastructure and the Qinghai-Tibet railway is big achievement for the development of the region. Through these assets, the western province is already connected with the rest of China.

Furthermore, Qinghai has great potential for tourism and many natural sites have been found in the province. These include the Birds Islet, the Mengda Natural Reserves, snow-capped A'Nyemaqen Mountain, Sun-and-Moon Hill, and Longyang Gorge Reservoir, Tanggula mountains, and the Kunlun mountain range, which spreads over 3000 km.¹⁵ Every year, thousands of domestic and foreign tourists come to Qinghai to enjoy the natural beauty.

Shaanxi Province

Shaanxi province is mapped on the northwest part of China's Loess plateau which almost covers fifty percent of its territory. It occupies an area of 206,000 sq km and has a population of 37.32 million.¹⁶ This province was historically considered as a main political center for most Chinese dynasties and remained the capital 13 times from the Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD).¹⁷ In ancient times, the northern part of the Silk Road connected the Xi'an capital city of Shaanxi to the historical city Kashgar in the Parthia era.¹⁸ Area wise, Shaanxi is ranked 18th, but its gross domestic product (GDP) is ranked 3rd among all Chinese provinces and autonomous regions.¹⁹

Historically, Shaanxi was a central part of ancient Chinese civilization; it has many noted sites such as the mausoleum of the first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC), site of terra-cotta warriors,²⁰ the mausoleum of the yellow emperor,²¹ forest of steles,²² tower of big goose, Xi'an city wall,²³ Huashan mountains,²⁴ and the Hukou water fall.²⁵ It is rich in cultural heritage and famous as a tourist destination.

Shaanxi is well developed in agricultural and industrial realms; its main crops are cotton, wheat and tobacco and it is well known for the production of wheat and cotton in China. It is also famous for livestock breeding. At the industrial level, it is famous for electronics, textile, medicine, energy, and chemicals.²⁶

The province is rich in minerals such as fusel fuels, coal, crude oil and natural gas reserves. In 2009, Shaanxi produced 296 million tons of coal, 18,950 million cubic meters of natural gas and 27 million tons of crude oil.²⁷ Shaanxi has become a major place of economic activities for China due to its natural resources, and given its historical sites, it is a major tourist attraction.

Sichuan Province

Sichuan is in the southwest part of China, occupying an area of 485,000 sq km. In 2010, it had 80.41 million inhabitants and it is considered an agriculture center.²⁸ The western part of the province is encircled with medium range mountains 4000 meters above sea level and the eastern side makes a basin which is called Sichuan basin. Wrapping an area of 165,000 sq km, it is listed among the largest basins inside Chinese territory.²⁹

Plentiful natural resources such as vanadium, calcium, fluorite, titanium, sulfur iron and natural gas have been found in Sichuan, making it immensely important for precious natural resources. It is also very famous for agricultural production such as rice, wheat, cotton, edible oil, fruits and other herbal products for medicine. Moreover, Sichuan has a huge number of natural forests covering an area of 7.46 million hectares,³⁰ and provides wood for domestic need especially in rural areas.

Chengdu is the provincial capital and it has become a scientific, technological and commercial center for southwest China. Good infrastructure of roads, railways and airports has been developed in the province, connecting it with the rest of the country. As a tourism destination, a number of scenic spots are situated in Sichuan, particularly

the Jiuzhaigou, Haunglong and Emei Mountains with the Leshan Giant Budha, Qingcheng Mountain and the Bamboo Sea, all of which are very famous for tourists.³¹ Along with these, many other tourist attractions such as plateaus, basins, mountains, rivers, lakes, national parks, waterfalls and limestone caves are part of the province's landscape.

Yunnan Province

Yunnan province is located in the southwest part of China and covers an area of 394000 sq km.³² It has a population of 45.7 million.³³ Kunming is the capital of Yunnan and the province shares borders with Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.³⁴ More than 20 ethnic groups live in Yunnan province, including Bai, Zhuang, Dai, Hani, Miao, Lahu and Naxi among others.³⁵

Most of its northwest part is comprised of high altitude mountains and in the southeast relatively smaller mountains make up exist. It is an adequate rainfall area and almost 600 rivers and lakes provide water for irrigation and hydropower generation. It is not suitable for agriculture and only 5 percent of the province is under cultivation. Its major crops are maize, rice, wheat, tobacco, cotton, sugar cane fruits and tea.³⁶ Many mineral deposits have been discovered, and these include zinc, tin, lead, cadmium, thallium and crocidolite; Gejiu city is very famous for zinc production in China.³⁷

Compared to other eastern provinces, Yunnan is relatively underdeveloped. However, its geographical position gives it an advantage for border trade within Southeast Asian states such as Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

Compared to other eastern provinces, Yunnan is relatively underdeveloped. However, its geographical position gives it an advantage for border trade within Southeast Asian states such as Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. Some serious social challenges like illegal migration, drug trafficking and HIV/AIDS, however, are yet to be completely tackled.

