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CASA-1000: Its Potential for Regional Trade and Development

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Abstract

The Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) is a trans-regional project aiming transition of 1300 megawatts hydroelectric power from Central Asian states; Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic, to South Asian countries; Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is not merely an energy project transiting electricity but having potential to enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation among participating states beyond the regional level. After its successful completion, the project will help increasing regionalism to connectivity, surge development to mutual trade and serve energy complementary situation to new openings in multidimensional fields. The paper aims to highlight the likely opportunities and benefits of realization of the project.

Key Words: CASA-1000, Electricity, Energy, Trade, Development

Introduction

Cooperation among states is necessary for them to survive as no state can live in isolation in the long term. Natural resources are not everywhere abundantly. The people who do not have access to certain energy resources, have right to be benefitted in some other ways. The nations having energy resources in abundance may help those who do not have it. An old bartering system now a days used as trade. It is an excellent give and take system.

Transnational collaboration is extremely important to have tranquility and flourishing among states. All the individuals have right on the assets of the entire world which can be asserted through dealing framework or exchange. The collaboration among neighbour and other countries can be portrayed fit as a fiddle of 'exchange.' Trade on regional level is more beneficial for both parties than trading with a country of other continent. Colossal transportation expenses and vitality can be spared along these lines. The spared energy can be utilized by other people who do not approach it and it is likewise conceivable through exchange. Fossil fuels are used for transportation of goods which is degrading the environment and strongly discouraged by the environmentalists. States are usually responsible to facilitate trade with other countries and manage the energy sources. Under Central Asia – South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) project, surplus clean energy will be transmitted from Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and then Pakistan and it could be a source for betterment of lives of people in later two countries. This paper intends to highlight the scenario in the two regions; Central and South Asia referencing CASA-1000 and its benefits. The venture is a source of regionalism which may prompt the inclinations of trading with each other on the regional level. The under subject countries are in a position to 'give and take'. CASA-1000 project has the ability and capacity to enhance regionalism along with creating

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interdependence between the two regions and among the four countries particularly. Furthermore, it can enhance bilateral and multilateral trade by developing trust level with the completion of this project. After developing trade relations on regional level, mutual rivalries and other issues could be mitigated. A definitive aftereffect of this regional and beyond the region collaboration is more reliance, more harmony, greater success and more financial improvement.

CASA-1000: A Source of Regionalism

Regionalism is an idea identified with the coordination of numerous states which are topographically associated and located in a similar zone. The nations have numerous likenesses in the midst of shared pressures. States inside an area are associated politically and economically. The unity of the states makes common relationship between them on regional premise and allows to think bit over the national interests. The elation of globalized world is not getting at this moment. With the end of Cold War, the world was believed to be globalized with its actual quintessence. Be that as it may, that is not the situation as countries are all the more concentrating on regional instead of global level. Regional connectedness is progressively refreshing as it serves the monetary viz-a-viz political interests (Saeed, 2016). Presently fondness to a faraway state dependent on philosophy is not working rather making local combination concentrated on shared political and monetary concerns is progressively important and need of the time.

Integration between South and Central Asia is more likely after the completion of CASA-1000 project (Delovarova, 2013). Its sustainability will demand continuous cooperation which will ultimately lead to boosting regionalism. Transmission of hydroelectric power is a complementary situation for the exporter and importer states (Din, 2016). It will equally benefit all the stakeholders as well as other states of the regions. Furthermore, the two regions have history of geographical connectivity for trade routes to connect the East with the West. The revival of ancient time's connectivity can create physical connections through road and railway networks.

There are multiple opportunities of connectivity for the two regions and they need to set a common stage to enhance their cooperation. Imports of one region can be exports of adjoining region and the other way around. It demonstrates that both the regions can rely upon one another. The states can improve the participation from energy trade to joint security endeavors. To enhance the regionalism tremendously, CASA-1000 and in like manner ventures are gigantic activities for serving the purpose. Greater regionalism efforts demand the transnational steps on the regional level side by side the national interests and gains to create a win-win situation for all.

All the stakeholders of the project are facing the menaces of terrorism and being affected less or more by it. Though Afghanistan is the major victim of it, neighbouring states are also bearing the impacts. The situation is not favoring CASA-1000 project and may weaken its progress. It makes very necessary for the stakeholders to join their hands for the concurrent solution of terrorism. If they cannot eradicate it right now, better steps should be taken for the security of the project to realize it as soon as possible. These mandatory joint efforts may strengthen the regionalism.

