Stabilising Balochistan: Exploring the Blue Economy as an Alternate Option

Muhammad Talha Saleem[*] & Mariam Asif[†]

Abstract

Balochistan is a resource-rich area, yet numerous challenges prevent the full utilisation of its resources. Unemployment is the key factor that yields widespread grievances among the population. The unequal distribution of resources fosters resistance to responsibilities. Sparse population and vast land area discourage the state from launching large-scale industrial projects, potentially exacerbating long-term issues. However, the Blue Economy model offers a potential solution by creating employment opportunities and improving the Human Development Index (HDI) in the region. This model has gained international recognition as a sustainable and inclusive approach for addressing the socio-economic challenges of underdeveloped areas like Balochistan, making it a win-win for all the stakeholders. This study is divided into two parts: the first section discusses the Blue Economy model and its practical implications for the people of Balochistan; the second section discusses the socio-political and economic challenges of the people of Balochistan and explores whether the Blue Economy can serve as an alternative solution for bringing prosperity to Balochistan. It is an exploratory study based on secondary data, with the challenges potentially alleviated by realizing Balochistan's Blue Economy potential. Internal and external criticism methods are used for authentication and verification of the sources. The qualitative and quantitative methods, including content analysis techniques, are implied for in-depth and reliable findings.

[*] M. Phil Scholar, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
[†] Assistant Professor, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Keywords

Blue Economy, Balochistan, Sustainability, Economic Potential, Relative Deprivation, Gwadar, CPEC.

Introduction

Balochistan's extensive coastline and its strategic location with its deep-sea port of Gwadar hold significant potential for economic development. Full realisation of this potential can create ample employment opportunities and foster prosperity for the local inhabitants. Besides that, the region's progress is hindered by persistent social, political, and economic uncertainties, which pose substantial challenges to developmental efforts. Study reveals that the roots of these uncertainties go deep into the political, economic, and social reasons (Dinesh, 2021). Addressing these obstacles is crucial to unlocking Balochistan's full potential, such as fisheries, maritime trade, coastal tourism, offshore energy, and marine biotechnology, which ensures sustainable growth in the region. Pakistan desperately needs to resuscitate its economy. Natural resources of Balochistan, specifically its blue economy, can play a key role in its regard (Khan, 2024). In place of all the challenges highlighted above, can the blue economy serve as a refuge? Would it remove all the irritants and causes of the violence, or at least help reduce the intensity? This study is pivoted around these questions.

The blue economy emphasises the sustainable use of marine resources for economic growth, environmental health, and social equity. It includes activities such as fishing, marine energy, and tourism, ensuring economic benefits while protecting marine ecosystems. This approach contrasts with traditional ocean economies that often lead to resource depletion and environmental damage. By integrating sustainable practices into regional development, it can leverage its coastal potential to promote peace, prosperity, and ecological balance (Reitmeier & Kyriacou, 2024). The World Bank gave the model of the blue economy. By adopting this model, the state can enhance economic growth, livelihood, and ocean health, etc (World Bank, 2021). Promoting the Blue Economy in Balochistan can get-up-and-go stability and development by leveraging its fisheries, coastline, and renewable energy potential. Sustainable practices

like controlled aquaculture and marine conservation can create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve the infrastructure of the region. Empowering local communities through marine administration programs reduce tensions and strengthens governance. This method also develops climate pliability, ensuring long-term environmental and economic stability for the region (Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, 2020).

By declaring 2020 as the "Year of Blue Economy", Pakistan emphasised the significance of utilizing its maritime resources for sustainable economic growth. This initiative underlined the country's focus on using the potential of its coastal areas, particularly the Gwadar Port, and promoting maritime-related industries to harness economic development (Walayat, 2022). Going one step further, Pakistan has also incorporated maritime capital into the National Security Policy (NSP). Not only Pakistan, but the entire world has partially diverted its attention towards untapped potential, especially the blue economy (National Security Division, 2022). It is a win-win model for sustainable economic development. A few core countries that have utilised the potential are China and the USA. Proceeds from the blue economy constitute 10% of the Chinese GDP. On the other hand, 40% of people are directly linked to the coastal economy, and it has created millions of jobs that contribute around 116 billion dollars to the GDP of the US (Muhammad et al., 2021).

This article sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of Balochistan, focusing on economic dimensions. The discussion then highlights Balochistan's strategic importance, emphasising the potential for the development of the blue economy. This potential is closely linked to the stability of the region, as peace and security are essential for the effective use of its marine resources.