Guangxi autonomous region

Guangxi autonomous region is situated in the southern province and shares an international border with Vietnam. In 1958, it obtained the status of autonomous region with privileges in China.³⁸ Guangxi covers an area of 236,000 sq km with a population of 46 million.³⁹ During the regime of

Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), Guangxi was a province, but in modern times - till 1950 - it was considered an open and wild territory.⁴⁰

Most of the area is hilly and has short coastal lines on the gulf of Tonkin in South China Sea.⁴¹ It is rich in water resources and many famous rivers such as Beipan, Nanpan, Rong, Long, You and Zuo rivers allow for an estimated 188 billion cubic meter water flows in Guangxi, which ranks fifth in China.⁴² The leading crops of the province are maize, wheat, rice, tobacco, peanuts, sweet potatoes, cotton and tea. It is also famous for the production of grapefruit, oranges, litchis, pears and lemons.⁴³

Furthermore, industries for textiles, silk, paper, leather, chemicals and pharmaceuticals are growing rapidly. Heavy industries such as iron and steel, machinery production and cement industry are also flourishing in Guangxi. The mining industry is another source of revenue for the province and more than 96 minerals have been discovered, including vanadium, tungsten, antimony, silver, aluminum, and talcum.⁴⁴

Inner Mongolia

Inner Mongolia autonomous region is located in the north of China along the borders of Mongolia and Russia. Hohhot is the capital and third largest territory of China covering an area of 1,200,000 sq km, which accounts for 12 percent of China's total territory.⁴⁵ It has continental monsoons and very harsh and dry winters, while summers are short but extremely hot and arid.

Inner Mongolia is an agricultural area famous for its stockbreeding center of Sanhe horses and abundance of sheep wool. Other major crops are wheat, potatoes, rice, oat, soya beans and sugar beets. A wide range of grassland can be seen in Inner Mongolia on more than 86 million hectares, while forests cover an area of 18 million hectares.⁴⁶ It is very rich in water resource and more than 1000 rivers and lakes run through it, which covers 655,000 hectares of fresh water accounting for 10 percent of China's fresh water.⁴⁷

In terms of natural resources, coal, natural gas, iron, chromium, copper, lead, zinc, gold and mica salt are abundantly found in Inner Mongolia. The second largest coal reserves of China have been discovered and 500 million tons of coal were produced in 2010.⁴⁸ There is also a dynamic tourism industry which attracts tourists from China and abroad who come to experience rich natural resources, beautiful landscapes and

vast grassland sceneries, the Mausoleum of Genghis Khan, the Zhaojun Tomb, ancient Great wall, Wudang Monastery, Balling Temple and the virgin forest in the greater Hinggan Mountains.⁴⁹

Tibet autonomous region

Tibet autonomous region is located in the southwest part of China and shares borders with India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. Lhasa is the capital city of Tibet, and Tibet covers an area of 1228400 sq km and it has a population of 3002166.⁵⁰ The famous Qinghai-Tibet plateau covers a large part of Tibet autonomous region which is 4000 meters above from the sea level and also called the roof of the world.⁵¹ Due to the harsh winter it is the least densely populated area in China with an average of 2 people per sq km.⁵²

Tibetan economy is based on agricultural and animal husbandry, and the Chinese government gives subsidies in the sectors of livestock and agriculture. It is famous for many species of birds, mammals and fish, including the rhesus monkey, head haired deer, wild cats, black bears, leopards, little pandas, wild yak and others. Major crops in this region are vegetables, wheat and barley, and Tibet is considered among one of five natural forest reserves in China where many high quality medical plants grow.⁵³

Tibet is rich in mineral resources such as copper, lithium, chromites, gypsum, mica, sulphur, salt, natural soda, potassium, and corundum.⁵⁴ It is rich in water; around 354.8 billion cubic meters of surface water resources, accounting for 13.5 percent of China's total, originate from its soil. Many of the rivers are quite famous, and they include the Indus river, the upper courses of the Brahmaputra, the Nyang River, the Salween river, the Yangtze river, the Mekong river, and the Yellow River.⁵⁵

