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ISSN: 3006-6557 (Online)

ISSN: 3006-6549 (Print)

Vol. 3, No. 1 (2025)

Pages: 389-399

**Key Words:**

Economy, political-economic dimension, geo-strategic dimension, environmental sustainability, gwadar.

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the complex aspects of Pakistan's blue economy, emphasizing its promise and problems. The research is informed by three principal frameworks: the political-economic dimension, the geo-strategic dimension, and environmental sustainability. These frameworks provide an essential perspective for analyzing the political processes and possible social and environmental inequities linked to blue economy growth in Pakistan. This research aims to examine Pakistan's blue economy, particularly via the case study of Gwadar. This study will use a qualitative methodology supplemented by little quantitative data. The qualitative data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The research results indicate that Gwadar has significant untapped potential as a key hub within Pakistan's Blue Economy framework. This study delineates the principal elements of Pakistan's blue economy, including fisheries, coastal and marine tourism, maritime transportation, and offshore oil and gas resources. This article asserts that augmenting security measures in and around Gwadar and other coastal areas would cultivate a conducive business environment and attract foreign direct investment (FDI). The collaboration among adjacent nations for regional integration may enhance the security and economic conditions of the area.*

**Introduction**

The oceans play a crucial role in the Earth's economy, facilitating commerce and providing seafood, since 80% of global trade transpires via maritime routes. Consequently, the vast seas adorned with blue tones are vital to the earth's vitality and dynamism. The seas, covering 72% of the Earth's surface, are the origin of all living species and the heartbeat of the planet. They generate fifty percent of the oxygen we inhale, absorb carbon dioxide like a super sponge, and regulate the ecosphere's temperature to maintain favorable weather conditions for life. Their turbulent currents and nutrient-dense waters sustain a highly biodiverse ecology, teeming with many aquatic species that constitute the foundational food chain for terrestrial inhabitants, including humans. Oceans, as sources of biological prestige, are fundamental to life and the sustenance of human communities. They comprise a substantial resource, contributing over 20% to the global protein diet, while also bolstering the livelihoods of millions via fishing, aquaculture, and maritime enterprises. These serve as the global transportation network, facilitating 80% of the world's import and export trade via freight and commerce. They are esteemed

for tourism, leisure, and balance, attracting millions who want to alleviate stress and discover new experiences along the coastline (Blue Economy concept paper, 2014).

However, the prosperity of oceans does not only consider to the upper layer. It contains wonderful resources both reachable and yet fallow, in the shape of both hydrocarbon that is fueling today's energy necessities and gases, metals, minerals, and the biogenetic wealth that is now be discovered. Technical invention is making the undiscovered "blue energy" solutions like wind, waves, and tides probable to give an avant-garde preview of how the maritime energy marketplace will look like. Thus, the oceans are not only water it is so much more than a liquid, being an essential part of our earth's landscape, smooth running the climate, so long as providing food, encouraging economy and lighting our creativity. Given the existing reality of a persistently developing environment, the study and conservation of these great systems in no way is just an option, but an important and essential for all that for life. In the context of major players, Pakistan is blessed with important and appreciated natural resources mainly Pakistan has a 1050 km coastline, blue resources, uninterrupted sea trade, and an exclusive economic zone of 240,000 sq km, Pakistan is well-positioned to reap the benefits of this new economic paradigm. Pakistan worked as a trade transit route for Afghanistan and the Central Asian States. It is estimated that the total worth of the world's blue economy is 24 trillion dollars but benefits only \$5-600 billion. In South Asia, India, and Bangladesh earn billions of dollars annually from the blue economy on the other hand Pakistan's annual revenue is \$450 million but it is very low against its potential which is estimated at 100 billion dollars. Pakistan's maritime sector plays a crucial role in facilitating trade, with 95pc of its trade and 100pc of minerals and resources imported through sea routes. Pakistan falls at 74th rank out of 142 coastal countries. Pakistan possesses several well-developed ports crucial for its blue economy. Karachi Port, the largest and busiest, handles 60pc of national cargo. Port Qasim, the second-largest, boasts infrastructure linked to railways and highways, while Gwadar Port, a developing deep-sea port, offers excellent connectivity to Baluchistan's transportation network. These ports position Pakistan strategically for maritime trade and resource exploration. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is seen as a major driver for Pakistan's blue economy and is an important project in the growth of the blue economy and the development of Gwadar port. However, the flagship project faces opposition from the US, which views it as a threat to its dominance. This rivalry necessitates robust maritime security measures by Pakistan, including acquiring patrol ships and tackling piracy. Territorial disputes with India further complicate matters for Pakistan's blue economy development (Askari, Tahir, &, Shaheen 2020).