This study also integrates the World Bank's Blue Economy Development Framework (BEDF) (World Bank Group, 2016) to analyse how regions facing instability, such as Balochistan, can transition to sustainable economic growth and development. Furthermore, the article explores Pakistan's broader blue economy potential and its anticipated role in promoting peace and stability in Balochistan. The research relies on qualitative and quantitative methodology, including internal and external criticism and content analysis techniques, drawing on secondary

data to provide a nuanced understanding of key issues. Ultimately, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of the interconnected challenges and opportunities within Balochistan, offering avenues for overcoming instability and unlocking the region's economic potential.

Literature Review

Achieving peace and prosperity in Balochistan requires stability and sustainable development. However, the region's instability poses a significant obstacle to its development. Scholars have offered various opinions on the issue, but there is no consensus. Mendez (2020) suggests that Balochistan's instability is closely linked to its geographical location. Balochistan remained sandwiched between the Iranian Plateau and the South Asian subcontinent (Mendez, 2020).

To some extent, equipping individuals with market-related skills, such as technical skills, IT knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills, can enable them to gain employment, start a business, and contribute to the local economy. Instability in Balochistan is linked to the lack of technical education, unequal distribution of resources, and the slower pace of development. Furthermore, ethnic and religious divisions have also been increasing tensions in the region. These factors collectively contribute to ongoing challenges and instability (Ahmed, 2024).

Captain Alfred T. Mahan's sea-based theory of geopolitics is relevant to today's politics. He emphasised the strategic importance of maritime power by proclaiming that "he who controls the water controls the world" (Mahan, 1890). Khetran (2012) asserted that socio-economic grievances are seen in the natives of Balochistan. While the Baloch community demands greater autonomy and control over resources, this creates problems and hinders development (Khetran, 2012). Malik (2017) notes that Gwadar improves Pakistan's strategic depth and provides China with a strategic vantage point to examine sea lanes and counterbalance India and the U.S. impact in the Indian Ocean. The development of Gwadar also promises economic uplift for Balochistan and is projected to foster regional cooperation by providing transportation routes for Afghanistan and CARs, by-passing dependence on Russia and Iran (Malik, 2017).

Moreover, Imran and Nordin (2021) note that violence in Balochistan is the cause of instability in the economic, political, and social sectors. When a native is employed, violence must convert into stability (Imran & Nordin, 2018). Asif (2022) emphasized that illiteracy and the prioritization of foreign labour over local labour are significant contributors to the instability in Balochistan. The lack of adequate education hampers the ability of the local population to acquire the necessary skills for employment, resulting in both a shortage of skilled labour and challenges in spreading knowledge related to modern technologies and intelligence. These issues pose substantial barriers to the region's overall development. Moreover, Balochistan's education system is troubled by fundamental shortcomings, including inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and low enrolment rates. These educational deficiencies hinder the socio-economic progress of the province and make its instability worse. If economic vulnerability is converted into opportunities, it can bring prosperity to the entire region (Asif, 2022). Malik (2016) presents the Indian Ocean, where the US planned to shift 60% of its naval assets to the Pacific under its 2012 defence strategy to consolidate its power in the region. In response, China has invested in key projects such as Gwadar Port under its String of Pearls strategy, emerging as an alternative force challenging US maritime dominance (Malik, 2016).

Rehman (2023) narrates that Balochistan has great blue economy potential, but a lack of awareness and understanding about the significance of oceanic resources is leading to an overemphasis on land-based activities and neglect of coastal and maritime potential (Rehman, 2023). Similarly, Khokhar (2024) also comments that a lack of effective strategies and a short-term focus on profits undermine the potential of blue economy development and long-term marine conservation (Khokhar, 2024). Khan (2024) critically analyses the Blue Economy as a sustainable model balancing economic growth with environmental conservation and social inclusion. He elucidates key areas such as marine renewable energy, fisheries, aquaculture, maritime trade, and tourism, besides those major challenges like overfishing, inadequate infrastructure, and the lack of sustainable strategies (Khan, 2024).