Furthermore, it has developed well executed tourism resources. Lhasa has become a favorite tourism destination in China for its natural beauty and people come to see the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Barkhor Bazaar, Norbulingka (jeweled garden), Drepung Monastery, Tsetang Valley, Zhangmu, The Himalayas and Qomolangma (Mount Everest).⁵⁶

Xinjiang autonomous region

Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region is situated in northwest of China. It covers an area of 1,600,000 sq km and is claimed to be the largest province/autonomous region by area. It has a population of 21,813,334.⁵⁷

Geographically, it has a 5600 km long boundary line which shares borders with eight countries namely, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, India, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Afghanistan.⁵⁸ Many ethnic groups live in Xinjiang, including Uygur, Han, Kazak, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Tajik, Uzbek, Manchu, Tartar and Russian. Uygur Muslims are a dominant group accounting for 47 percent of the total population in Xinjiang.⁵⁹

It is an agricultural area where more than 40 percent of the land is available for crops to be cultivated. Consequently, record production of wheat, cotton and sugar beets has been seen in the last fifteen years.⁶⁰ Xinxiang is also famous for its fruits such as melons, pears, grapes and walnuts. Moreover, the industrial structure is developing rapidly for textile, leather, food processing units, sugar, carpet, paper, iron and steel, machinery, chemicals and power generation.

In China, living standards show regional disparities; for example, a huge gap in gross domestic product has been seen in coastal cities and the western region of China, with the living standards in the latter being much less than those in the former.

In Xinxiang's landscape the three mountains Altay, Kunlun and Tianshan, and the two basins of Tarim and Junggar are very important. Minerals such as oil and gas, beryllium, muscovite, natron saltpeter, pottery clay and serpentine, salt, soda, borax, gold, jade and coal are abundantly found in these areas. The Government of China has planned to invest 1.5 billion Yuan for mineral exploration.⁶¹ To cater for the increasing energy demand, it has completed the Atasu-Alashankou Trans-National oil pipeline with Kazakhstan.

Chinese Policy for western region

The development of the western region is very important for the stable growth of China. In January 2000, China started the western region's development program with aims to help it to catch up with the other more developed areas of the country in the thriving eastern regions (such as Shandong, Shanghai, Tianjin, Jiangsu and Zhejiang). There is thus a major focus to increase economic activities, build communication linkages and expand industrial projects in the western region of the country.

In China, living standards show regional disparities; for example, a huge gap in gross domestic product has been seen in coastal cities and the western region of China, with the living standards in the latter being much

less than those in the former.⁶² The Chinese government has worried about the rising unbalance, which could potentially cause social unrest. In the five years from 2011-2015 China will have invested 1.8 trillion Yuan for construction and development projects such as improving agricultural infrastructure inside the western region and it has already invested 3.5 billion Yuan in the construction of railway tracks, roads and dams in last 10 years.⁶³

The Chinese government is mainly focusing on the development of the elements listed below.

Natural resources

The Chinese government is very interested to explore its hidden treasures in the western region as many natural resources have already been discovered. Statistics show that this area has 36 percent of China's coal reserves, 53 percent of its gas, 12 percent of petroleum and water resources account for 82.5 percent.⁶⁴ It is very rich in terms of rare metal reserves such as coal, copper, cobalt, gypsum, iron, lead and nickel. The western region will, as a result of the investments, prosper and add much to China's already rapidly growing economy.

Human resources

After 2000, many agricultural and industrial installations have been established in many parts of the western region. Xi'an and Chengdu have more than 50 higher learning education institutes and more than a hundred other types of vocational and training centres are working to produce a skilled human force for Chinese industries. Approximately 232 million people between the ages of 18 and 64 live in the western region and could provide tremendous benefits to the country's industry.⁶⁵

Market environment

The populous western region has become a potential consumer market for Chinese goods; in particular in the increasing urbanization in each provincial capital, the purchasing power of the people has comparatively increased. With different communication techniques, people are connected with different parts of China. Huge investments from Chinese and foreign companies have resulted in a rising GDP and in 2010, the total GDP of the western area reached US\$ 1.191 trillion,⁶⁶ which is higher than many states in the world.

