

Chinese Food Culture in Pakistan: Analysis of Chinese Food Culture within the Framework of the CPEC Project

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ABSTRACT: In philosophy, “culture” denotes something separate from nature. Sociology, like ethology, defines culture as "what a group of people shares and unifies," that is, what is learned, transmitted, formed, and produced. Culture is what sets individuals apart from one other and their origins. It includes all aspects of human life, including communication and contact. Food is a need of existence, not just a means of sustenance. It also influences how we assess and recognize people, as well as their culture. Cuisines and ingredients vary greatly across civilizations, resulting in a fusion of foods and cultures. Food doesn't matter how they eat or cook it as long as it represents them and their culture. Cuisine and culture are intertwined, as are religion and customs. The rising number of Chinese people visiting Pakistan to work on hundreds of CPEC projects and Pakistanis visiting China for various reasons has helped Chinese cuisine gain popularity in Pakistan. Food is one of the most exciting ways to learn about culture. Active or experiential learning improves comprehension and retention. This article addresses the relationship between culture and food, claiming that teaching food as culture may assist build cultural awareness and intelligence. This theoretical investigation used primary and secondary data. The primary sources were books, official Chinese and Pakistani databases, and bilateral agreements, while secondary sources included research papers, newspapers, journals, and internet databases.

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INTRODUCTION

Apart from supplying nourishment and nutrition, food and eating habits significantly impact many parts of our lives, including our emotions, habits, appearance, health, hobbies, livelihood, social groupings, relationships, culture, and identity.

According to Barthes (2008), "food is a communication system, a collection of pictures, a protocol of usages, circumstances, and behaviors" According to Barthes (2008), food is seen as a symbol with meanings that may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on its usage and context. Gunkel (2016) refers towards this "ability to have multiple and distinct meanings in different contexts" as "the polysemy of food" and defines food as "a system of communication, a type of language through which we express our relationships, and identities including gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, national origin, festivity, and sacrality" (p. 246). Food is also believed to elicit emotions and form an emotional bond. Anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies have all looked at food as an object of study. However, it has not received much attention in the field of communication studies. When someone discusses food, the first thing that comes to mind is where it comes from, how it tastes, and relates to culture. According to the replies given, cultural and religious contexts are often cited. An individual's cultural identity is based on the values and information that they have accumulated during their lifetimes, together with their habits and lifestyles. One way to look at culture is to see it as a set of values, symbols, interpretations, and views that separate one group of people from another in developed civilizations. Its members generally understand a culture's symbols, objects, and practices to have the same or comparable meanings. Communication techniques are substantially molded and transmitted by culture, while culture shapes communication practices.

Mannur (2010, p. 5) emphasizes the importance of food in fostering nostalgia, enacting cultural identity, and developing alternative networks of closeness that are not bound by blood and filiation. A person's culture, background, and ethnicity may be accessed via cuisine (Barthes, 2008). The way food is prepared, presented, and eaten may speak volumes about an individual's, community's, or nation's identity and culture. Food nurtures and produces energy for the human body on an individual basis. Food also contributes to a person's emotional, spiritual, mental, and social well-being. It delivers multisensory pleasure that has an effect on our emotions and behaviors and is utilized for consolation. Additionally, it elicits nostalgia and recollections of people, events, and places; according to Wong (2007), "the sensory experience of food remains ingrained in one's memory bank long after the environment in which it is ingested vanishes or changes" (p. 121). Gunkel (2016) observes that food has a amazing power to express mental – even philosophical – frameworks such as time, nature, and home (p. 247). Additionally, food is utilized as a vehicle for expressing sentiments and loves and for forming emotional ties. Fieldhouse (1995) observes how food may be used to communicate friendliness, to ease social interactions, and to demonstrate care. Food has played a critical role throughout history in forging bonds between individuals and their families, friends, homes,

cultures, heritage, and nation. Food may serve as a symbol of identity and act as a uniting as well as separating force. Food is utilized to establish a community identity based on shared interests, race, religion, geography, and nationality. A passion for a specific cuisine, dish, or kind of food may unite individuals and play a role in forming ties and enduring connections and friendships.

At the same time, food may also be a source of division between individuals, depending on their dietary choices and religious limitations. As a result, food may take on various roles, meanings, and functions depending on the environment and circumstance. Food study has expanded beyond its biological, dietary, and nutritional functions, with scientists investigating how food and its production, cooking, eating, storage, and disposal practices are connected to sociocultural norms and social variety within a culture or country (Kong & Sinha 2016: Twiss 2012). The foodways of a community, or the way society sees, prepares, utilizes, and consumes food, are considered to reflect its values, philosophies, and identities. As mentioned by Zahra, Ho-Abdullah, and Tan (2014, p. 33), "investigating what and how a country consumes, as well as the components, quality, manufacturing, and ingestion process, may give us with a useful insight on many elements of their personal and cultural identities." According to Housefield (1995), the norms and practices governing the distribution and sharing of food indicate a society's social ties, social ideals, and structures.

Thus, research on culinary traditions has the potential to be revelatory in terms of elucidating culture and identity in society and country. Food has a plethora of meanings and importance in a multicultural and transcultural society like China. Food is often the focal point of numerous key events and festivities on both a personal and community level and is inextricably related to cultural concepts of hospitality, respect, and even love in the majority of Chinese communities. According to Housefield (1995, p. 78), "important life transitions, the rites of passage, are characterized in practically every society by ritual or ceremonial food distribution and eating." Individual, societal, cultural, and religious aspects all contribute significantly to the functions and importance of food in China. According to Gunkel (2016), food can only be understood via examining the symbolic function of food objects and practices; food is both a material cultural object and a ritual practice object (p. 246). As Housefield (1995) puts it, a rich tapestry of social meaning is woven around each meal event in intricate threads since food occurrences may have several meanings depending on the characters and the conditions of the play (p.79).

The increasing number of Chinese individuals going to Pakistan to work on hundreds of CPEC projects and the increasing number of Pakistanis visiting China for different reasons have aided in the growth of Chinese food's appeal. Numerous Pakistani cities, including Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, now have restaurants. Additionally, many Pakistani restaurants situated in cities involved in CPEC projects have included popular Chinese foods into their traditional Pakistani menus due to the presence of Chinese people in those areas. While some in the hotel business say that the CPEC has opened enormous prospects for commercial enterprises on both sides of the border, the arrival of Chinese cuisine

has given Pakistani dining tables a new appearance. This research is concerned with the many social connotations of food. Although there is widespread awareness of interest and enthusiasm for food and eating in China, research examining the many meanings and functions of Chinese food and foodways are still in their infancy. The purpose of this research is to examine the several facets of Chinese cuisine in Pakistan. Exploring the importance and potency of food as a social agent will help us better understand inter-ethnic interactions in Pakistan.

A theoretical research technique was chosen, and secondary data was gathered by examining a variety of reliable and authentic sources. Numerous researchers have already used the analytical study approach (Asif & Ling, 2019; Ali, Gen & Saleem, 2020; & Ziaur Rahman et al., 2020). Secondary data were gathered from official databases such as the Belt and Road Portal, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor Portal, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, the Pakistani Embassy in China, newspapers, publications, magazines, and articles. Additionally, the study consulted various policy documents, journal articles, reports, and working papers produced by international organizations such as UNESCO. The researchers attempted to include as much recent data as possible from all available sources in order to expedite the argument.

Food and Culture Theory

Geert Hofstede describes culture as “mind software.” His notion argues that culture is a kind of mental training that starts in infancy and serves to identify us as individuals. heroes, rituals, Symbols, and ideals are all part of the culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Many different fields have their food theories, such as ecological, economic, optimum foraging, and cultural (Yesner, 1987). Each of these ideas contains key elements that are relevant in various contexts and eras. Anthropological research has long supported the cultural theory of food (James, 2005).

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who authored “The Physiology of Taste” in 1825, was the first notable writer on food and culture. he said “Tell me what sort of food you consume, and I'll tell you what kind of guy you are,” (Brillat-Savarin, 2012). In 1968, Claude Lévi-Strauss published “The Culinary Triangle,” another early study on food and culture. He divided food into three categories based on how it was prepared: boiling, roasting, and smoking. Because it employed a pot, which he regarded a cultural item (Lévi-Strauss, 2008), he likened them to either a fundamental nature (roasted or smoked) or a cultural nature (boiled). Food, according to some scholars (Counihan & Esterik, 2008; Launay, 2003), is a significant cultural emblem that exists in practically all societies. “Dietary habits are defined as a collection of culturally standardized food behaviors demonstrated by people who have grown up in a certain cultural heritage” (Counihan & Esterik, 2008, p. 18).