Regional Cooperation and Development

Something which is exceptionally obvious is that CASA-1000 has capacity to enhance regional connectivity and cooperation. Furthermore, it can help boosting inter-regional trade as energy corridor will create interdependence among the states of the two regions especially among the partner states of the project. With the assistance of anticipated collaboration, advancement might be found in all the states taking part in CASA-1000 project. Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic will get an opportunity to earn foreign exchanges by trading their surplus power and Pakistan and Afghanistan will get the desperately required power for household utilization and industrial use to balance those foreign exchanges in the other way around. It might leave a mutual beneficial outcome on the participants' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Ashly, 2016). South Asian States will observe a certain improvement in their Human Development Index (HDI) with the

provision of power supplies on adequate levels. It is obvious that CASA-1000 project will not only help Pakistan and Afghanistan in additional power supplies but will be helping to improve electricity infrastructure in all the participating nations. Energy is not the only field of HDI but it helps improving all the fields as it is a basic necessity. After the power supplies on adequate level, the states will be able to improve the remaining fields. It must enhance the living standards of the peoples of the both countries.

Cooperation under CASA-1000 will benefit the partner states right after the completion of the project. It will start a developmental process in terms of electricity infrastructure and broadening regional trade. It will also create an environment of engaging the neighbouring states in this regional cooperation. CASA-1000 will make a useful jumping circumstance for every one of the partner states. It will help in lessening the border issues and tensions on the diplomatic level. It will be providing a chance to discuss and negotiate the mutual issues to realize this trans-border project and pave the way for many other new joint ventures.

A cognizance of past the fringe advancement might be seen. As both the regions are attempting to stab at better security and financial conditions, completion of the project will create a more cooperative environment for other projects to start.

Furthermore, the completion of this cross-border project may lead the states to sit together and negotiate the border issues and resolve them on diplomatic forums. Economic connectivity brought by the project will enhance regionalism. CASA-1000 will provide a chance to the regions to move further from regionalism to regionalization. This win-win situation would prompt to discover more approaches for joint endeavors.

Energy shortage is causing huge issues for the South Asian states. They are facing traditional security challenges as well energy security challenges. They are starving for energy boost. Half of Afghanistan's population is living below the poverty line and energy is one of the causes for diminishing their living standards. Electrification of the rural areas of Afghanistan is required to enhance the living standards (Azizy, 2008). Complementarily, Central Asian states are desiring for energy diffusion market during summers to utilize their surplus energy to increase some productive outcomes (Dixon, 2016). CASA-1000 is including four nations right now and it will not remain stick to it. There are adequate open doors for other neighbouring nations to join it on the later stage. Manageability of the venture may invigorate neighbouring countries and even regions to turn to the project.

CASA-1000: An Ice-Breaker

Afghanistan and Pakistan have reciprocal relations with Central Asian Republics (CARs) yet to appreciate better joint efforts and collaboration; there is a need to go for multilateral commitments among states and regions. Mutual issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan are maligning their relations on regional level with CARs because Afghanistan is the route to Central Asia. In recent era, CASA-1000 is one of the initial joint endeavors among the states of both regions. As this project is involving four states from two regions and is based on physical infrastructure which will be permanent in nature. This is drawing in various partners in the long haul and growing relations between the four accomplice states in this venture. Where development and cooperation are concerned, CASA-1000 is truly an ice-breaker. Coming years will observe increasingly more collaboration and improvement between the states as well as between the two regions, too. It might upgrade exchange of goods and services among the four accomplice states as the fruition of this 'useful for all' task may fortify the relations and help decreasing the issues.

"Quadrilateral Summit of CASA-1000 member states" held on 6th July, 2017 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (Harmon, 2017). In quadrilateral summit, CASA-1000 project was discussed completely by the leaders of the four partner states. Growth and hurdles of the project were investigated thoroughly. Leaders from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan restated their dedication and earnestness for the acknowledgment of the joint venture. All of them were of the view that CASA-1000 has capacity to bring more opportunities of interests through mutual ventures.