Alam and Azam (2023) have focused on the loss of distinct species occurring due to inadequate regulations and the degradation of crucial ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs (which protect coastal areas from erosion, support marine biodiversity, improve water quality, and contribute to local economies through fisheries and tourism). There is a dire need for comprehensive policy frameworks, international cooperation, and the adoption of modern technologies to fully harness Pakistan's maritime resources (Alam & Azam, 2023). Scholars also explain that the strategic location of Gwadar and the marine industry and coastal economy, such as Gwadar port, located near the Strait of Hormuz, enhance Pakistan's position as a regional trade hub, connecting West China, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and other regions. Major marine industries contributing to this potential include oil and gas, communication and transportation, electric power, seawater utilisation, salt manufacturing, chemical industries, marine biomedicine, marine engineering, etc. (Naz & Rashid, 2024).

A review of the aforementioned literature indicates that instability in Balochistan is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Balochistan has seen gradual stabilisation in recent years due to a combination of improved security measures and economic initiatives. For example, the completion of infrastructure projects such as the Gwadar Port under CPEC has improved economic activity, created some employment opportunities, and reduced grievances in specific areas. Furthermore, the frequency of militant attacks has significantly decreased, as has the decline in insurgent activity in districts such as Gwadar and Lasbela. However, areas with limited socio-economic development, such as Kech and Awaran, still suffer from sporadic violence, underscoring the need for balanced regional development to ensure lasting peace. Furthermore, the government of Pakistan announced 6 billion dollars to create jobs and enhance the human development index of the region (Younus, 2021). China's Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) strategy, dividing its 18,000 km coastline into eight zones, has boosted its blue economy by 6.5% (World Economic Forum, 2023). In contrast, Pakistan, with its 1,046 km coastline along the Arabian Sea, possesses significant maritime potential that remains largely underutilised (Kamboyo, 2024).

The Blue Economic Model can strengthen Balochistan by utilising the 750 km long coastline for sustainable development in fisheries, aquaculture, and maritime trade. It creates jobs, promotes technical education, and ensures equitable distribution of resources by investing in local infrastructure. Inclusive development promotes social cohesion, while sustainable practices protect ecosystems and secure long-term livelihoods, promoting equitable development and regional stability (Fenichel, 2023). Since a major chunk of the blue economic potential exists in Balochistan, the stability of Balochistan is thus necessary for the sustainable development of the country. Actualisation of the blue economy is indispensable for the prosperity of every state (Ki-Hoon Lee, 2020).

Martim Paldam says that the economy does generate high income, which should make people approve of the government. Ultimately, growth does generate stability (Paldam, 1998). Ali explains that wherever there is political stability, there is socio-economic stability. So, these three variables have a direct relation to the stability of the region or state (ACAR, 2019).

Research Questions

How the blue economy potential of Balochistan can be an option for political and social stability?

Blue Economy Model

In lieu of Pakistan's vast coastline, its untapped marine resources, and the strategic importance of Gwadar Port in regional trade and CPEC, experts stress on the need to address challenges such as policy gaps, environmental concerns, and "ocean blindness" while capitalising on opportunities in shipbuilding, tourism, renewable energy, and fisheries. The role of the blue economy in securing trade lifelines, enhancing maritime security, and promoting regional stability was recognised as critical to Pakistan's long-term prosperity and global competitiveness (Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 2024).

Coastal and island nations, especially those that fall into the lower and lower-middle income categories, have significant potential to benefit from the blue economy, which includes vast jurisdictions and abundant

opportunities. By fostering innovation and growth in the coastal, marine, and maritime sectors, these nations can provide essential products and services such as food, energy, transport, and biotechnology, creating a strong foundation for sustainable development. Diversifying economies away from land-based activities and using coastal resources is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth globally. In Europe, for example, the blue economy creates around 5.4 million jobs and contributes around €500 billion to the economy annually, reflecting the economic benefits to be gained from sustainable marine resource management (GROUP, 2016).

To effectively navigate these issues, countries need a comprehensive understanding of the biophysical characteristics and capabilities of their aquatic ecosystems to guide management practices. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) can play an important role by integrating different policies affecting coastal zones and addressing their vulnerability. The blue economy includes a variety of activities, including fishing, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, offshore renewable energy, seabed mining, marine tourism, and coastal infrastructure development. Investments in governance, technology, markets, and finance are essential to unlock the full potential of the blue economy, ensure responsible resource management, and empower communities. Organisations such as the World Bank Group (WBG) are well-positioned to provide the necessary capital, technical assistance, and innovative financing mechanisms to promote sustainable solutions within these sectors (World Bank, 2017).