Food is also symbolic in religious terms and functions as a mode of communication, a means of conveying information (Barthes, 2008). Food is utilized to convey messages in every civilization on Earth. Messages of community togetherness are prominent among them; food sharing is practically sacrosanct in virtually all faiths (Anderson, 2005). Most faiths have regulations or include food into religious rituals. Not only is food a symbol of cultural

distinction, it is also actively employed to sustain identity. It is a "means of social interaction that is infused with significance in a wide variety of cultures" (Rozin, 1996, p. 235). For example, whereas whole grain bread is considered a luxury item enjoyed by the middle class now, refined white bread was considered a luxury item consumed exclusively by the upper classes hundreds of years ago. "Foodways" refers to the "extensive network of activities associated with the purchase, preparation, display, performance, preservation, and consumption of food (Long, 2001, p. 240, as cited from Yoder 1972). The intensity of food traditions varies across culture. It is a self-evident fact that ethnic groupings are identified and often characterized by their foodways (Anderson, 2005, p. 201). For instance, some cultures see food preparation and consumption as a sensual art, while others value predictability and sanitation (Bouchet, 1999). When immigrants enter another culture, they retain one identity: food, its preparation and consumption. This identity is not rapidly assimilated throughout the acculturation process. Food habits and preferences are typically one of the final vestiges of heritage in an ethnic group, and it is frequently via food that negotiations with the host culture and local circumstances take place (Long, 2001, p. 238).

Communication is the exchange of ideas, messages, or information, such as via voice, pictures, signals, writing, or action, in order to convey a message or communicate a notion. Basically, it's the exchange of significant information between two or more individuals. Communication is a broad term that encompasses both verbal and nonverbal methods of conveying our understanding of the world to others. When it comes to communicating with people, we may utilize food as a nonverbal medium. Understanding how food is transmitted has been made possible by scholars such as Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Jacobson who supplied us with theoretical tools for this purpose. Semiotics is used by Barthes to explain the role and significance of food. A symbol, a sign that communicates something other than itself, he believes, is what food does. We're not simply purchasing or eating a thing when it comes to food; we're part of a larger system or chain of meanings. This includes the sun, water, animals, and humans that helped grow the mango; it's not just a single piece of fruit that you eat for nutrition. There are several ways that eating habits and culture are intertwined, according to Ronald Barthes. It aids us in tracing and analyzing the meaning of what we eat. Barthes discusses the effect of culture and class on taste, and how food is a situation in and of itself. Adverts' argument regarding the relationship between food and advertising is supported by coffee's association with taking a break rather than having an impact on the nervous system. Because of advertising, Barthes claims that consumers have grown more devoted to the brand than to the meal itself. As far as he can tell, he believes food has the power to speak for itself. Consumers and producers alike use food as a commodity. Similarly, food as a cultural artifact is linked to nostalgia and tradition, as well as the rhetorical repertoire of aesthetics, uniqueness, and identity.

Cultural Intelligence Theory

Ang, VanDyne, and Tan (2012) describe Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the capacity to modify and adapt to a variety of diverse cultural contexts. Although CQ is based on prior conceptions of social and emotional intelligence (EQ), Thomas and Inkson (2004) argue that it is more immediately applicable to cultural environments. Earley and Ang (2003) suggest a three-part framework for cultural intelligence, which they divide into three categories. Cultural intelligence is comprised of three components: cognition (the "head" or awareness), motivation (the "heart" or persistence), and behavior (the "action" or adjustment to the cultural context). All three components are vital in the development of cultural intelligence. For meaningful cultural contact to take place, all three components must be present (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Because it involves the mind, then awareness, and lastly acceptance or at the very least sensitivity to various cultures (MacNab, 2012), this three-step approach offers experiential learning that is important for teaching culture. Formal CQ training may be divided into three categories, according to Thomas and Inkson (2004): factual, analytical, and experiential. They come to the conclusion that among the three ways, experiential training is the most rigorous and successful in establishing a high cognitive ability (p. 72). For further information, please check the following link: <http://www.culturalq.com/class.html>.

Active and Experiential Learning Theory

According to Chavez and Poirier (2007), active learning is described as being highly participative, including both student activities and reflection on those actions. Whetten (2007) describes active learning as being essential to good teaching (Brinkley et al., 2011; Svinivki & McKeachie, 2011) and as being a crucial component of effective course design. Memory research has shown that associations are the most important factor in recall. As Svinivki and McKeachie (2011) explain, "if we develop our learning by thinking about its link to other things we know...we are more likely to recall it when we need to utilize it later" (Svinivki & McKeachie, 2011, p. 37). Active learning fosters interaction in our brains with other memories, which improves improved comprehension and retention of what we've learned. However, although comparable to active learning theory, experiential learning theory is described as learning that includes integrating experience with ideas (Ng, VanDyne, and Ang, 2009). Experiential learning theory is defined as learning that requires integrating experience with concepts. The educational theory of John Dewey, published in 1938, was the beginning of experiential learning (Chavez & Poirier, 2007). Learning, according to Kolb David (1984), is defined as "the process by which knowledge is formed via the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Experiential learning is a powerful tool for promoting cross-cultural understanding and acceptance. In the words of James McCaffery (1993), "the experiential model is particularly well adapted to cross-cultural skill training since most of the strategies are active and involved, and because they encourage participants to practice and try things out" (p. 235). According to cognitive psychology, stimuli that interact with other memories and sensory regions of the brain strengthen the learning process. Both active learning and experiential learning theories are founded on this observation.

Curiosity and new experiences, in a similar vein, boost our cognitive capabilities and enhance our learning. The findings of stimulus novelty studies have shown that the quantity and depth of information processing conducted by people is significantly influenced by novelty (Burke & James, 2008, pp. 279-280). Curiosity is a powerful motivation for learning and personal development (Kashdan, Rose, and Fincham, 2004), and it may be used to achieve these goals. Via the interdisciplinary ideas of food as culture, cultural intelligence, and active or experience learning as the basis, the suggested method of teaching culture using food samples may be built on top of that framework. There are a plethora of classification schemes for the dietary and cultural elements. In food, there are many differences, as evidenced by the following physiological experiences: sweetness; saltiness; sourness; bitterness; temperature; cold, warm; pure, unclean; holy; healthy; secular; dry; genuine; preparation; spicy; attitudes; necessary; and social ties (traditional, public, private; luxurious; festive; exotic) (Bouchet, 1999). Because of the many different influences and points of view, analyzing food and culture may be difficult, but it can also be entertaining. Because of the complexity of human people and their cultures, it will be difficult to identify causation; yet, correlations may be useful in providing information.

Methods Used in Teaching Culture

One of the facts of contemporary society is its plurality, its diversity, and this is reflected in the word pluralism. This is an irrefutable and unavoidable fact that cannot be avoided. It is as much to suggest that males should live with (M'Begniga & Asif, 2020) as it is to prove that people should live with. As a result, one method of teaching culture is via the use of dimensions or classes, which provide students with a simple heuristic to utilize in their learning. Because of its simplicity, every global business textbook includes a dimensional approach to understanding culture. The nine dimensions of project Entire planet (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), Hofstede's six dimensions (Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*, 1984), and finally Trompenaars' seven dimensions (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) have all been developed through large-scale research. The training in intercultural communication (ICT) on the other hand, is something that might be highlighted here. As a matter of fact, intercultural communication training (ICT) is the most common application of intercultural communication theory, which is the study of intercultural interaction at the level of a group of people. Using culture-general (etic) observational categories to contrast one's own worldview with other views of the world and recognize different cultures that make much difference for trying to coordinate connotation across cultures, the strategic and operational form of ICT can be used to communicate effectively across cultures. As M'Begniga & Asif (2020) Apart from that, professors of global business may also instruct students on differences in business etiquette such as personal space, gift giving, eye or body contact, and other topics by using resources such as Morrison et al. (1994) "Kiss, Bow, Shake Hands" and Axtell (1998) "Gestures."