A feature of the new openings by CASA-1000 was seen on the sidelines of the Quadrilateral Summit in Dushanbe. Pakistani Prime Minister and Tajik President had one-on-one meeting and conversed two-sided collaboration and promised to keep up great relations and enhance them with the passage of time. A declaration on "Road towards strategic partnership for regional solidarity" was jointly signed to reiterate the effectively existing relations and to make them solidier. Leaders of the two nations consented to improve economic relations on bilateral level (Shahi, 2017). Joint Business Council (JBC) was also marked during the official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan to Tajikistan (Ullah, 2017). Such are the expected outcomes of CASA-1000 which might make more reliance between the states of the two regions.

Another trilateral summit meeting also took place between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan on the sidelines of CASA-1000 to discuss the common interests including regional connectivity, stability and security (Hameed, 2017). This was an agreed initiative of long time ago but did not gain ground because of the absence of regional connectivity and lack of collaboration on multilateral level. This is a praiseworthy accomplishment seen on the sidelines of "Quadrilateral Summit of CASA-1000 member states". The summit gave a stage to debate, evaluate and sign numerous arrangements.

Afghanistan: A Significant Bridge for CASA-1000 and Regional Connectivity

All the Central Asian states are land locked as well as Afghanistan and they use to depend on their neighbours for trade with the outer world. Pakistan has an attractive solution of it in the form of newly built Gwardar port which is beneficial for Afghanistan and Central Asian states alike. In this way, all the land locked states mentioned above can compensate their foreign exchanges and can bargain with Pakistan for more favourable conditions (Fazil, 2016). Central Asia is just 28 kilometers away from Pakistan through Wakahan strip. In the past, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan have signed an accord to build this 28-kilometer road to connect Tajikistan with Pakistan. Through this road, Central Asian states can be easily connected to Gwardar port through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route. CARs can fabricate a joint endeavor with Pakistan by involving Afghanistan as it plays role of a connector. This will reduce the transportation cost for them while importing and exporting through Gwardar port. Some of the states will also be getting transit costs and Afghanistan will be the major beneficiary.

Afghanistan is a bridge between South and Central Asia and it is the most important country in joint ventures of the two regions. Its geographical location can pay it off whenever the two regions are connected through any way. The inter-regional energy projects which are in progress, are involving Afghanistan as a key partner state, however, it is not interested in importing energy due to lack of demand in the country. Only 30% Afghani are connected to the national electricity infrastructure and situation of natural gas consumers is also the same (The World Bank, 2020). Afghanistan is seeking economic and political goals through being a part of the multilateral projects. Afghanistan is willing to offer its terrain to be used by its neighbours for trade which will ultimately compensate in bettering its economy through infrastructural development and stabilizing it politically.

Afghanistan is required to play its key role in realizing the ambitions of physical connectivity because it is the middle state between Central and South Asia. A road or railway network can be constructed covering CARs, Afghanistan and Pakistan and expanding it to other neighbouring states in the future. It will also help in creating harmony and friendlier relations among nations of the joint venture. This road or railway track can be built alongside the CASA-1000 transmission line. The network will increase trade volume as well as help in security of the transmission line. The completion of CASA-1000 will help realizing road or rail network ideas because of a practical example of physical connectivity. It will build trust among the partner states which can attract the other neighbouring states to become part of the project or coming joint ventures to bring collective peace and prosperity in the two regions.

CASA-1000: A Solution to Pakistan's Electricity Shortage

Energy is the spinal cord for economy of any state. It plays a principal role in boosting exports of all sorts.

Generation of enough energy from accessible resources or imported materials is very much necessary to give a strong hold to the economic condition of a country. The option of clean energy is best in all terms; from production to import of energy. Energy deficiency influences different portions of the general public. In the period of globalization, energy is obligatory to contend with the world in financial matters. Energy shortage is affecting Pakistan's economic conditions badly. Economy of a nation endures even with the dread of energy shortage. South Asian region is witnessing huge economic viability which demands higher amount of energy also. In Pakistan, available energy is not meeting the commercial and domestic requirements. It is unable to meet energy requirements of industrial sector. At present, Pakistan's industries are confronting incredible inconvenience because of inadequate power and gas supply.

Pakistan needs a long-term energy plan to diminish its energy shortage because it is facing huge shortfall since long. Tech revolution and property boost in 2000s demanded large investments in the energy sector, but no heed paid by the leadership of the time. Now, some immediate steps are required to mitigate energy crisis at present and in future. CASA-1000 is a physical infrastructure for long-term solution and its sustainability is linked to the security of the transmission line. Expenditure on the project, its maintenance and security measurements will bound the partner states to get maximum benefits of it. Afghanistan and Tajikistan will be getting transit fees of the transmitted electricity, they will be more concerned about security issues and will play their due role.