Increase industrial growth

After the developed coastal areas, the western region has become a major centre for energy, raw material and heavy industries for China. The Chinese government's focus has resulted in strong communication networks, transportation, science and technology and industrial networks. For example, the aircraft industry in Xi'an, iron and steel industry in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia, auto industry in Chongqing, electronics industry in Sichuan, petrochemical industry in Gansu and Xinjiang and coal industry in Gansu and Shaanxi (western region) have been established.⁶⁷ A large number of large and medium size industries have also been set up in Xi'an, Chengdu, Urumqi and Chongqing, where job opportunities for local people have risen.

Agricultural development

Being an agricultural area, the basic source of income for the people is related to agriculture and stockbreeding. The region covers a wide range of climates even though some areas face extreme weather conditions. The main crops are rice, cotton, wheat, barley, tea, peanuts, oil seed sweet potatoes, fish and livestock (sheep, goats, yaks and camels). In 2010, China became the largest importer of soybeans and other food crops (corn and sugar) in the world.⁶⁸ Due to less available land, China imports its grain commodities from different countries. Keeping this in mind, the government is giving subsidies on agriculture and providing water resources to farmers in order to encourage more crops cultivation and ensure food security and self-sufficiency.

Tourism resource

With historical sites, a wide range of biological reserves, and scenic beauty, the western regions of China attract thousands of tourists from all over the world. Many famous tourist places are located in the western region, including Red Hill, West white popular gully and Heavenly Lake in Xinjiang, Museum of Qin Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses, The Bell tower and Big Wild Goose Pagoda site in Xi'an,⁶⁹ three parallel Rivers of Yunnan protected Areas,⁷⁰ Longmen Grottoes,⁷¹ Dazu Rock Carvings in Gansu Province,⁷² old town of Lijiang in Yunnan,⁷³ Emei Mountain scenic spot in Sichuan,⁷⁴ Mausoleum of the first Qin dynasty emperor and Terracotta Army in Shaanxi,⁷⁵ Potala place in Lhasa (Tibet),⁷⁶ and Mogao caves in Gansu,⁷⁷ all of which are very famous for domestic and foreign tourists.

Intra provincial expressways in western region

| Name of Expressway | Length |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Qingdao–Yinchuan (Ningxia) Expressway (G20) | 1,600 km completed |
| Qingdao–Lanzhou (Gansu) Expressway (G22) | 1,795 km completed |
| Shanghai–Xi'an Expressway (G40) | 1,490 km completed |
| Shanghai–Chongqing Expressway (G50) | 1,900 km completed |
| Shanghai–Kunming Expressway (G60) | 2,360 km completed |
| Chongqing–Kunming Expressway (G85) | 838 km completed |
| Beijing–Kunming Expressway (G5) | 2,865 km under construction |
| Beijing–Tibet Expressway (G6) | 3,710 km under construction |
| Beijing–Urumqi Expressway (G7) | 2,540 km under construction |
| Shanghai–Chengdu Expressway (G42) | 1,960 km under construction |
| Lanzhou–Haikou Expressway (G75) | 2,570 km under construction |
| Guangzhou–Kunming Expressway (G80) | 1,511 km under construction |

Source: Data collected by Wikipedia.org

Dams in western region

| Name of Dam | Acre. ft |
|--|-----------|
| Baihetan Dam (Sichuan and Yunnan provinces) Under construction 2019 | 7,150,000 |
| Guanyinyan Dam (Yunnan and Sichuan) Under construction 2012 | 1,679,798 |
| Changheba Dam (Sichuan Province) Under construction 2016 | 4,588,637 |
| Dagangshan Dam (Sichuan Province) Under construction 2012 | 871,517 |
| Guandi Dam (Sichuan Province) Under construction 2012 | 616,142 |
| Houziyan Dam (Sichuan Province) Under construction 2015 | 536,692 |
| Jinping-I Hydropower Station (Sichuan) Under construction 2014 | 6,200,000 |
| Jinping-II Hydropower Station (Sichuan) Under construction 2014 | 11,500 |
| Lianghekou Dam (Sichuan Province) Under construction 2015 | 5,131,815 |
| Tingzikou Dam (Sichuan province) Under construction 2015 | 3,297,171 |
| Wudu Dam (Sichuan Province) Completed in 2008 | 436,728 |
| Pubugou Dam (Sichuan Province) Completed in 2010 | 4,369,744 |
| Yele Dam (Sichuan Province) Completed in 2006 | 241,593 |
| Zipingpu Dam (Sichuan Province) Completed | 907,999 |