Every global business textbook discusses major cultural variations in language, conventions, and values, as well as faiths, all of which aid in the development of cultural sensitivity. Developing a thorough awareness of the

variations in smell, color, taste, and other sensations that may impact their goods or services is essential for successful worldwide commercial operations. A large number of instructors use active learning techniques such as case studies (Ramburuth & Daniel, 2011) or real-life examples to ensure that students acquire the content efficiently. Some others have employed or encouraged innovative interactive learning approaches such as video or online conferencing (Hu, 2008), novel narrative analysis (Wright & Larsen, 2012), films (Cardon, 2010), role playing (Blanton & John E. Barbuto, 2005; Anakwe, 2002; Humes & Reilly, 2008) and others. Food and food tales were employed in the classroom by Chavez and Poirier (2007) to promote cultural diversity knowledge among American students. The event "Food Along the CPEC" was held on February 21st, 2019 and was organized by the University of Peshawar. A culinary festival that included delights from Chinese and Pakistani cuisines, as well as traditional Pakistani cuisine. In total, over 54 kiosks showcased the cultures of Pakistan and China, as well as a diverse selection of culinary products ranging from Chinese soups, pasta and rice-based meals, to savoury snacks, baked goods, and the delectable fare of Pakistan and the Middle East. Face painting, henna tattooing, cosmetics, jewelry, hand painted apparel items, stores, pottery, and handicrafts were among the many attractions that drew a large number of female visitors. The second portion of the event consisted of a national culinary competition with the topic "Pakistan-China Food Fusion." The tournament was attended by students from around 22 female institutions throughout the country. Both rice-based main course dishes and desserts were entered into the competition, which was separated into two categories. During the competition, some of the most creative fusions were shown. The dishes made were rated based on their degree of fusion, the type of the Pakistani or Chinese cuisine that was fused, the quality of preparation, and the level of presentation (University of Peshawar, 2019).

The Relationship Between Food and Culture

Civilization is a multitude of tactics, as brilliant as priceless stones set in a golden crown, used to conceal the sound of, and the horrible meaning of, human people grinding their teeth. The significance of man's participation in the food cycle that we had thought may not apply to us (Belasco, 1999, as cited from Oates, 1993, p. 25). Since the dawn of civilization, food and getting together to eat have been a need and a joy in all societies. Inviting someone to dine with us communicates something about our connection with them, and the menu choices might reflect our attitude toward them (Long, 2001, p. 251). Certain meals contain memories that, when evoked, instantly transfer us to previous events and eras. Food contributes to the definition of culture. Often, the final habit of altering throughout the acculturation process is the food type (Kittler, Sucher, & Nahikian-Nelms, 2012). Food is cultural, but it also has a cultural component. Every society has food laws governing what ingredients are used, who consumes what, and when and how food is offered (Leschziner, 2006, p. 423). Numerous culinary experts assert that food is culture, although culture encompasses a plethora of other complexities. Culture is a collection of heuristics that use rules, beliefs, and traditions to assist individuals in symbolically defining their distinctive identity. Cultural heritage describes what is vital to the history of a

people or nation, it embodies their self-defined collective national identity" (DeSoucey, 2010, p. 435). Thus, the writers of food are partly accurate. According to Turmo (2001, p. 99), the act of cooking becomes a process of food patrimonialization since when one chooses one dish over another one picks particular ingredients, seasonings, and culinary methods that enable one to associate the item with a tradition. Various tastes are linked with parspecific cultures or countries.

The French utilize butter, milk, and wine, but the Chinese use soy sauce, rice wine, and ginger root to flavor their dishes (Kittler, Sucher, & Nahikian-Nelms, 2012). Elisabeth Rozin was the first to identify flavor principle by how different cuisines are distinguished from one another. "For example, what distinguishes southern Italian cuisine as "Italian" is the use of olive oil, tomatoes, and basil or oregano, among other ingredients" (Pliner, 2008, p. 54). The environment has a significant impact on the development of foodways around the globe. Grains such as wheat and barley were farmed by farmers in the Near East and the Mediterranean region for centuries. In the far East, rice and millet are grown. In the Americas, maize and manioc root are widely grown. Africa is home to millet and yams. Potatoes are widespread throughout Europe. Sheep and goats are found across Europe and the Mediterranean. Llamas may be found throughout South America. Fish may be found in a large geographic area, including Finally, new development is the preservation of certain traditional foods and names by organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Slow Food Movement, the European Union, and Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). It is now time for CPEC construction to enter a new stage of high-quality growth, with a strong emphasis on industrial and agricultural cooperation and substantial bilateral complementarity in agricultural commerce, cold-chain storage, and other industries (Xinyi, 2021).

Multiculturalism and Transculturalism in Context of the CPEC

The phrases multicultural and transcultural are employed to define the sociocultural environment of China in this research, which is a hybrid of the two. It is possible to live in a multicultural society while retaining each community's unique individual heritage and identity. A multicultural society comprises diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious communities that co-exist as a unified community in a primarily practical way while retaining each community's unique individual heritage and identity. Although there have been some positive contacts between various cultural groups, there have also been other instances when knowledge and comprehension of other cultures have been shallow, restricted, or even non-existent. Furthermore, to emphasize the multi-polarity of the globe, it is important to emphasize that one of the markers of this multi-polarity is its conflicts, namely the collision of cultures and civilizations. As M'Begniga and Asif have said (2020), An ethnic and cultural community that is more open to interaction and mixing among ethnic and cultural communities, traditions and practices, and interculturalization is distinguished from a transcultural community, which is characterized by blurring of boundaries and identities, resulting in hybrid cultures and mixed identities that are more fluid,

dynamic, and open to growth (Hinnerová 2007). Specifically, according to Epstein (2009, p. 349), "multiculturalism paves the way from the dominance of one canon to the diversity of cultures, and transculturalism moves even further, from the diversity of cultures to the even greater diversity of individuals, transcending their rigid cultural identities." According to Epstein, there is a deeper and stronger collective knowledge, acceptance, respect, and tolerance for all cultures in a transcultural society, resulting in a more dynamic and progressive society.

While each of these concepts may refer to China, they are not always used in the same way to denote distinct periods of history, geographical places within the nation, or pockets of society depending on age, class, or social hierarchy. The country of China may be both multicultural and transcultural at the same time, depending on the circumstances and domain. While there are some domains in which communities resist transculturalism and prefer to preserve and uphold the purity and uniqueness of their cultural heritage, such as language and rituals, there appears to be a greater acceptance of cultural hybridity and blending in other domains such as food and fashion. As a result of this journey, China seems to have discovered a way to be both multicultural and transcultural, hang on to their traditional cultural history while embracing other cultures, and fluidly adapt to and learn from the various cultures that surround them. The next part will offer a quick overview of multiculturalism in China and its implications for Chinese Literature written in English in the country.

As a result of CPEC, an opportunity to establish a multicultural character existed and continues to exist. At the start, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has encouraged medium- to large-scale Chinese investors to invest in Pakistan. However, the Chinese were thwarted by the confluence of bureaucracy and the conservative industrial class in the United States. On the other hand, society was unprepared to deal with the influx of so many foreigners into the local marketplace. The scenario was made much more difficult by security and political considerations. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has attracted thousands of Chinese citizens to Pakistan. They are either working on projects or researching potential investment opportunities. In addition, the Chinese government fostered people-to-people interaction and organized trips for members of the media, academics, politicians, businesses, and youth in the hopes of fostering a deeper understanding of one another's cultures and social customs. Almost 23,000 Pakistani students are enrolled in Chinese educational institutions, where they study various subjects. Initially, Pakistanis were thrilled about Chinese people and sympathetic to the notion of visits, but as time has gone on, the cultural divides have become vaster between the two countries.

The presence of a multicultural character is also a response to the persistent extremism in our society. It has the potential to foster tolerance and acceptance of the country's diversity. It contributes to the enrichment of society and the expansion of individual perspectives. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represents a significant potential for developing this component of Pakistani society, particularly when Pakistanis have little chance to contact other countries. Many experts see the Belt and Road Initiative, which includes

the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as a resurgence of the ancient Silk Route, which united civilizations and civilizations and brought Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam to China. It had also aided in sharing technical information and the development of trade, commerce, and collaboration between countries. (Rana, 2021)

History of Chinese Food

The Chinese people who are eating in ancient times, in the days before supermarkets, in China as much as anyplace else, "cuisine" was more a matter of availability than flavor. According to archaeological findings, rice may have been farmed in central and eastern China as far back as 5000 BCE. Rice was cooked and consumed, as well as fermented to make rice wine, in ancient China. In northern China, where rice does not grow, people grew millet and foraged for wild sorghum to supplement their diet. The millet was cooked and turned into a porridge-like consistency. The meat was only offered on rare occasions and was cut into tiny pieces to present to guests. By 5500 BCE, the Chinese were consuming pork, and about 4000 BCE, sheep, and cattle were brought in from other parts of the world. The Chinese ate soybeans crushed and drank soybean oil as a source of fat. Because meat was so costly and Buddhists were not allowed to consume it, tofu and bean curd were employed as a source of protein about the year 1000 AD.