For regions like Balochistan, the blue economy presents a significant opportunity for stability and poverty alleviation. Given the region's extensive coastline and rich marine resources, promoting sustainable fishing practices, aquaculture, marine tourism, and renewable energy can significantly increase local livelihoods. By developing these sectors, Balochistan can diversify its economy, reduce dependence on land-based activities, and create employment opportunities for its population. Additionally, implementing blue economy strategies can promote community empowerment and resilience, addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by marginalised groups. Prioritising the Blue Economy

will not only contribute to the sustainable development of Balochistan but also lift communities out of poverty, ultimately ensuring the health of oceans and coastal areas that are essential for future generations.

Geopolitical and Economic Dynamics in Balochistan

Balochistan occupies a crucial geopolitical position, bordering Afghanistan and Iran while providing Pakistan with vital access to the Arabian Sea. Its proximity to India and the Strait of Hormuz further enhances its strategic importance. The province is rich in natural resources and is home to the Gwadar Port, which has immense economic and geopolitical potential. Recognising this, China has invested billions of dollars in Gwadar as part of broader development projects, creating mutual benefits for both China and Pakistan by boosting trade, infrastructure, and regional connectivity (Ahmed M. , 2019).

The economy of Balochistan is mostly dependent upon livestock, agriculture, and fisheries. It is also not easy because the population of Balochistan is divided into hierarchical orders. for example, 55 percent population is "Baloch," 30 percent is "Pashtun," and a small portion of other ethnic communities also live in Balochistan (Aziz Ahmed, 2020).

Balochistan is rich in precious and sophisticated minerals like gold, copper, chromite, limestone, natural gas, etc. However, the government of Pakistan has been unable to exploit the actual potential of these natural resources due to socio-political instability, unskilled labour, and lack of technology. A multinational company signed a project, “Saindak Copper Gold Project" which is working in Noshki and Chaghi to extract Gold and Copper, and 2% royalty is given to the government of Balochistan. Similarly, another gold and copper mineral extraction project "Reko Dic Mine Project" is signed with a 25% royalty for the government of Balochistan (Achakzai, 2022).

Suppose the natives are prosperous with provision of job opportunities, progress in the human development index and per capita income, accessibility of health and education facilities. In that case, it will ensure the prevalence of peace. As provided in the Constitutional Article 172(3) and Article 158 of Pakistan (ownership and management or distribution of resources) (Senate of Pakistan, 2020), the government of

Pakistan ought to increase the royalty on natural resources for Balochistan province including the Sui Gas and other mineral resources. People living at the places from where the resources are extracted have the first and foremost right to enjoy the outcomes of these resources. These economic initiatives will enhance prosperity in the region.

Moreover, the fish industry and tourism development in Balochistan will also secure the jobs of the natives. It will contribute to enhancing Pakistan's per capita GDP. Baloch people are struggling because 60% of people are directly linked to the coastal economy.

On 24 June 2022, the Prime Minister of Pakistan visited the Gwadar port, where he announced that the federal government has allocated over Rs100 billion for development projects in Balochistan under the Federal Public Sector Development Program (FPSDP). During his visit to Gwadar, he witnessed the signing of an MoU between Indus Hospital Karachi and Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), under which Indus Hospital will manage a 150-bed hospital in Gwadar. The government will replace old water supply lines and take immediate steps to address the water shortage. Additionally, 2,000 free engines will be provided to fishermen to enable them to earn their living. The Chinese government has provided 3,700 solar panels to help address the power shortage, while efforts are underway to provide electricity to the Makran Division from Iran. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif reiterated China’s strong support for Pakistan and assured full cooperation to the Balochistan government in resolving public issues (Shah, 2022). These initiatives show that the Pakistani state does understand the nature of the conflict that exists in Balochistan. However, completion of these projects is a big task. This can be realised by tapping into the blue economy potential.

Blue Economy and its Potential in Pakistan

Pakistan possesses significant marine natural resources, containing hydrocarbons, minerals, fisheries, and other marine assets, yet their potential remains underutilised. Ranked 74th among 142 coastal states, Pakistan's maritime sector peaked in the 1970s under the "National Shipping Corporation" (NSC), which was formed in 1979 and operated 50 ships at its height. Today, this capacity has drastically declined to fewer

than a dozen ships, and the NSC contributes only 7% to Pakistan's GDP. Despite having the potential to manage 39 million tons of cargo, the country currently manages only 5 million tons. To address this, the government introduced the "Merchant Marine Policy" in 2001, which was revised in 2019, setting a determined target to increase the maritime sector's contribution to the economy from 5% to 40% by 2020 (Naz et al., 2023).