Chinese western region's development programme

| | |
|---|------------|
| Liyuan Dam (Yunnan Province) Under construction | 589,388 |
| Longkaikou Dam (Yunnan province) Under construction 2015 | 441,028 |
| Ludila Dam (Yunnan province) Under construction 2015 | 1,392,805 |
| Nuozhadu Dam (Yunnan Province) Under construction 2015 | 17,632,000 |
| Xiangjiaba Dam (Yunnan Province) Under construction 2015 | 4,185,712 |
| Xiluodu Dam (Yunnan Province) Under construction 2013 | 10,271,736 |
| Longma Dam (Yunnan Province) Completed in 2007 | 478,321 |
| Jinghong Dam (Yunnan) Completed in 2008 | 201,868 |
| Malutang Dam (Yunnan Province) Completed in 2009 | 442,649 |
| Jinanqiao Dam (Yunnan) Completed in 2010 | 686,674 |
| Shimenkan Dam (Yunnan Province) Completed in 2010 | 159,710 |
| Dahuashui Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed | 224,162 |
| Hongjiadu Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2005 | 4,010,598 |
| Sanbanxi Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2006 | 3,319,060 |
| Suofengying Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2006 | 163,115 |
| Guangzhao Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2008 | 2,638,061 |
| Silin Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2008 | 976,909 |
| Shiyazi Dam (Guizhou Province) Completed in 2010 | 260,644 |
| Jiudianxia Dam (Gansu) Completed in 2008 | 764,503 |
| Baise Dam (Guangxi) Completed 2006 | 14,531,223 |
| Longtan Dam (Guangxi Province) Completed in 2009 | 22,108,149 |
| Gongboxia Dam (Qinghai Province) Completed in 2006 | 510,749 |
| Laxiwa Dam (Qinghai Province) Completed in 2009 | 875,000 |
| Jilintai I Dam (Xinjiang) Completed in 2005 | 2,051,104 |
| Shuangjiangkou Dam (Tibet) | 2,5410,586 |

| | |
|--|---------|
| Under construction since 2008 | |
| Zangmu Dam (Tibet) | 70,208 |
| Under construction 2015 | |
| Pengshui Dam (Chongqing) | 419,949 |
| Under construction 2015 | |
| Tengzigou Dam (Chongqing) Completed in 2006 | 156,468 |

Source: Data collected by Wikipedia.org

Ecological development in the western region⁷⁸

- The grassland, meadow and wetland ecological zone in Qinghai
- Yellow river substitution in south Gansu
- Hill and Gully soil erosion in the Loess Plateau
- The Karst Litho-desertification combating zone in Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi
- The forest ecological and biodiversity zone in Yunnan and Sichuan
- The dry-hot vally ecological zone in Yunnan and Sichuan
- The Roige Plateau wetland ecological zone in Sichuan
- The Ke'erqin , the Hulun grassland and the Hunshandak sandland desertification combating zones in Inner Mongolia
- The Trim River, the Altai Mountains forest and the Altyn grassland ecological zones in Xinjiang
- The forest ecological and Qiangtang Plateau desert ecological zones in Tibet

Keeping in mind these development strategies adopted by the neighbouring and friendly nation of China, which has shown miraculous growth in recent years, Pakistan can draw many lessons for its own prosperity. A diverse country with more than 55 ethnic groups, China has managed to succeed while presenting a unified and nationalistic front wherein development has been widespread and has ultimately benefitted the nation as a whole. This is no small achievement. China has kept economic construction at the core of its planning, while also safeguarding social stability and uniting people of all ethnic groups as it attempts to bring people out of poverty and into prosperity, which is perhaps the biggest achievement in human history.

During the period of 1960s and later, the global perception about China was very negative because of the Cultural Revolution, the ideas of communism, and the notion of human rights violation. China's social indicators were also not healthy, and there was little evidence that could

suggest that this nation would emerge the way it has within a very short period of time. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China made remarkable progress in every field and it now has the largest reserves of foreign exchange in the world. This is the result of hard work, planning and determination of both the leadership and the nation.

Pakistan is much smaller than China and apparently administratively controllable, and can take advantages from the experience of its friendly northern neighbour. Some problems like weak government, military dictatorships, mismanagement of resources, corruption, nepotism and bad governance have created numerous obstacles to economic growth. The development of China's western region can be seen as a way to create national development through focusing on a previously neglected region.