However, even in ancient times, one of the unique characteristics of Chinese cuisine and cookery was heavily influenced by philosophy and religious ideas. In approximately 2000 BCE, the mythical Emperor Fuxi is claimed to have taught people how to fish, hunt, cultivate crops, and cook. As well as this, Confucius (about 550 BCE) had high regard for the art of cooking, and he set culinary standards and correct table manners - many of which are being followed today. Despite this, social status significantly influenced individual eating since individuals born into noble families could only consume specific delicacies. One of the most noticeable aspects of Chinese dining (and cooking) that westerners notice is the usage of chopsticks as a tool for eating and cooking. A pair of bronze chopsticks, believed to be the world's oldest known object, dates back to around 1200 BCE. As the population increased and cooking fuel became more limited, people learned to save fuel by chopping food into smaller pieces to cook more quickly. Therefore, chopsticks replaced knives at the eating table (which was contrary to Confucius' teaching that knives should not be used at the table), and they became the preferred tool, first for cooking but subsequently for dining as well.

When the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) was early, people ate noodles prepared from wheat dough or millet flour. During the Tang Dynasty (618 – 906 CE), Chinese people sought all potential sources of food in order to maintain a diverse diet and maintain good health; however, cows and bulls were off-limits due to religious restrictions against eating them. Tea drinking became more prevalent among people of all socioeconomic groups. Although the Chinese had been drinking tea for thousands of years, millet wine was more popular than tea at this period.

As early as the Song Dynasty (960 – 1127 CE), cosmopolitanism resulted in restaurants that served Chinese delicacies to the general public, which had previously only been accessible to the nobles. In the winter, the Chinese would keep ice blocks; then, as the weather became warm, they would put the ice blocks in rice wine to make it very chilly. They began selling ice cubes in the late Tang Dynasty, and they would sweeten the ice cubes to entice more consumers as a marketing strategy. During the Northern Song Dynasty, they began selling sweetened ice cubes and frozen plum juice on the streets. Ice cream first appeared during the Yuan Dynasty (1279 – 1368 CE), when a fresh discovery resulted in the invention of refrigeration. The great famine that came from Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966 and is still fresh in many people's minds today, had a long-lasting impact on Chinese food and the Chinese people themselves. Even in times of tremendous famine, people were eager to consume any meal in order to live. This willingness to experiment with new and unfamiliar cuisines is still present today (Wickham, 2020).

Different Features

According to the eminent French sinologist Jacques Gernet, "There is no question that China has shown more innovation than any other culture in this domain than any other civilization." The Chinese have historically been among the peoples of the globe who have been most interested in food and eating. Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, Confucianism, Traditional Chinese Medicine, cultural and aesthetic accomplishments, and national characteristics contribute to the development of this cuisine culture that dates back thousands of years. In general, the following characteristics may be found in Chinese cuisine culture:

China has vast land and abundant resources, and each region has a distinct climate, natural resources, and folk traditions that vary from the others. After a lengthy period, each location has developed its distinct cuisine tastes. Those in southern China, for example, are used to eating rice as their staple diet, but people in northern China are accustomed to eating noodles or steamed buns as their central cuisine. When it comes to taste, the whole nation may be split into four sections: the sweet south, the salty north, the sour east, and the spicy western regions. From the raw materials used to the cooking techniques used, Chinese people will modify their menus with each season change since each season employs a distinct spice and accompanies it with a different meal. Seasonal meals in the winter are thicker and richer in taste, but summer cuisines are light and refreshing in flavor; winter cuisines are typically braised or stewed, while summer cuisines are mostly served cold and topped with sauce. Chinese cuisine places a high value on the visual appeal of a meal, and it strives to achieve harmony in terms of color, aroma, taste, form, and tool use in every dish. It is possible to convey the esthetic sense of the meal via a variety of means. Whether the raw material is Chinese cabbage or carrot, they may all be sliced into various shapes to fit the rest of the meal, resulting in a highly united mental and physical satisfaction for the audience. Chinese people believe that food, in addition to supplying nutrients for the body, can heal sickness. When you are not unwell, you may treat your condition by eating the right foods; nevertheless, if the diet does not cure your ailment, you may need to resort to pharmaceuticals for help.

The FDA has determined that medicine has some toxicity and that food is a safer approach to maintaining health and treating illness than medicine is now available (sadly, it works slower).

Philosophical Thinking in Chinese Food Culture

Traditional Chinese philosophy has permeated every aspect of Chinese culinary culture, from cooking to eating. Yin-Yang and the Five Elements: Yin and Yang are two complimentary parts of every phenomenon represented by Yin and Yang. While the Five Elements are represented by the metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, nature is generated by the circulation of the Five Elements and their mutual promotion and restriction among themselves. As an example of how this philosophical thinking may be applied to Chinese cuisine, Yin and Yang symbolize two characteristics of the human body, while five components indicate that the food can be categorized into five categories: hot (yin), warm (yang), neutral (neutral), superb (yang), cold (yin), and neutral (yin). Consuming hot and warm foods may help promote the Yang energy in the human body, while consuming cool and cold foods can help promote the Yin energy in the human body. Neutral food is a kind of nutritional balance for the human body. When the Yin and Yang in the human body are kept balanced, individuals sustain their good health.

The unity of man and nature: according to this philosophical perspective, people's diets should be tailored to the natural environment in which they live. People who live in a wet area, for example, should consume more hot and spicy foods, which may aid in the release of moisture from the body. According to the above, Chinese philosophy significantly impacts Chinese food, influencing everything from raw material selection to matching, from the cooking process to cooking technique. The whole cooking process in Chinese cuisine reflects the harmony and balance of the natural environment. Chinese cuisine should not only gratify the taste buds of the eater, but it should also be beneficial to their health (C. n.d.2021).

A Delectable Comfort and love: A Brief History of Pakistani-Chinese Cuisine

According to Fatima (2020), it has long been documented that most urban Pakistanis like Chinese cuisine in particular. However, many people are unaware that this situation concludes a long-standing interaction between the Chinese and the Indian subcontinent. The majority of Chinese cuisine present in this region is classified as Indo-Chinese cuisine, more precisely as Pakistani-Chinese cuisine. In most cases, it is a medley of acidic, sticky, and spicy sauces that adhere to various delicious meats and are served with a freshly prepared dish of fried veggie rice or (pronounced "chow mein" 炒面) noodles. Since colonial times, Chinese food in South Asia has been defined by a long history of migration and hybrid cuisines, which have marked the cuisine of the Chinese who have settled in the region. Chinese immigrants have been arriving in the Indian Subcontinent since the 18th century, with the majority of them settling in and around Calcutta under the British Empire. The provinces of Hubei, Guangdong, and Shandong provided the majority of the migrants. Many of the newcomers were Hakka, a different ethnic and linguistic community that speaks a dialect of Chinese rather

than the standard Mandarin language. They established themselves as dealers, artisans, shopkeepers, and, of course, restaurant proprietors across India.

As a result of the country's establishment in 1947, the Sino-Indian War of 1962, and the establishment of Bangladesh in 1971, waves of Chinese immigrants came and dispersed across Pakistan's various regions. After 1962, most Chinese Muslims fled to Pakistan to avoid Indian persecution and internment camps, while some were Chinese Muslims who preferred to reside in Muslim-dominated nations such as Pakistan. According to the available data, they often settled in big cities such as Karachi and Lahore, as well as smaller towns such as Rawalpindi and Abbottabad. Chinese families had also established restaurants in Dhaka and Chittagong in East Pakistan; nevertheless, they were forced to relocate to West Pakistan to avoid political unrest and start a new life. Chinese immigration to Pakistan has received little attention in academic circles, despite that research on Chinese immigrant culture in India has been conducted extensively. According to anthropologist Alice Ping-hsiu Lin, the Chinese population in Pakistan is not a monolithic group but rather a heterogeneous group with complex identities who consider themselves just as much South Asian as they are Chinese, according to their own words.