### Research Questions

- What are the main key challenges hindering the growth and development of the blue economy in Pakistan (a case study of Gwadar)?
- How do political factors, with domestic governance and regional security dynamics stimulus the development of the blue economy in Pakistan?
- What are the potential social and environmental effects of growing the blue economy in Pakistan (especially in Gwadar), and how can these be reduced or lessened?

### Literature Review

There is a general lack of definition towards what the Blue Economy currently entails. Mere counting of the various economic activities in the ocean is not enough, oceans have a very large economic potential but so, oceans also sustain human existence that is why we need to save them. The conventional concepts of Blue Economy must encompass such values as business profitability and environmental friendliness to be regarded as genuine. This report has also suggested the United States and China should work together on the befitting definition of Blue Economy in order to align with the two

objectives above. This might include identifying how the economic impact of having healthy oceans can be measured in the long-run and dissemination of the most effective approaches in planning for the ocean and the technology involved (Conathan, &, Moore, May 2015).

Pakistan has the longest cost line of 1050 km long length covering rich maritime resources and in a good geographical position to act as a pivot to central Asia. The article also indicated that Pakistan should emulate the Blue economy nations, through this Pakistan extends and diversifies its economy and strengthens its position in the Indian Ocean, the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth also led to job creation. That mean sector like aquaculture, fishery shipping tourism and renewable will enhance the GDP of the country and created prosperity (Barrech, Brohi, & Ullah, 2021).

The significant coastline and rich maritime resources, potential of renewable energy, fisheries and maritime transport and mention that despite this government neglects it due to which it remains underdeveloped so that way it did not attract the investors. The research also emphasized the importance of CPEC, the Sino-Pak Blue economic partnership, and its opportunities and also highlighted some challenges faced by the blue economy which the main issue of inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic hurdles, regional instability, and lack of awareness due which low rate of investment and suggested that the government focus on these things by this the position of Pakistan will be improved ( Askari, Tahir, &, Shaheen 2020).

#### **Worlds' Major Beneficiaries of Blue Economy**

The blue economy encircles all economic activities related to the ocean, seas, and coasts. It plays a vital role in the global economy, with several major players reaping significant benefits. Major players in the world economy include China, USA, and South Asian countries that focus mainly on the blue economy.

#### **China's Growing Economic Influence and the Blue Economy**

China's economic upswing draws global focus and its Belt and road initiative (BRI) is still driving the global agenda. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in gaining a comprehensive blue economy, China actively uses the potentials of the Belt road initiative (BRI) in advancing the maritime processes. Guangshun, Director-General of the National Marine Data and Information Service (NMDIS) stated that Beijing considers the blue economy as a major component of the BRI. To support his claim, he exposes China's stance in the global developments in this domain, stressing that "China supports building a blue partnership", thus actively participating in the promotion of the aforementioned strategic partnerships. China's blue economy which related to a number of industries including shipping as well as fisheries are showing a very positive change and the change can be informative for the global community. This changing trend can be seen from newly developed marine industries and healthy aquaculture industry in the country establishing China's commitment to developing oceanic economy. In addition, while proposing his Resolution on the marine economy, Guangshun pays great attention to affirm China's dedication to promoting cooperation with other countries in this sphere. Reflected in this context is the invitation made to coastal cities' entries to actively participate in local economic development (Chrematistics) and enhancing cooperation with the nations along the MSR by advancing implementation of the relevant projects (Malik, H. Y. 2012).

#### **The US Blue Economy**

The two vast bodies of water that directly touch the United States include the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, means that there has been policy maker interest in enhancing a blue economy. This sort of an economy, based on the sea, tends to be fascinating more so to the US, given its dependence on the ocean for its provision. Notably, six crucial job sectors are intrinsically linked to these resources: marine civil structures, tourism, shipbuilding, maritime transport, recreation and even mining of offshore minerals. These sectors, as late as 2014, together have a capacity to generate a remarkable new job of 75,000 units proving the huge prospect of blue economy for the US ( Barrech, Brohi, & Ullah, 2021). The Blue Economy is similar to the coastal economy; however, it strictly concerns the sectors related to marine economy in the U. S. For instance, a survey conducted in 2014 proves that the ocean economy is

a important component since it created 2.7 million inhabitants, equivalent to the state of Mississippi, and \$258 billion to the GDP in 2010, or \$790 per each inhabitant of the USA. In spite of the fact that overall coastal counties account for \$6.6 trillion (that is \$20,000 per person in the US) and 48, it is to be noted that, although the Blue Economy notion (implying 8 million jobs in 2012) points to the long list of related sectors, these figures suggest the industry's role in the overall economy rather than its verticals.