For Pakistan, this provides a role model for the development of Balochistan, which is the largest province of Pakistan, and, just as the Chinese western regions, has been known to provide opportunities for minerals and natural resources. The potential has, however, not been tapped. Since independence in 1947, no government has bothered to comprehensively develop Balochistan, which remains a backward and economically and politically unstable region. The main reason is the system of Sardars who have immense power in their tribes and have remained involved in inter-tribal conflicts for a long time. Some of the key tribes of Balochistan are the Bugtis, the Marris, the Khetrans and the Mengals.

The Baloch dissidents blame the Pakistani military establishment for being involved in the target killings of Baloch people, while the federal government accuses rebel groups of having connections with hostile international elements that want to disintegrate Pakistan. But this is not the way to proceed with a solution to a difficult situation. The government of Pakistan must pay attention to the voice of the Baloch people and bring them in national policy-making processes, talking to all stakeholders and minimizing military involvement in the province.

The traditional Baloch leaders can be brought into the mainstream by offering more political incentives. Although demands of reform-minded leaders should be addressed, the political reform process cannot be commenced unless old and traditional leaders are taken into confidence and given adequate representation. A local government system that brings forward leaders from the grassroots, and introduces political reforms at the local level, appears to be a suitable way forward.

Balochistan's situation not only demands political, economic and social development, but the foremost thing is maintaining the law and order situation and hence establishing an effective police force. It is important that all reform packages, whether political, economic or social, are implemented in tandem with the maintenance of law and order.

This essentially means that Pakistan must learn from the long-term planning adopted by China for its own neglected areas that are likely to be shining examples of success in future. A similar path should be adopted by Pakistan to deal with the Balochistan issue. Nowadays, Pakistan is facing many external and internal challenges, its economy is on the threshold of collapse, and water shortages, electricity breakdowns, and a worsening law and order situation have brought the country to the brink. In these circumstances, China provides the best example for the way out of the problems.

The infrastructural development, planning, engineering, mining, tourism development, management and a host of other activities that accompany the initiatives in the region allow for opportunities at large scale.

Conclusion

From the projects, and documented facts about the initiatives in the western region of China listed above, it is apparent that the country is investing heavily and methodically in a relatively underdeveloped part of its territory. This is important for China for a number of reasons. These include, among others, bringing down poverty levels, bridging regional gaps, enhancing political stability, and also ensuring security of a region that shared many international borders. For China, it also makes tremendous economic sense since the western region, as highlighted above, is rich in minerals, and its potential has not yet been realized. With the current level of investment, as planned, this could change and bring about tremendous benefits for the entire country.

Moreover, the development of the western region also provides opportunities in a number of economic sectors. The infrastructural development, planning, engineering, mining, tourism development, management and a host of other activities that accompany the initiatives in the region allow for opportunities at large scale. They also provide opportunities for the rest of the world to visit a naturally scenic area that has not yet been fully explored. In the end, the development of China's

western region will become a sign of how China is viewed in the world, and that makes its policies practical, significant, and worthy of notice.

Notes & References

- ¹ Data from CIA Fact book 2011, 'China' www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html
- ² Western Region Development, www.china-window.com/china_market/china_industry_reports/western-region-developmen.shtml
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Gansu Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/gansu.html>
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Market Profiles on Chinese Cities and Provinces, <http://info.hktdc.com/mktprof/china/guizhou.htm>
- ⁷ Guizhou Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/guizhou.html>
- ⁸ China National Highways, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_National_Highways
- ⁹ Mary Terrell, Heather Kathleen, "Fertility in China in 2000: A country level analysis", <http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/3892/etd-tamu-2005A-SOCI-Terrell.pdf?sequence=1>
- ¹⁰ Guizhou Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/guizhou.html>
- ¹¹ Guizhou Province, <http://thechinaperspective.com/topics/province/guizhou-province/>
- ¹² Qinghai Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/qinghai.html>
- ¹³ Qinghai, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-xibu/2JI/3JI/qinghai/qing-ban.htm>
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Qinghai, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qinghai>
- ¹⁶ Shaanxi Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/shaanxi.html>
- ¹⁷ Shaanxi, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaanxi>
- ¹⁸ C. Hogan. Michael, 'Silk Road, North China - Ancient Track way in China', <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=18006>
- ¹⁹ Shaanxi Province, The China Prospective, <http://thechinaperspective.com/topics/province/shaanxi-province/>
- ²⁰ The Mausoleum of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty and Terracotta Warriors and Horses, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/kuaixun/74862.htm>
- ²¹ Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mausoleum_of_the_Yellow_Emperor
- ²² Forest of Stone Steles Museum, http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/shaanxi/xian/stone_stele/
- ²³ City Wall, http://www.echinaromance.com/destinations/xian_scenicspots1.htm
- ²⁴ Huashan (Flower Mountain), www.chinahighlights.com/xian/attraction/huashan-mountain.htm
- ²⁵ Hukou Waterfall, <http://www.world-of-waterfalls.com/asia-hukou-waterfall.html>
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Sichuan Province, The China Prospective, <http://thechinaperspective.com/topics/province/sichuan-province/>
- ²⁹ Sichuan Province View, www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/156637.htm
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Sichuan Tourist Cities, www.topchinatravel.com/sichuan/sichuan-tourist-cities.htm
- ³² Yunnan Province, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/yunnan.html>