Karachi was the site of the establishment of some of Pakistan's earliest Chinese restaurants. There is a record of the A.B.C Restaurant in Karachi's Saddar neighborhood, which is believed to have been established in the 1930s by a teacher named Li Dianxian, the country's first known Chinese restaurant establishment. It was said that Premier Zhou Enlai paid a visit to the restaurant in 1964 and that he continued to attend it until the business closed in 1988. The Hong Kong Restaurant at the Hotel Metropole in Karachi and the Four Seasons at the Golden Dragon in Islamabad are among the other options. It is one of the more prominent, still-existing establishments that serves fusion Pakistani-Chinese cuisine. Mei Kong is a restaurant that began in Karachi and has since expanded to include branches in all of Pakistan's major cities. According to the proprietor, the current cooks have received formal Chinese culinary training.

As Chinese cuisine started to take over the culinary scene in Pakistan's main cities throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it also grew more popular in Pakistani families at the same time. Women were interested in learning about the unusual yet enticing new tastes of thick soups and sauces made with cornflour and how to make them. It was seen as a weekend treat for the whole family and a welcome change from traditional Pakistani cuisine. However, it provided the same sense of security that comes with familiar flavors and spices. It was not a problem that they did not have the right ingredients or a diverse palate: they changed the recipes to suit the people's tastes in the area. In order to carry on the heritage of nutritious Pak-Chinese cuisine started by the previous chefs. We should use this opportunity to discuss what is perhaps the most renowned of all Indo-Chinese dishes: the Chicken Manchurian. The Chicken Manchurian, prepared in a thick and spicy tomato sauce with fried, diced chicken and veggies, is a genuinely Sub-continental meal. Nelson Wang, a third-generation Indian-Chinese, is credited with inventing the Manchurian meal in 1975 due to an impromptu cooking session.

Even though the cold winter environment of Manchuria province does not lend itself to fowl cuisine, the term "Chicken Manchurian" is likely originated from the soup 'Manchow,' which is an approximate transcription of the word "Manchurian." We do not know precisely how the Chicken Manchurian made its way to Pakistan, but it is possible that a contemporary of Wang's took it to Karachi during a fresh wave of Chinese immigrants who came in the 1980s. It did not take long for the meal to gain popularity among Pakistani diners as well. Chinese restaurants are experimenting with unique Pakistani-Chinese cuisines, as well as more conventional Chinese dishes, in order to stay ahead of the competition. Also growing in popularity in high-end restaurants is the notion of the "Pan-Asian" restaurant, which blends Chinese cuisine and other Asian palettes such as Thai and Indonesian cuisine.

Meanwhile, even though older Chinese communities in Pakistan have been shrinking for some time, the Belt and Road Initiative has significantly increased Chinese people's exposure and culture. Greater visibility will provide more opportunities for the various Chinese population in Pakistan to communicate and document their different historical narratives. Furthermore, if cultural interactions between the two nations get more substantial and more regular, it would be more intriguing to see regional Chinese foods introduced into the Pakistani culinary scene to provide more diversity to the menu.

Promoting cultural interaction via CPEC

Since the historic Silk Road construction, there has been a long history of cultural exchange between Pakistan and China. During this period, there was a progressive growth in the amount of cultural interchange and collaboration. Despite the expansion of commercial and trade relations between China and Pakistan, there remains a critical area of cultural collaboration and communication that has to be improved on both sides. It is necessary to promote cultural cooperation and communication in other sectors covered by the CPEC project as part of its overall objectives. There have been several beneficial exchanges and collaborations in various subjects, including sports, education, literature, art, cultural relics, information, youth affairs, women's affairs, health, publishing, archives, and other areas of interest. Chinese cultural troupes paid visits to several cities in Pakistan, where they performed folk music, dance, acrobatics, and traditional instrumental performances. President Xi made a speech at the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, in which he emphasized that the "Shanghai Spirit" is vital for prosperity and peace-seeking common ground and that it is strengthened through cultural linkages and people-to-people interaction (Asif & Ling, 2018).

It is important to note that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is about more than simply energy and infrastructure projects; it is also about strengthening people-to-people connections between Pakistan and China. Increasing cultural cooperation between Pakistan and China is being pursued via activities such as participation in cultural events in both countries. The promotion of cooperation has been achieved by utilizing many components of culture, including cuisine and language instruction. The CPEC project is equally important for both nations since it would increase commerce and promote

regional integration. Although this project has a cultural component, the CPEC and its impact on Pak-China people-to-people contacts are being examined in the context of the historical role played by ancient trade routes between the East and the West in the development of religious, cultural, and artistic exchanges among the foremost centers of civilizations of that era, which is being examined in the context of the historical role played by ancient trade routes between the East and the West on the development of religious, cultural, and artistic exchanges among the foremost centers of civilizations Asif (2018) describes the significance of the well-known Chinese Silk Road, which includes branches that stretch practically the whole length of the globe (Asif, 2018). A significant value to the world is the diversity and uniqueness of Chinese culture, harmoniously combined with other cultures. The Chinese culture guide offers material organized into categories such as Traditions, Heritage, the arts, Festivals, Language, and Symbols (Asif & Ali, 2019).

With the establishment of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, China and Pakistan share their cultural values, norms, and patterns, among other things (CPEC). This is the most recent effort in the history of bilateral economic cooperation between China and Pakistan. The life methods of a society or groups within a society are referred to as its culture. It covers things like how people dress, their marital rituals, language, family life, job habits, religious rites, and recreational activities. Cultural ties between China and Pakistan are more neutral and inclusive than they are with other countries. In particular, under President Xi Jinping, who has heralded the resurgence of the Silk Road, that the cultural interactions between the 'iron brothers' have gained new vigor and gained new speed. Culture and people-to-people ties were stressed during the Belt and Road Summit, which took place in Beijing in May 2017, and the 19th Plenary Session of the Communist Party of China in November 2017. Because of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), both nations have launched on a voyage of colorful cultural interchange once again. These cultural exchanges and cooperation will significantly strengthen the comprehensive bilateral relationships and stabilize regional developments, allowing the bilateral strategic and cooperative partnerships between China and Pakistan to deepen even further in the "all-weather" conditions. The most successful goal of this initiative is to promote understanding and collaboration between national societies for the mutual benefit of all parties involved in it. To promote mutual understanding, Chinese and Pakistani citizens are sharing socio-economic patterns and exchanging material and non-material cultural heritage. If the thoughts mentioned above are correct, the frequency and activity of bilateral communication and cultural trade between China and Pakistan would significantly increase. Building cooperation institutes and cultural trade centers, such as the China-Pakistan Folk Culture and Art Centre and the China-Pakistan Film Centre, which may serve as fantastic examples of the nations, and the "Belt and Road Initiative," is also viable (Asif et al., 2021).

The goal of cultural relations is not always to gain an unfair edge on one side of the table. The most successful goal of this initiative is to promote

understanding and collaboration between national societies for the mutual benefit of all parties involved in it. To promote mutual understanding, Chinese and Pakistani citizens are sharing socio-economic patterns and exchanging material and non-material cultural heritage. China and Pakistan are exchanging goods, commodities, and resources with one another in material culture and trade. A non-material culture includes cuisine, language, clothes, religion, and way of life patterns.

Consequently, economic prosperity strengthened the social links and bonds between the two countries, and their friendship flourished due to their mutual progress. Pakistan has also taken an active role in a variety of cultural events. In addition to participating in the Xinjiang Cultural Festival with their delegation, Jamal Shah, the director of the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), brought various acts that showcased the rich culture of Pakistan. To promote mutual understanding, Chinese and Pakistani citizens are sharing socio-economic patterns and exchanging material and non-material cultural heritage. The trend of exchanging cultural activities between China and Pakistan is gaining momentum like a hurricane daily. The following response came from a field survey participant: "Chinese work ideals and working hours much too much influence him." They are concerned about the safety of local workers, and their working hours are the same as those of Chinese workers. If they work longer hours, they are compensated with additional compensation." Pakistani students are making strides forward in China's top colleges while retaining their cultural characteristics, traditions, norms, and values in their hearts and minds. Every year, on cultural days, Pakistani students demonstrate their heritage and traditions. In a similar vein, everyone in China is aware of Pakistan; a local shopkeeper or cab driver is aware of the relationship between China and Pakistan. When they learn that we are from Pakistan, the first thing they say in Chinese is "Hao peng you (好朋友)," which means "good friends." Communities in both nations are proud of their country's alliance well with friendship.