At present, the exporting states can export the hydroelectric power during summers only because their internal electricity demand increases and production decreases in winters. But the stakeholders can take the advantage of the transmission line during summers as well by enhancing generation capacity of the exporters during that time or by engaging any other neighbouring states with the required capacities including remaining CARs or Russia (Kiani, 2016). In this way, the transmission line would be used during winters as well to provide Pakistani industries uninterrupted power supply. Furthermore, it will be helping towards the solution to Pakistan's energy shortage. Load shedding is a great problem to the economy of Pakistan.

Earning Foreign Exchange Reserves for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

For a steady economy, states must make an equalization in importing and exporting goods. The countries fall behind in exporting goods or services, and import more products or services, have feeble and flimsy economies. Central Asian states are not having strong economies due to lack of exports. This is the region full of natural minerals but mostly unexploited. The resources which have been exploited, do not find a proper mechanism for exports mostly due to be land locked and its tough terrain. When they will start exporting their energy products to its neighbours on a large scale, their economies will stable to some extent. They will be able to create some balance in their imports and exports. As the project will be bringing foreign reserves half of the year at least, the exporting states will be able to utilize them in diminishing trade deficit. Moreover, the transmission line is a permanent physical infrastructure which do not need any coastline and being land locked is not a disadvantage (International Hydropower Association, 2017). The exporting states of Central Asia will have the option to utilize the foreign reserves for imports from Pakistan as well as paying transit fees to Afghanistan and Pakistan for using their port and land route. CASA-1000 will be a reciprocal project for Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic if they use Pakistani port for their imports which will be the ultimate fruits of the project intended to be completed as soon as possible. Afghanistan will also be getting transit fees for the transmission line.

The to be transmitted electricity is of no use for the Central Asian partners because the hydroelectric power is already surplus during summers and they will not generate especially for the exporting purpose. This surplus energy can reward them in terms of huge foreign reserves once CASA-1000 project is realized. This energy is otherwise being wasted every summer. Furthermore, these foreign reserves can also be utilized for expanding the generation and transmission capacity and the transmitting period could be extended to winters as well. For the time being, to be transmitted hydroelectric power is 1300 megawatts;

1000 megawatts imported by Pakistan and 300 megawatts by Afghanistan. But while constructing the transmission line, it will remain in consideration to enhance the capacity to 4000 megawatts in the future. If in future India becomes a part of the project, the capacity could be enhanced to the maximum limit by extending the transmission capacity. This entire situation is favoring the Central Asian states by making them well off if there should be an occurrence of effective execution of the project. The gathered incomes can support Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic to beat the intense energy deficiencies during the winters (The World Bank 2016). The two nations face power setback in the winter season. This setback can be limited by improving power creation in the winters.

Cheap Imported Energy: Boost for Economies

Pakistan is confronting intense energy problems currently. Due to energy crisis, Pakistan's economy has been paralyzed (Kugelman, 2013). The problem has arisen to this extent due to no investments on electricity production since long. No new dams since 1960s to increase hydroelectric power. Energy demands increased in 2000s with no such projects to meet the requirements and Pakistan had to go for energy imports through joint ventures with its neighbours. Pakistan's efforts to resolve this problem is a positive step towards regional cooperation. Afghanistan is also facing electricity shortage. It is using the least per capita electricity in the world. Not so many people have access to electricity. Its landscape, limited infrastructure and political instability are the main hurdles. Energy deficit is posing irreversible loss to both countries' economies. CASA-1000 has brought the two neighbouring states to more cooperation for energy imports from Central Asia which can help in stabilizing the economies of both countries.

CASA-1000 project is not giving the restrictive advantage of power import to Pakistan and Afghanistan, this task can make them a center point of energy because of their geography. Their location is like a connector if other energy starving regional states become a part of CASA-1000 and likewise projects in the future. The situation will bring greater regional cooperation as well as prosperity and innovation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Right now, both the neighbouring states are relying on oil for production of electricity which is a costly and unclean production source (Mallick, 2015).