-
- ³³ Yunnan, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yunnan>
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Yunnan Province, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/67788.htm>
- ³⁶ Yunnan, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yunnan>
- ³⁷ Yunnan Province, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/67773.htm>
- ³⁸ Guangxi, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangxi>
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Guangxi, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/55628.htm>
- ⁴³ Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/guangxi.html>
- ⁴⁴ Guangxi, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/55628.htm>
- ⁴⁵ Inner Mongolia, Province Overview, <http://china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/183227.htm>
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Inner Mongolia to double annual coal output by 2010, People's Daily, December 27, 2005, http://english.people.com.cn/200512/27/eng20051227_231175.html
- ⁴⁹ Top Places to Visit in Inner Mongolia, http://www.tour-beijing.com/china_travel_guide/inner_mongolia/top_places_to_visit_in_inner_mongolia.php
- ⁵⁰ Tibet Autonomous Region, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region
- ⁵¹ Tibet - The Roof of the World, www.regit.com/regitour/china/intplace/tibet.htm
- ⁵² Tibet Autonomous Region, *The China Perspective*, <http://thechinaperspective.com/topics/province/tibet-autonomous-region/>
- ⁵³ Tibet Autonomous Region, An overview, <http://china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/156226.htm>
- ⁵⁴ Tibet Autonomous Region, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Places of Interest in Tibet, www.visitnepal.com/getaway/tibet/places_of_interest.htm
- ⁵⁷ Xinjiang, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang>
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/xinjiang.html>
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ China to invest 1.5 billion yuan on mineral exploration in Xinjiang, May 11, 2010, *People's Daily*, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90778/90862/6980612.html>
- ⁶² Nicolas Becquelin, "Staged Development in Xinjiang," *The China Quarterly*, 2004, vol 178, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=232565>
- ⁶³ China to increase investment in water conservation projects, www.china.org.cn/video/2011-10/13/content_23614375.htm
- ⁶⁴ National Bureau of Statistics of China, www.stats.gov.cn
- ⁶⁵ China, *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China>
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.

-
- ⁶⁷ Li Jun, Ma Ke, "China business" China International Press, 2004 p. 364
- ⁶⁸ "China to become world's top farm products importer", *Reuters* Nov,06, 2011,
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/07/us-china-trade-agriculture-idUSTRE7A60O120111107>
- ⁶⁹ Tourist sites in China, <http://sitara.com/china/tour.html#Urumqi>
- ⁷⁰ World Heritage Convention ,<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1083>
- ⁷¹ Longmen Grottoes, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longmen_Grottoes
- ⁷² Dazu Rock Carvings, <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/chongqing/dazu.htm>
- ⁷³ Old Town of Lijiang, <http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/lijiang.html>
- ⁷⁴ Brief information on Emei Mountain, http://www.chinatouronline.com/china-travel/chengdu/chengdu-attractions/Emei-Mountain_225.html
- ⁷⁵ Terracotta Army, *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terracotta_Army
- ⁷⁶ Potala Palace, Lhasa, www.sacred-destinations.com/tibet/lhasa-potala-palace
- ⁷⁷ Mogao Caves - Art of Dunhuang Caves, http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/gansu/dunhuang/mogao_grottoes/
- ⁷⁸ National Development and Reforms Commission, en.ndrc.gov.cn/hot/w020060531535879801160.jpg