Food plays a vital role in the development of cultural and people-to-people ties between China and Pakistan. Chinese residents in Pakistan take pleasure in the cuisine and flavors of the country. During the interviews, a Chinese responder said that they are "in love with chicken biryani, chapati, and chicken." Most of the time, Pakistani co-workers bring food from their homes to share with their Chinese colleagues. It is often believed in China that Pakistanis are very welcoming people. Even though they do not have enough earned resources, they are always willing to provide others nutritious food.

In contrast to Pakistani employees who work with Chinese colleagues, Chinese workers always share their meals and expose them to Chinese cuisine. Some Chinese restaurants have been established on a grander scale in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, among other cities. These restaurants provide cuisine that has the same flavor as that which is available in China. The same kind of Pakistani food restaurants can also be found in the major cities of China, where we can discover the same type of Pakistani cuisine. Another beneficial consequence of the CPEC is the increase in marriages between Chinese and Pakistani citizens. Prior to the establishment of the CPEC, Pakistani male

students were marrying Chinese females. The majority of the couples resided in China and worked together to make money. However, Chinese guys are increasingly working in Pakistan on various projects, marrying Pakistani women, and living with them in the country of their birth. It is the beginning of a new link between two civilizations that are opposed to one another. This is a new cultural wave that has swept over China and Pakistan recently. Even when we go to Pakistan's major cities, we do not see the faces of Americans; instead, we see the faces of Chinese people who live all across the country. In Pakistan, the Chinese language has supplanted English as the language of employment prospects.

Additionally, the study of the Chinese language and history is becoming increasingly popular in Pakistani academic courses. The University of Agricultural Faisalabad established a Chinese language institution to increase the number of students who want to study the language. Even most students achieved a satisfactory HSK score and then applied to Chinese institutions, increasing their prospects of being admitted to China. Even in tiny towns and villages, workers who have learned the Chinese language through their employers can now teach the language to their fellow citizens. Similar developments are taking place in Pakistan, with Chinese employees acquiring Urdu and other local languages in the country's labor force. We cannot comprehend another's culture unless we are familiar with the tangible and non-material aspects of their own culture. With the CPEC, both nations can communicate with one another and better understand one another's lifestyles, motives, concerns, and ambitions. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a solid human instrument that may inherit both cultures, establish a new social pattern, and introduce new knowledge into Pakistani and Chinese communities.

CPEC: A chance for the market and employment creation

Pakistan will finally say goodbye to its energy constraint,' proclaims the cover of a recent edition of the Huashang Weekly, Pakistan's first Chinese-language newspaper, which is distributed in 5,000 copies each week to critical cities and CPEC project sites around the country. According to the official, it is intended to serve as a link between Pakistan and China. Those who come from China have little knowledge about Pakistan, whether in terms of business or even culture. Several Chinese-focused projects have previously been established in Pakistan by Infosphere, a Shanghai-based corporation with a presence. Among them is the newspaper, which is a glossy tabloid that costs around \$1,000 for full-page advertising. They also operated a Chinese-language courier service and built a smartphone app to enable Chinese-speaking customers to buy meals from Pakistani eateries. A large number of enterprises are forming in order to take advantage of this Chinese migration. Although authentic Chinese cuisine is difficult to come by and is often rejected by desi palates, I am nonetheless enthusiastic about trying new Chinese restaurants, despite being a connoisseur of Chinese cuisine. One of the most famous ancient cuisines in the world, Chinese cuisine emphasizes the use of entire grains and fruits, vegetables, fresh fish, and seafood (Hashim, 2017).

In Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is expected to increase the GDP growth rate by 1.5 percent. Employment and globalization are positively related to one another and enormously significant to economic policymakers in developing nations such as Pakistan (Hijazi et al., 2017). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will boost the local economy by creating many employment and commercial possibilities (L. Ali et al., 2016). More specifically, the result of infrastructure development is determined by the perceived economic evolutions of communities in question (Tehsin et al., 2017).

All of the projects associated with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, according to a report, are continuing ahead without any interruption. Out of 88 projects, 19 have been finished, 28 are in the process of being implemented, and 41 are in the planning stages. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has created around 75,000 employment in Pakistan. Chinese labor accounts for just 17.5 percent of the number of workers now employed on the CPEC, with Pakistani residents accounting for 82.5 percent of the overall labor force. Projects in electricity and infrastructure under the CPEC have made significant contributions to Pakistan's socio-economic growth. Even during the pandemic crisis, almost 47,000 people were employed on different CPEC projects at any one time. Out of this total, 40,000 individuals, including laborers, engineers, and technicians, are Pakistani nationals, accounting for around 82.5 percent. The remaining 7,000 people are Chinese, including senior engineers, and the Chinese workforce accounts for 17.5 percent of the total.

According to the research, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides huge chances for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) to thrive. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has a significant impact on small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan, and many transporters are involved in CPEC projects. Residents and companies are also donating a variety of items to the ongoing construction projects. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Pakistan's economy, and these firms are benefiting from CPEC projects by gaining knowledge that will help them expand and prosper in the future. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is expected to transform Pakistan's economic structure and boost the country's gross domestic product (GDP) by more than 2 percent. This is a significant percentage rise in GDP growth for any nation (CPECinfo, 2020).

Oriental cuisine: CPEC brings boon for Chinese restaurants

According to hotel and restaurant owners, the influx of Chinese people boosts economic development. The number of Chinese restaurants in Islamabad is increasing rapidly, and the post-CPEC scenario has also compelled local eateries to provide Chinese cuisine in response to an inflow of Chinese citizens. According to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) statistics, the city has around 15 Chinese restaurants, 12 of which debuted after 2013. According to the management of a Chinese restaurant, Mei Kong was the first restaurant to open in Rawalpindi in the 1970s. Ten years later, the federal capital's China Town restaurant opened. He said that the restaurants' rise is not just due to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) but also to many Chinese businessmen and visitors who are prospective clients but have no direct connection to the project.

However, he said that since the start of CPEC, the influx of Chinese clients had grown significantly, assisting the hotel and restaurant industry's economic development. Additionally, he added that before, the Chinese labor was restricted to mining and energy projects like the Saindak energy facilities, but they were now present in considerable numbers in Pakistan's main towns. Another Chinese restaurant manager, Andrew, said that his establishment attracts many local and international clients, demonstrating that admiration for Chinese cuisine is not confined to Chinese citizens.

According to the survey report, the proprietor of a Pakistani hotel, Chinese clients routinely visit his restaurant for Pakistani cuisine and appreciate local specialties, particularly biryani, one of their favorite cuisines. A growing number of restaurants and some small home-based operations are serving Chinese cuisine to their prospective clients in addition to the traditional cuisine. "Pakistan's spicy cuisine has not been suitable for us for a long time; therefore, we must return to our traditional food, to which we are better used," said a Chinese resident who runs a small business out of a leased flat. Potential customers included Chinese nationals employed by large corporations such as ZTE and Huawei, who could take advantage of their low prices and experience the flavors of their home country. Another Chinese restaurant, Jade's Operational Manager, refuted that the restaurant catered only to Chinese customers by stating that the bulk of their customers were Pakistanis and foreigners. Chinese restaurants are becoming more popular throughout the world since they are sanitary and stomach-friendly. According to him, they are no longer limited to their traditional meals, and in addition to oriental cuisines, fast foods such as pizza and burgers are now being provided at Chinese dining establishments, which was not expected in the past. Although he acknowledged that Chinese foods are more costly than local cuisines, he said that this is the reason why these establishments are located in high-income neighborhoods. It takes more than Rs30 million to build a decent Chinese restaurant, and an additional Rs15 million is necessary to manage the business in the long term. According to official statistics, Chinese citizens have tripled in Pakistan from 43 projects directly under the CPEC umbrella (The Express Tribune, 2018).

Chinese cuisine has taken over the menus in Pakistan

Several intriguing realities are reshaping human civilizations, including the Belt and Road project, which was introduced by China and stemmed from the need for sustainable development and equitable growth in the nations participating in the initiative. The vital aspect of people-to-people connection, which is based on cultural exchanges and aims to strengthen the relationships that exist between people from various continents, is also maintained by China. Aside from promoting economic integration and the formation of new regional development alliances for the benefit of the people, the Belt and Road initiative also aims to introduce Chinese food culture to other parts of the world, which has a thousand-year history in China and has been passed down from generation to generation. As a result of its growing popularity and apparent presence across the globe, Chinese cuisine, with all of its distinctive cooking methods, tastes, and colors, has begun to dominate Pakistani menus. As the centerpiece project of the

Belt and Road initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has effectively cleared the way to introduce Chinese food to Pakistani cuisine. The increasing number of Chinese individuals going to Pakistan to fulfill their jobs on hundreds of CPEC projects and the increasing number of Pakistanis traveling to China for a variety of reasons have contributed to the rise in popularity of Chinese cuisine in the country. Restaurants are now available in several Pakistani cities, including Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore.