### **Gwadar Port Geo-Strategic and Geo-Economics Importance for Pakistan**

#### ***Gwadar Port –A Geostrategic Game Changer for Pakistan***

One of the main reasons behind the geostrategic significance of Gwadar is its location at the entrance of the Persian Gulf where it has a direct association with the Indian Ocean. The port is planned to handle mega-ships of up to 200,000 tons of dead weight, a distinct and unique feature of this port in the region. This maritime advantage makes Gwadar as a strategic center in trade and naval operations on the sea. As it is, Pakistan's coastline along the Arabian Sea holds a strategic gem— Gwadar port. This deep water port located near the Persian Gulf's mouth is far from being an economic asset alone. Gwadar's geographical advantage holds a chance to bring a complete change in the destiny of Pakistan by securing its strategic position in the world, strengthening its stance, and becoming a vital actor in the new world order of maritime navigation. and it offers the strength and potential to shore up Pakistan's security position, improve regional influence, and redefine its role and image in global maritime trade dynamics. Gwadar's shifting power balances and its rise as a major trade nucleus could change the current power elements and dynamics in the region. Pakistan's expanded financial leverage could promote to more balanced association with regional players, particularly those with a prevailing presence in the Arabian Sea (Fakhar & Saadat, 2021).

#### ***Improve Security Posture: Protecting Territorial Waters***

Gwadar's advancement strengthens Pakistan's sea security in many ways. The port structure can be used for maritime activities, considering well monitoring and watching of regional waters. This enhanced security account can prevent smuggling, carrying, and other sea dangers and thus safeguard vital shipping channels and enable safe access to ships. Besides, Gwadar may serve as a virtual hub for delivering advanced ocean surveillance technologies and realizing Pakistan's capability of securing its regional waters. Also, the development of Gwadar assists with raising nearer positive collaboration with referential partners about marine security issues, which shapes a progressively secure maritime environment for everyone. Countering Local Competition: Thus, the enhancement of Gwadar has essential ramifications for local anchors of power. Thus, by building up a proper base for itself as a central member of territorial exchange and oceanic matters, Pakistan can gain for more significant power status and possibly overcome the pressures from other local actors. That is the reason the Focus area is essential and as Gwadar turns into an increasingly entrusting focus for exchanging with Afghanistan, more adjusted and helpful relations with the district can be available (Rahman et al., 2022).

#### ***Gateway to the Region***

Gwadar's essential area slings it to the front of territorial exchange, going about as a pivotal door for the trading of merchandise between central Asia, the Center East, and countries further abroad. Settled at the mouth of the Persian Bay, Gwadar flaunts direct admittance to the decisively huge Waterway of Hormuz, a sea chokepoint through which a significant piece of the world's oil travels (U. S. Energy Data Organization, 2019). This beneficial situating permits Pakistan to arise as a crucial connection in the worldwide production network, cultivating nearer monetary binds with local players like Iran, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian Republics (Malik, 2012), Gwadar's presence as an exchange center presents a remarkable chance for Pakistan to expand its exchange organizations, diminishing reliance on customary courses and encouraging a more strong and versatile economy (Khan et al., 2024). Envision a clamoring commercial center where products stream unreservedly between mainlands. Gwadar, with its profound water harbor and vital area, can possibly turn out to be unequivocally that. By utilizing its situation and putting resources into foundation improvement, Pakistan can change Gwadar into a central participant in the worldwide exchange field, drawing in unfamiliar speculation, advancing the local financial mix, and eventually, moving Pakistan's monetary development direction (Malik, 2012).