The blue economy holds immense potential to ensure the stability of Balochistan by addressing the key concerns of the Baloch people and utilising the province's rich coastal resources. Pakistan's blue economy has already explained remarkable benefits, creating approximately 1.3 million jobs in the fisheries sector and increasing coastal employment by 20%. It contributes 15% to the national GDP, highlighting its economic significance (Khan, 2020). Coastal tourism, with a revenue potential of $4 billion, further highlights its promise, while sustainable fisheries and aquaculture have achieved a 10% revenue increase. These developments have had a profound social impact, reducing poverty rates in coastal communities by 15% and boosting household incomes by 20%. Additionally, infrastructure investments have risen significantly, with a 20% increase in port infrastructure and a 15% growth in renewable energy projects. These achievements underscore the transformative capacity of the blue economy to drive economic growth, alleviate poverty, and promote sustainable development in Balochistan. (Bank of Punjab, 2022) To some extent, Pakistan's economy is highly reliant on the sea, with 95% of its trade and 100% of oil supplies transported through sea routes, valued at $74 billion (over 30% of GDP). The country has vast untapped potential in fisheries ($3 billion), offshore energy (16 billion barrels of oil/gas), mineral deposits ($14 billion in continental shelf oil/gas and $4-5 billion in deep-sea minerals), coastal tourism ($4.5 billion annually), and shipbuilding and maintenance (billions in revenue). Tapping into these resources can generate billions in revenue, create millions of jobs, and significantly boost Pakistan's GDP, economic standing, and stability (Hussain, 2022).

The World Bank defines the blue economy as "Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic magnification, enhanced livelihoods, and

jobs while maintaining the health of the ocean ecosystem." The revenue generated from the oceans and seas can play an instrumental role in the geo-economic development of a state (Group, 2017). Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers 290,000 square kilometres, with Balochistan's 770-kilometer coastline constituting 73 percent of the country's total coastline. This strategic coastline positions Balochistan as a key hub for regional and international trade, particularly through Gwadar, a key project under CPEC. A significant portion of Pakistan's blue economic potential is connected to Balochistan's coastline along the Arabian Sea, which stretches for about 700 to 800 kilometres. Gwadar, a port city on this coastline, serves as a key access point for landlocked countries like Afghanistan and Central Asia. Furthermore, Gwadar provides a short, low-cost, and secure trade route to China, further enhancing its strategic importance (Jamali, 2022). China has shown significant interest in Gwadar over the past two decades and has invested heavily in the region in recent years. Pakistan has launched multi-billion-dollar projects, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Central Asia-South Asia (CASA) energy project, the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline, and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline. These projects aim to meet the energy needs of Pakistan and the wider region. For Balochistan, these initiatives hold the promise of promoting stability and addressing the province's relatively long-standing sense of deprivation. (Inayat Kalim, 2020). The importance of Pakistan will further enhance when Central Asian landlocked states use Pakistan's sea and land for regional connectivity.

Apart from access, communication hub, shipping potential of the blue economy, including the aquaculture, fishers, shipbreaking, coastal tourism, ocean industry, and offshore basins, are available in Pakistan for sustainable economic development. The shipbreaking and maintenance sector of Pakistan also generates 3 billion dollars annually. In 2011, Pakistan set a world record by demolishing around 1485 ships all over the world. Moreover, the seafood industry of Pakistan has a potential of more than 1 billion dollars, forming 1.8 percent of the GDP. Around 600,000 tons of fish are grasped annually. Only the fisheries industry of Pakistan generates 1.5 million employments. Its export worth is around 2.5 billion dollars. Sadly, Pakistan never utilized its blue economic potential.

Secondly, marine tourism in Pakistan also carries a worth of 0.3 billion dollars annually (Zafar, 2021).

Sr. no.	Indicators	Potential (in dollars)
1	Shipbreaking	3 billion
2	Seafood Industry	1 billion
3	Seafood Exports	2 billion
4	Fisheries	3 billion
5	Coastal tourism	4.5 billion
6	Offshore energy	16 billion
7	Mineral deposits	14 billion
8	Deep sea minerals	4-5 billion

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources as mentioned above

In comparison to regional states, Pakistan has not performed well in realizing its potential, meanwhile, other regional states generate a large part of their GDP from the maritime industry. According to the report of the World Bank, in 2019, India and Bangladesh generated 6 and 8.1 billion dollars respectively from the marine sector. When compared, the marine sector of India provides 4.1 percent of the GDP and Pakistan's provides only 0.5 percent in annual GDP.