Aside from that, several Pakistani restaurants situated in the cities that are part of the CPEC projects have added well-known Chinese foods into their typical Pakistani menus due to the large number of Chinese people who live in those areas. People in the hotel business feel that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has dramatically increased the number of commercial organizations on both sides of the border, but that the entrance of Chinese cuisine has given a new face to Pakistani dining tables. Mei Kong, founded in the 1970s and is considered Pakistan's oldest Chinese restaurant, takes the lead and takes great satisfaction in being the first to introduce Chinese cuisine to the country. The restaurant employs cooks who are well-versed in preparing Chinese rice, chow mein (stir-fried noodles), Lanzhou Lamian (stretched noodles), shrimp, prawns, and lobsters. The entrance of Chinese seafood into Pakistan has expanded Chinese taste and culinary traditions to spicy Pakistani meals, resulting in an unending array of fusion cuisine alternatives. Chinese rice has also become a staple on many people's weekly dinner tables. Because of the growing popularity of Chinese restaurants, hotels are stepping up to the plate to prepare and offer new Chinese cuisine on the eve of the Spring Festival celebrations. The Chinese cultural center in Islamabad has also made significant contributions to promoting genuine Chinese cooking habits and eating practices, particularly the use of chopsticks.

Pakistan, a country known for its delectable traditional cuisine, has always welcomed different cuisines, and the public is highly applauding the addition of Chinese cuisine to traditional menus. The development of Chinese culture in Pakistan via the consumption of distinctive cuisine has shown that the Belt and Road project has had results beyond commerce and investment. Chinese cuisine has always been a source of strong bonds between people all over the globe, and there are now many more culinary options to enjoy with family and friends (Assadi, 2018).

Chinese food has captured the hearts of Pakistanis as the restaurant business booms

After waiting for one hour to acquire a table, a Pakistani resident family enjoyed a bowl of vegetable and Hunan beef chow mein in one of the city's most known Chinese restaurants. Ginyaki is a popular destination for Chinese cuisine enthusiasts, particularly on weekends, and customers are advised to make appointments well in advance to prevent disappointment. Whenever his family is in the mood for a new kind of meal, they gravitate toward Chinese cuisine, which is unrivalled in terms of its incredible flavor and its many health-promoting properties. He has travelled to China on business several times and has discovered that the taste of Chinese food in Pakistani restaurants is more or

less the same as authentic Chinese cuisine. However, there are some restaurants where chefs add a touch of local flavor to the oriental dishes to satisfy visitors' intrinsic taste buds in these restaurants. Some restaurants also provide chopsticks and play Chinese music in the background to give patrons an impression of traditional Chinese cuisine, which is mesmerizing. The enormous variety of different varieties in beef, mutton, seafood, and vegetables is one of the reasons for locals' fondness for Chinese cuisine.

Although there were only a few Chinese restaurants in Pakistan's capital city of Islamabad before 2015, the implementation of various projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has resulted in a significant increase in the number of Chinese restaurants and guesthouses in the city, which has also resulted in a boom for the country's food and hospitality industries overall. At present, there are around 30 Chinese restaurants in the capital. The increasing popularity of the unique and flavorful Chinese cuisine in Pakistan shows that the CPEC is about more than just commerce and investment. According to Pakistani businessmen in the restaurant industry, an increase in the number of Chinese nationals in the country as a result of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) or other business ventures, as well as an increase in the number of Pakistanis traveling to China in recent years, has played a significant role in increasing the popularity of Chinese food in the country. Prior to this year, they had not anticipated such a high demand for Chinese fare. In addition to creating tremendous economic and social prospects for the people of Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has paved the path for the entry of Chinese cuisine into the nation, therefore stimulating the local restaurant business.

According to Hussain, there is a need for more Chinese restaurants in Pakistan's main cities, including Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, who have worked in the food industry for more than ten years. There was a need to construct more Chinese restaurants to suit the demand of Chinese and local inhabitants. Given the advantages of owning a restaurant, he decided to do so some years ago. He began his career as a cook at another Chinese restaurant in Islamabad, and now he has his own establishment. His family is now able to secure a stable and secure way of life because of him. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period, when all restaurants were shuttered for dine-in business throughout the nation, sales via home delivery and takeout continued uninterrupted, according to the eatery. "He has given his restaurant the Chinese name "Xinhua," which translates as "New China," in order to demonstrate his admiration for China and the Chinese people. He claims that the name also draws a large number of clients who are interested in traditional and genuine Chinese cuisine. In addition to Chinese and Pakistani nationals, our restaurant also serves guests from a wide range of other nations worldwide who are enthusiastic about Chinese food. Chinese food offers much superior flavor, quality, and nutritional value compared to other current cuisines (global times. 2020).

Table 1. Chinese Food Restaurant in Pakistan

Lahore	Karachi	Islamabad
Yum Chinese & Thai – One of Lahore’s Oldest Chinese Restaurants	Table of Contents	SiLu Food Culture
Novu Asian Cuisine	Suzie Wong Restaurant	Asian Wok Islamabad
The Rice Bowl Pakistan	Lotus Court	Ginyaki Islamabad
EAST Chinese and Thai	China Town	Yum Chinese and Thai Islamabad
Veera 5 Thai And Chinese Cuisine	Yuan Tung	Golden Dragon Islamabad
Red Lotus	Jade Garden	Heng Chang Islamabad
P.F. Chang’s	Imperial Court	KIM MUN Islamabad
Lung Fung Chinese Restaurant	Kowloon Chinese Restaurant	Dynasty Restaurant Islamabad
Fuchsia Kitchen	Ginsoy	China Town Islamabad
MEI KONG	Dynasty	HA PI Chinese Restaurant
Sichuan Chinese Restaurant	Little China	
Wrapping things up		

Chinese Food Restaurants in Lahore

All across the globe, Chinese cuisine is famous, but it is trendy in Pakistan. It might be challenging to select where to dine in Lahore since many eateries are cropping up every corner. Therefore, identifying the establishments that provide excellent food quality and quantity is a challenge. Our list of the 11 top Chinese cuisine restaurants in Lahore results from an extensive survey and countless rating assessments. Read on to learn more about these establishments. When it comes to cuisine, Lahore is regarded as the "City of Food," a location where you can find everything and anything at any time of the day. Residents and visitors are surrounded by a plethora of eateries serving every cuisine imaginable. According to research, there are 1196 officially registered restaurants in Lahore alone, with 109 of them serving Chinese cuisine (see chart above). These restaurants have been chosen based on their ratings, design, food quality and quantity, and the overall level of service they provide to their customers. As a result of one or all of the criteria, several restaurants could not make this list. Even in these difficult economic times, these eateries try to regularly serve hundreds of pleased clients (Raja, 2021).

Chinese Food in Karachi

Chinese cuisine is growing more popular around the globe. It is regarded to be a nutritious food item. Polyunsaturated oils are used in the preparation of meals at the best Chinese restaurants. Authentic Chinese cooking does not need heavy items such as cream, butter, or cheese, and only a tiny amount of meat is necessary. Many people believe Chinese cuisine to be an excellent diet is one of the primary reasons behind this. There is a plethora of excellent Chinese food establishments all over the globe since this cuisine is gaining popularity daily. Grains, vegetables, meats, and other carbohydrates are used in abundance to

prepare traditional Chinese cuisine. Because this cuisine is relatively low in calories and fat, it has sparked interest among a wide range of individuals who want to eat healthier and live longer lives. The number of people who like Chinese cuisine in Karachi is rising all the time. It is one of the primary reasons for an excessive number of genuine Chinese cuisine establishments across the city. For those who wish to experience authentic Chinese cuisine without going to China, we have gathered a comprehensive list of establishments that can accommodate their food carving needs (khappa.pk, 2019).