Industry needs adequate arrangement of energy to work appropriately. It is the backbone and primary prerequisite of the industry. CASA-1000 will be including 1000 megawatts of modest power in the national network of Pakistan and 300 megawatts in the national grid of Afghanistan (The Dawn, 2017). The electricity attained by CASA-1000 project can surely help Pakistan and Afghanistan in diminishing the shortfall for domestic and industrial use persisting at the moment. Though it cannot overcome the energy crisis, but the problem could be resolved at least in the short run. Any development in the industry can lead to investment in the energy sector for its production locally or import from neighbouring states. Pakistan's population is growing in fast pace as well as its industry. More people mean more business and more business leads to more energy requirements. Growth in the both sectors requires increased energy. Industries are usually deprived of required electricity during the summers due to the high usage of domestic consumers. To be imported hydroelectric power via CASA-1000 project will surely decrease the shortfall by 1000 megawatts and decreasing the industrial electricity cut.

CASA-1000 can Help Alleviating Unemployment and Poverty

CASA-1000 project can surely bring a difference to a common man's life by enhancing their living standards of four partner states especially Pakistan and Afghanistan as it will decrease the regular power cuts during summer season and increase employment opportunities for labour class in the four nations. The areas, CASA-1000 is taking place, are one of the world's poorest countries. One-third population (between 30-35%) of Pakistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan are living below the poverty line (The World Bank 2016). Afghanistan's conditions are worse than this but its data is not available on World Bank's website. As poverty and even employment is directly linked to the businesses in a state, energy plays a vital role to stabilize or destabilize the economy. Lack of energy, especially electricity, leaves some irreparable causes on the

business environment and foreign investments. CASA-1000 transmission line is furthering a step towards employment of lower class as it is passing through all the partner states.

Energy is the main component to run the agriculture of any country. As Pakistan largely depends on it for its GDP, it needs mouthful of energy to bring advancement in its central sector. Electricity is being most used in Pakistan's agriculture, CASA-1000 project will bring positive change. Agricultural sector leads the economy of Pakistan as it is 25% of its GDP (The World Bank, 2017). Subsequently, CASA-1000 might profit the significant field for Pakistan which is straightforwardly connected with the ordinary citizens. Increment in the production of agricultural sector with the assistance of adequate energy availability will be changing the lives of so many farmer families and seek a noticeable abatement in joblessness.

This venture is the best method to use the surplus hydroelectric power of Central Asian states and mitigating the electricity requirements of the South Asian partners during the summer season. The otherwise wasted electricity to find a way to earn the benefits for exporting nations. Easing of intensity power cuts in the South Asian states can mitigate the poverty by diminishing joblessness. Electricity is the main energy tool to run the industries in Pakistan and Afghanistan which is needed almost in all the sectors. In this way, it is right to state that adequate accessibility of power will support businesses in South Asian states and foreign reserves gathered by exporting it will help the economies of Central Asian states (Roman, 2013).

Natural Resources of CARs and South Asian Appetite

Minerals make countries rich. The states having supremacy in minerals are rich and important politically. The minerals play a great role in economy of any state where they are found plentifully. Moreover, the exploitation of natural resources is actual success. The states which are unable to produce them, take advantage of other skillful states to invest there and help them exploit. The situation is in the CARs. They have abundance of natural resources and having an important strategic and political location in world politics. They are also unable to achieve the desired outcomes; therefore, involvement of skilled states and companies is required. Furthermore, South Asian states also play their key role in the specific area of digging out and utilizing those minerals (Dook, 2016).

The Central Asian states do not have complete political stability and power struggle remains constant. Political instability does not let the governments concentrate on economic affairs especially the long-term projects. There is no proper energy exploitation and diffusion mechanism in CARs and they are unable to take full advantage of abundant energy resources. The states lack in technology, infrastructure, trade routes and will to exploit the natural resources. The states remained under Soviet control for a long time and could not be established unilaterally because of being operated under a single umbrella. If only Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic are taken into consideration, they can produce up to 80,000 megawatts hydroelectric power. Currently, they are producing only 10% of the total capacity. Water issues are the major obstacles to increase production by cooperating with each other. All the states are prey of political rivalries and not interested to resolve the water sharing problem. There is no dearth of water but lack of sharing mechanism. Multiple water management issues are persisting in Central Asia. There is no institutional mechanism to resolve this type of issues. Central Asian states must have a designated regional forum to resolve the problem and enhance the hydroelectric power capacity as well as invest jointly to discover and build trade routes and infrastructures. Since independence, the states are getting funds in shape of foreign aid for the development of infrastructure. But CARs are unable to resolve their mutual disputes and Aral Sea is one of the examples (Easterly, Levine & Roodman, 2004). Central Asian Republics are connected to each other geographically and the same landscape gives rise to water disputes because of running rivers from more than one state. There is a complex interconnectedness among the states of the region. They face problem in water sharing as it is great source in terms of irrigation and producing hydroelectric power. They should resolve the issues and enhance their collective capacity of generation electricity. The hydroelectric power is a clean source of energy having international endorsement and encouragement. In this view, CASA-1000