Real GDP growth in South Asia	2018	2019	2020	2021
Afghanistan (CY)	1.8	2.5	3.0	3.5
Bangladesh (FY)	7.9	8.1	7.2	7.3
India (FY)	6.8	6.0	6.9	7.2
Pakistan (FY, factor prices)	5.5	3.3	2.4	3.0
Nepal (FY)	6.7	7.1	6.4	6.5

Source: World Bank. GDP: Gross Domestic Product, CY: Calendar Year, FY: Fiscal Year, e: Estimate f: Forecast; in Bangladesh, Bhutan,

Nepal, and Pakistan, 2019 refers to FY2018/19 and ended in June 2019. For India, 2019 refers to FY2019/20 and will end in March 2020.

Blue Economy and Balochistan's Stability

Balochistan's vast territory and sparse population hinders development, literacy, and technical education. Despite government initiatives, outsiders often fill skill gaps, neglecting native talent. To address this, focused efforts are needed to provide technical education to Balochistan's locals. Investing in the Blue Economy, a win-win model, would benefit both the state and indigenous population, rather than relying solely on mega projects. Regardless of Balochistan's strategic location, it is Pakistan's largest province with minimum population where development and standard of living are low. Balochistan's economy is largely dependent on dry fruits, vegetables, breeding cattle, milk, meat products, mining and mineral production. Gas, coal, minerals, gold, copper, chromite, etc., exist in the mountains of Balochistan and the government of Balochistan or the central government of Pakistan takes the initiative to extract these natural resources. Extraction projects are given to different multinational companies because native people do not have enough technology education and infrastructure for the extraction of these natural resources (Afrasiyab Gul, 2021).

Pakistan's blue economic potential is closely linked to achieving peace and stability in Balochistan. Globally, nearly 80% of trade is carried out through maritime routes, estimated at $1.5 trillion annually. By harnessing its maritime resources and leveraging its strategic coastal location, Pakistan can play a significant role in this global trade network, promoting development and stability in Balochistan (Affairs, 2023). Former president, Dr. Arif Alvi said, in the 9th International Maritime Conference (IMC-21), which was held in Karachi, in February 2021: Pakistan is now transforming its policy from Geo-Strategic into Geo-economic. So, the government of Pakistan included the blue economy in the National Security Policy of Pakistan. Realizing the potential and prospects linked with the blue economy, the state of Pakistan initiated several projects and CPEC forms the major chunk. China has invested 62 billion dollars in sustainable development (APP, 2021).

These mega projects are directly linked to the prosperity of the region. For the extraction of the actual potential of the blue economy, first need to reconcile the relative deprivation of the Baloch community. In recent years, the security situation in Balochistan has improved. Because people are getting jobs. It is possible by giving economic opportunities to the natives of Balochistan. Similarly, the Gwadar smart city project will boost the economy of Balochistan and bring prosperity. The stability of Balochistan or Gwadar is also necessary because of its strategic location. Gwadar provides marine and silk routes for regional states as well (Safdar, 2022).

Conclusion

Balochistan faces significant challenges to sustainable development due to its complex socio-economic dynamics, including low levels of education, limited awareness of natural resources, focus on short-term goals, and ethnic and linguistic divisions. These factors hinder the province's development. Meanwhile, Gwadar has emerged as a strategic focal point in global politics and is a key hub for trade and transportation between regional states. It serves as a key asset for unlocking Pakistan's economic potential, especially in the blue economy. Given Pakistan's current challenges, sustainable development is no longer optional but essential for the country's survival. Prioritizing the blue economy has become imperative, as it plays a critical role in achieving long-term economic stability and growth. The inclusion of the blue economy in Pakistan's national security policy underscores its importance not only for economic development but also for strengthening national security.

By focusing on the Blue Economy, Pakistan can effectively utilize its maritime resources, promote trade, and contribute to environmentalutilise sustainability, while generating economic expansion through fisheries, tourism, and renewable marine energy. It can create new opportunities. This will help Pakistan strengthen its economic resilience and integrate more effectively into global trade routes, positioning Gwadar as an important gateway. By using blue economic potential, the relative grievances of the inhabitants will be answered. Similarly, the economy is a prerequisite for the prosperity and sustainable development of any nation. So, it is a doctrine of necessity, that Pakistan should solve the

Balochistan question on an early basis, by utilization of the actual potential of the blue economy. In the future, the blue economy can serve as an alternative option for stabilizing Balochistan. This will help in bringing stability and prosperity to Balochistan.