Chinese Restaurants in Islamabad

Throughout history, food has formed identities, crossed divides, and united countries. While Chinese restaurants have long been popular in Pakistan, they often provide a South Asian take on the food. Authentic eateries operated by Chinese businesspeople and families are already sprouting up around Islamabad's Federal Capital. Biyo, a Chinese businessman, wanted to test his adventurous spirit by launching a noodle restaurant. "he chose to start a restaurant in Pakistan in order to establish a connection with a country of excellent taste; he felt compelled to share the cuisine he grew up eating in Ürümqi with the Pakistani people." Biyo came to Pakistan in late 2016 and opened Hong Du Noodles in April 2017. Initially, he encountered several obstacles, but the language issue proved to be the most difficult.

Yan's established its first restaurant in Islamabad in 2017. He has created an eclectic menu that includes everything from chowmein and dumplings to kebabs and steamed fish. Yan is a self-proclaimed gourmet who enjoys Pakistani cuisine, particularly mutton karahi. Yan argues that the two nations have a plethora of foods. One of them is dapanji, a kind of chicken stew or karahi. Another is the Chinese lamb kebab (khoru shah in Mandarin). Yan supplemented. This is the tale of a husband and wife, Saleha Khan and Su Su Khan, who may seem to be Chinese but are Pakistanis at their core. Saleha and Su Su have adopted the surname Khan as a tribute to the Pathan culture.

In the summer of 2016, the dynamic pair decided to launch a Chinese Muslim Restaurant. Su Su, a native of Kashgar, Xinjiang, China, wanted to introduce authentic Chinese cuisine and her own distinctive dishes to Pakistan. "In many aspects, the Chinese and Pakistanis share the same culture, cuisine, and morality. Muslims in China and Pakistan are much more similar," Saleha said. "she has not experienced any homesickness since relocating here." Indeed, she saw the pair hopping from one table to the next, attempting to speak with their clients, even though neither could comprehend a word. She attempted communication without a translator as well and was unsuccessful. She attempted to teach them Urdu during the three hours they spent conversing but studying Chinese instead. While we savor the delicacies of traditional Chinese food, let us pay thanks to the dedicated individuals who pioneered these initiatives. Pakistan and China have had decades-long links, and as we continue to improve our relationship, a new sort of bond between the two nations' peoples is developing; a bond of cuisine, family, and friendship (Ahmed, 2018). We conducted some research to determine the most popular Chinese restaurants in the capital and confidently state that we

have compiled a list of the most popular Chinese restaurants in Islamabad (Usama, 2021).

Restaurants, guesthouses, and stores are springing up to accommodate the Chinese influx brought about by the CPEC. Pakistan's capital, Islamabad - Zhang Yan Xu seems carefree as he sits in his open-air kitchen in the center of a bustling retail area in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. The tall, broad-shouldered chef seems a gregarious individual who revels in his incapacity to interact with his clients. "No English," he responds, a big smile on his face. "There is no Urdu." The Xus work at Hong Du Ramen, the newest in many Chinese restaurants, grocery shops, guesthouses, and language centers throughout Pakistan, mainly to cater to the country's burgeoning Chinese community.

The migration has been facilitated by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a \$62 billion initiative in which Chinese corporations construct highways, power plants, and industrial zones across the South Asian nation (Asif & Ling, 2019). Two years after its announcement, the first "early harvest" infrastructure projects under the CPEC are already operational, with dozens more underway. That was the year of early harvest, as we refer to it. The ultimate objective is to assist Pakistan in developing its economy to speed the process of industrialization. According to the Chinese embassy in Islamabad, the 43 projects directly associated with CPEC have doubled the number of Chinese people residing in Pakistan to more than 30,000. Additionally, Reuters claimed that around 71,000 Chinese citizens entered the country last year on short-term visas. As more Chinese engineers, managers, and employees arrive in Pakistan, many supermarkets, guesthouses, and other companies catering exclusively to Chinese demands have arisen.

According to the Chinese deputy ambassador, he is a frequent visitor to the nation's new grocery shops, stocking up on traditional products not readily accessible elsewhere in the South Asian country. "He made a beeline for those markets. Even the embassy will not be able to bring everything from China," he said. Firststop (a portmanteau of 'First Stop') is one of Islamabad's biggest supermarkets. The store aisles are stacked with Chinese-made goods, ranging from noodles to hardhat construction helmets, sea kelp to stationery, spice mixtures, and industrial meat grinders. As a Chinese migrant to Islamabad, it seems as if Firestop has covered, whether searching for a fast lunch or the equipment and materials necessary to open a restaurant. However, most demand seems to be for prepared and raw food that is not readily accessible in typical Pakistani grocery shops. Most of the food and ingredients are imported from China, "except for [cooking] oil from Pakistan." The remainder is all Chinese. The majority of consumers are Chinese and Pakistanis, he adds, seem to like cooking Chinese food, but the South Asian version of Chinese cuisine, which is heavy on garlic, ginger, and tomatoes, does not always meet the standards of authentic Chinese cuisine. "[Traditional] Chinese cuisine is quite different from Pakistani cuisine,". A few kilometers away, at the Ni Hao Cash & Carry, the situation is almost identical. The little shop is crowded with row upon row of Chinese-labeled merchandise, including an assortment of spices displayed in open containers along the back wall.

According to a manager at the shop, "Many Pakistanis come in and are surprised to discover everything in Chinese here, and wonder whether they have landed in Beijing." Having worked with Chinese nationals on infrastructure projects for seven years, Hassan and his business partner, Eraj Raza, decided to open this shop six months ago. It was because of CPEC and other businesses that the shop was created, adds Raza. It is getting much attention from new investors. Businesses like restaurants and guesthouses are springing up all across the country. Raza estimates that around 90% of their clients are from China, with the balance coming from Korea, Thailand, and other East Asian countries. There is another Ni Hao in Pakistan's main metropolis, Karachi, and a few smaller ones at a number of the corridor's construction sites. According to Hassan, the language barrier is a crucial roadblock for many Chinese tourists. Urdu, Pakistan's primary language, and English, spoken by a lesser percentage of Pakistanis, are not widely understood by most Chinese. According to the author, China seems to be creating a whole new universe in the South Asian nation. Someone who says, "Right now, there is a huge Chinese life here" in bad Mandarin interrupts the conversation. They have all they need to live comfortably, with thousands of Chinese people living in Islamabad. Everything is now provided for them, even clubs. Pork is one of them, which is a surprise in the Pakistani Islamic Republic. It is against the law to import or consume pork in Pakistan, which is considered haram in Islam. Customs authorities at Pakistan's borders cannot interpret Chinese labeling on most imported food goods; thus, Ni Hao can avoid issues on its shelves, including pig snouts and trotters, sausage, and dried ham pieces. As a result, customs inspectors seem to be less likely to inspect goods labeled in Chinese. It has already begun. They are letting it since the items are arriving (Hashim, 2017).

Conclusion

It's a fascinating process to learn about a culture via cuisine because, once a person begins to ask questions like "how is something prepared," "what ingredients are in it," or "why is something termed a specific way," the answers that are acquired transcend well beyond culinary knowledge. Food, according to these responses, reveals something about a culture's attitude to life. We can argue that food serves as a metaphor for communication since eating is a practice that allows us to generate, manage, and exchange meaning with others. It is possibly better to understand culture, habits, rituals, and traditions through food and the way others perceive it. This research has shown how food is depicted as fulfilling various functions at both the individual and community levels in both texts. Food shows love, and affection at the individual level builds ties and elicits happy memories of home, family, and friendships. Food also serves as a vehicle for socialization. Food is frequently utilized as a sign of gratitude and acknowledgment, and it is a fundamental component of celebrations and other gatherings. Family and cultural legacies and traditions are maintained via the consumption of food. Food may be used to demonstrate charity and healing in a variety of ways.

Food serves as a source of identity and cultural capital at the community level and an agent of intercultural exchange. Food builds multicultural communities

and contributes to the formation of national identities by serving as a Third hybrid Space that enables people of diverse ethnic backgrounds to come together and celebrate their differences. The use of food as an ethnic insult to derogate is also widespread, and it has been used as a tactic in power struggles and betrayals between ethnic groups. Food both brings people together and separates them since it instills affection while also causing animosity. Although Pakistan is recognized for its outstanding traditional food, it has always embraced new cuisines, and the addition of Chinese cuisine to traditional menus is currently being greeted with enthusiasm by the general populace. The growth of Chinese culture in Pakistan due to the consumption of different cuisine has shown that the Belt and Road initiative has had effects beyond trade and investment. Traditional Chinese food has traditionally catalyzed the creation of deep relationships between people worldwide, and there are now many more culinary alternatives to enjoy with family and friends.

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