is a great initiative to motivate all the states of the region to take part in likewise projects to bear the fruits of this complementary 'demand and supply' situation. To be transmitted electricity can be augmented to 4,000 megawatts as well as adding more states in importing spectrum (Khan, 2014).

Central Asia has abundant natural resources and small populations and South Asia has large populations and rare natural resources. This is a balancing situation for the two regions to coordinate and cooperate for the benefit of all the stakeholders. South Asia's will to import Central Asian resources are equally beneficial for the states of both regions. One will be getting the scarce energy to maximize its industrial capacity and the other will be getting foreign currency reserves which are necessary for their development and prosperity. Though South Asian states are not capable of exploring or extracting Central Asia's abundant energy resources, but these states are key players in the process due to be importer partners. The trade infrastructure which was missing in CARs after their independence seems to be furnished with the collaboration of South Asian countries and CASA-1000 will be an epic initiative.

Further Openings

After the successful completion of CASA-1000 project, it would be contributing towards development and economic prosperity among the four partner states and the two regions; Central and South Asia and become an electricity market. The project will be a great source of further openings among the states of the two regions. As it is a permanent physical structure which have capacity to be extended to other states of the two regions and it surely will engage the two regions in multi-dimensional trade. When the states would be relying on each other, a sense of interdependence would be created. Interdependence always pays off in resolving mutual rivalries and building good relations based on trust and benefits. To bring this all, CASA-1000 is a great initiative.

There is already a multilateral and later multi-regional organization as Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) with focus to Central Asian region and its neighbours. Currently it is having 11 members including Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was found in 1997; Afghanistan got its membership in 2005 and Pakistan got in 2010. Pakistan's membership of CAREC became after the starting point of CASA-1000 project which is not necessarily result of it. But for sure, it will help decreasing tensions and enhancing relations through energy corridor and other joint ventures. CAREC and cooperation under it will be strengthened with the successful realization of CASA-1000 project.

Afghanistan's Wakhan valley is a narrow strip which is connecting it to China and separating Pakistan with Central Asia. It is only 13-65km wide. Tajikistan can be reached by constructing 28 km road from Pakistan's border (Khan, 2015). Pakistan can reach Central Asian country Tajikistan by building a route through Wakhan vale and further spread the possible road or rail network. In the past, Asian continent had been using the vale for the purpose of trade through a jeep track. The track could be taken as the base of road network and create an ease of surveying the whole valley. Wakhan valley can also be beneficial to fulfill the CARs' desire to join CPEC adjoining its western route which is passing through Pakistani province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) which is really very near to the Wakhan valley (The News, 2015). Wakhan is an already existing idea among the states of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan but unfortunately it is on paper only like many other joint projects between the two regions (GB Tribune, 2013). There is a need to set an example to follow the suit and CASA-1000 might be the best thing to realize on priority.

The current government of Pakistan is very much interested in ending load shedding from the country as the previous government was. This much enthusiasm of Pakistani government would help the fruitful execution of CASA-1000 venture. After the fruitful culmination of the task, governments might be urged to begin pragmatic work on different ventures which are in pipeline from numerous years.

Conclusion

CASA-1000 project is believed to be an ice-breaker project for the two regions; Central and South Asia. It has potential to enhance the relations among two regions and specifically among the four participating states.

The importing states have dire need of electricity in summers and exporting states have surplus during that period creating a complementary situation. Moreover, it will play a role in the development of local electricity infrastructure of the four nations along with opening new doors of opportunities in the energy field as well as other trading dimensions. It will promote the interdependence among the partner states which will be a constructive step towards peace and prosperity. Though CASA-1000 will not be able to eliminate the energy problems of the importing countries, it can help improving their living standards.

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