References

Achakzai, O. S. (2022). Balochistan: The Unrealised Potential. *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*, No. 03, 1-4.

ACAR, A. (2019). The Effects of Political Stability on Economic Growth of The Presidential Government System. *Uluslararası Ekonomi ve Siyaset Bilimleri Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 3*(9), 18-31.

Affairs, M. O. (2023). *Final year book 2020-2021*. Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Retrieved from https://moma.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/files/Final%20Year%20Book%202020-2021%20for%20Uploading%20on%20Website%2027-04-2023.pdf

Afrasiyab Gul, V. A. (2021). Policy Insights to Maritime Economy in Pakistan. *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. 60, No. 3, 373-384.

Ahmed, D. G. (2024). Human Capital Development for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: What is Needed? *Archives of Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 01, No. 01, 78–95.

Ahmed, M. (2019). The Princely States of Balochistan: Its Geography, History and Religions. *Pakistan Journal of History & Culture*, Vol. XL, No. 2, 140-161.

Alam, S., & Azam, M. (2023). Challenges and Prospects of Blue Economy for Pakistan. *Journal of Asian Development Studies, 12*(3), 1516-1527.

APP. (2021, February 13). Blue economy strategy to ensure responsible use of ocean resources: Alvi [Press release]. *The Express Tribune*. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from https://tribune.com.pk/story/2283915/blue-economy-strategy-to-ensure-responsible-use-of-ocean-resources-alvi

Asif, A. (2022). Insurgency in Balochistan: Then & Now. *Paradigm Shift*. Retrieved from https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/insurgency-in-balochistan/

Aziz Ahmed, N. M. (2020). Balochistan: Overview of its Geo-economic and Socio-economic Perspectives. *Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 No. 2, 235-246.

Bank of Punjab. (2022). Blue economy. Retrieved from https://www.bop.com.pk/Documents/Resource_Center/Blue.pdf

Dinesh, S. (2021). Strategic Salience of the Gwadar Port An Analytical Study. *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 53-78.

Fenichel, E. P. (2023). *National accounting for the ocean and ocean economy*. In *The Blue Compendium: From Knowledge to Action for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*.(279-307). Springer International Publishing,.

GROUP, W. B. (2016). *Blue Economy Development Framework Growing the Blue Economy to Combat Poverty and Accelerate Prosperity*. World Bank. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/pc/Downloads/AMCOECCBlueEconomyDevelopmentFramework.pdf

GROUP, W. B. (2017). *The Potential of The Blue Economy Increasing Long-Term Benefits of The Sustainable Use of Marine Resources for Small Island Developing States and Coastal Least Developed Countries.* Washington DC: UNITED NATIONS. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/cee24b6c-2e2f-5579-b1a4-457011419425/content

Group, W. b. (2017). *What is the Blue Economy?* Retrieved 2024, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy

Hussain, D. N. (2022). Pakistan's Blue Economy Potential, Challenges and Prospects. *Strategic Thought* Vol. 4 No. 1, 1-12.

Imran, M., & Nordin, R. (2018). *Countering insurgency and terrorism in Pakistan: Challenges and recommendations. In Proceedings of the International Law Conference (iN-LAC 2018) - Law, Technology and the Imperative of Change in the 21st Century* (pp. 95–102). SCITEPRESS – Science and Technology Publications.

Inayat Kalim, A. S. (2020). Maritime Economy and Gwadar Port: A Growth Catalyst. *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 73-82.

Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. (2024). ISSI and NIMA Jointly Organize Seminar on Unlocking the Potential of Blue Economy and Pakistan's National Security. Retrieved January 22, 2025, from https://issi.org.pk/press-release-issi-and-nima-jointly-organize-seminar-on-unlocking-the-potential-of-blue-economy-and-pakistans-national-security/

Jamali, D. H. (2022). Investment in the 'Blue Economy' of Balochistan: Potential, Prospects, and Policy Options for Improvement in the Light of Global Best Practices. *Journal of Pakistan Administration*, Vol. 43 No. 1, 1-30.

Khan, A. A. (2024). Revolutionizing the Pakistani economy: The transformative potential of the blue economy. *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences, 3*(3), 1689–1694.

Khan, M. Z. (2020). *Strategic Human Resource Development: Investing in Balochistan's Blue Economy*. Strategic Studies, 40(1), 87-102. Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Khetran, M. S. (2012). Crisis in Balochistan: Challenges and Opportunities. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*., 24-39.

Ki-Hoon Lee, J. N. (2020). The Blue Economy and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities. *Environment international*, Vol. 137, 105528, 1-6.

Kamboyo, S. H. H. (2024, December 23). Localisation of SDG 14: Opportunities for blue economy [Opinion]. *The Express Tribune*. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from https://tribune.com.pk/story/2517670/localisation-of sdg 14 opportunities for blue economy

Malik, H. Y. (2017). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Reinvigorating Blue Diplomacy by Linking Eurasian Continental Plate with Indo-Australian Oceanic Plate. *Muslim Perspectives*, 2(2), 74–84.

Malik, H. Y. (2016). Indo-U.S aspirations to dominate Indian Ocean Region mainly through India and its implications on regional and extra regional powers. *Muslim Perspectives*, 1(2), 28–41.

Maryam Khokhar, F. E. (2024). Potential barriers and drivers in the growth of blue economy: Perspectives of nautical tourism. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, Vol 8, Issue 9, 1-14.

Mendez, Z. H. (2020). Repression and Revolt in Balochistan The Uncertainty and Survival of a People's National Aspirations. *Journal of Ind-Pacific Affairs*, Volume 7, No. 3, 43-61.

Muhammad, D. M., Brohi, M. A., & Ullah, N. (2021). The Pakistan's Untapped Blue Economy Potential. *Journal of Global Peace and Security Studies (JGPSS)*, 2(1), 63-73.

Mahan, A. T. (1890). *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Naz, Ansari, Kazmi, Kalsoom, (2023). Potential of Blue Economy for Pakistan: A study of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 7(2), 71-80.

Naz, D. S. . ., & Rashid, D. M. I. . (2024). Unveiling the Paritime Opportunities: Analysing the Blue Economoy Potential Within the Framework of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. *ISSRA Papers*, 16(1), 54–63.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund. (2020). *Balochistan strategy* (2nd ed.). The Authority. https://www.ppaf.org.pk

Paldam, M. (1998, April). Does economic growth lead to political stability?. In *The Political Dimension of Economic Growth: Proceedings of the IEA Conference held in San José, Costa Rica* (pp. 171-190). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Rehman, M. U. (2023). Potential, Challenges and Prospects for Pakistan's Blue Economy. *Journal of Maritime Logistics*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 1-13.

Reitmeier, L., & Kyriacou, G. (2024). *What is the blue economy?* Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science. https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-the-blue-economy/

Safdar, R. S. (2022). Revisiting Blue Economy: Challenges and Prospects For The Maritime Sector of Pakistan. *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Vol. X, No. 2, 16-37.

Security Division, National, (2022). *National Security policy 2022-2026.* Retrieved from https://dnd.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/National-Security-Policy-2022-2026.pdf

Senate of Pakistan. (2020). *Rules of procedure and conduct of business in the Senate, 2012 (as amended* up to March 2020). Senate of Pakistan. Retrieved from https://www.senate.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1582527957_947.pdf

Shah, S. A. (2022). PM Shehbaz announces Rs100b development package for Balochistan. *The Express Tribune* . Retrieved from https://tribune.com.pk/story/2363137/pm-shehbaz-announces-rs100b-development-package-for-balochistan

Walayat, Ezba. (2022). *The Unexplored Blue Economy of Pakistan* - Pakistan House. Retrieved May 31, 2025, from https://pakistanhouse.net/the-unexplored-blue-economy-of-pakistan/

World Economic Forum. (2023, June). *China's Rising Tide: Expanding Investment in Blue Finance*. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/06/chinas-rising-tide-expanding-investment-in-blue-finance-amnc23

World Bank. (2021). *Riding the blue wave: Applying the blue economy approach to World Bank operations*. The World Bank Group. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/environment/publication/riding-the-blue-wave

Younus, U. (2021). Pakistan's Shifting Political and Economic Winds. Washington, DC 20037: *United States Institute of Peace*. Retrieved from https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/10/pakistans-shifting-political-and-economic-winds

Zafar, A. (2021). The Untapped Blue Economy of Pakistan. *Paradigm Shift*. Retrieved 2024, from https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/blue-economy-of-pakistan/.