#### ***The Geopolitical Landscape: Balancing Interest***

The Gwadar seaport works as a bridge for landlocked states. This strategic zone of Gwadar Port has a special advantage not only for Pakistan but also for its landlocked neighbor country, Afghanistan. This nearness though brings about the need for a 'bridge' that is wanted for exchange and trade-remaking efforts in the war-struck country (Khan, 2018). It can be a minimum link and it can be a trade link for Afghanistan to attach itself to the global business markets without passing through the costly and longer central Asian or Iranian routes. This efficient and cheap land has the potential to connect with the development of necessities' humanitarian aid, and reproduction material. It is understood that this has nothing to do with the past simple coordination factors. The provision of better exchange availability in Gwadar can be closely associated with the following economic development and improvement in Afghanistan. New position opportunities might emerge for increased communication and commerce, local businesses could be saved, and the Afghan government requires the revenues (Rahman, Z. U., Naeem, M., & Ishaq, M. 2022). Financial replenishment is necessary for the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan and an introduction of peace, thus ensuring the conditions for its development. Moreover, Gwadar Port can serve as the additional impetus for the further increase of both the territory and monetary cooperation and integration in the region. This trade can be further improved between the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan for readiness of developing economy based relation with other central Asian countries. This kind of regional integration is capable of increasing the level of interconnectedness as well as richness of the financial and economic realm for the enhancement of every individual country of the participation stream (Khan et al. , 2024). However, several provokes ought to be mentioned for the complete understanding of all the opportunities of Gwadar Port meaning for Afghanistan as the land span for reproduction. Security issues in both countries continue to be a major and significant factor. Therefore, predictability and stability throughout the entire land span course is crucial for promotion both export and investment (Khan, 2018).

#### **Research Methodology and Discussion**

This research monitors a qualitative approach with restricted statistical data. The qualitative data was composed of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprised of interviews of blue economy experts, conducted in a semi-structured in-depth format to gather the necessary data and provide direction to the study. Furthermore, some documented interviews of blue economy experts from YouTube were also taken. In terms of secondary data collection, research reports and academic publications were operated.

#### **External Challenges to the Gwadar Port: Geopolitical Rivalry and Tactical Competition**

##### **India's Strategic Concerns and Gwadar Port**

India considers the growth of Gwadar Port as a part of the Chinese 'String of Pearls' strategy to surround India and extend its naval influence into the Indian Ocean. It has been seen that this strategic outlook has played a crucial role in shaping India's response towards Gwadar and its development carries a rather long shadow. In fact, New Delhi considers CPEC with Gwadar at its core as a direct threat to its sphere of interests in the region. The possibility of a Chinese Naval Base in Gwadar continues to fuel anxiety in New Delhi because this shift can dramatically change the balance of power in the region in China's favor. India's response has been diplomatic, economic, and military where they have essentially tried to balance the Chinese threat by starting diplomatic warfare against Chinese influence, economic warfare by opener Chabahar port with Iran, and military warfare by attempting to build its naval military power. (Mohamed, 2021) India has quite openly acted contrary to the CPEC because India sees it as a threat to its power and to its existence. It passes through the Pakistani-administrated Gilgit Baltistan; what India imagines as its slice of the contentious Kashmir valley. It is known that on the March 3, 2016, Pakistani province of Baluchistan captured Indian RAW officer Kulbhushan Jadhav. The government operative then, at that point, confessed in a video discourse that he has been on covert operation in Baluchistan motivated to perform explosions in Pakistan. His main goal was to give a blow to the CPEC by employing the Baloch radicals. However, India has stated that Jadhav was there to cause damage (Zamir, 2023).

##### **US Geopolitical Factor and Gwadar Port**

The US's Indo-Pacific strategy, focusing on China's rise, brought a rather controversial element to the



Gwadar situation. Earlier the US was assertive of CPEC and support the project, including Gwadar but as it grows international levers and concern over China's expanding influence. Few factors explain Washington's suspicion of Gwadar. Immediately the US supports India's concerns about China's core objectives, considering Gwadar as a dual-purpose installation with military implications. Further to this, the lack of transparency on CPEC funding and obligation manageability has sparked concerns over Pakistani's economic vulnerability and the likelihood of debt dependency on China. Thirdly, the US is also aware of China's rising sea power in the Indian Sea and regards Gwadar as critical to Beijing's strategies to counter America's marine hegemony. To counter this, America has adopted a layered strategy. This entails building up the organizations and strategic relations with India and other provincial accomplices, backing another cross-stream drive alongside giving monetary back to Pakistan since it acts as stabilizer to the Chinese endeavors. Likewise, the US has expressed its need to connect with Gwadar for business, which can be seen as an effort to curb China's influence nevertheless, preserving the form of the US's approach to Gwadar is still cautious and contingent on Pakistan's ability to sustain strategic autonomy and address concerns associated with openness and sustainability of debts (Qazi et al., 2020). Although the key rationale behind the Biden organization's orientation of common freedoms and majority rule esteems added extra question identity marks into the US-Pakistan relationship and engagement on monetary and foundation projects like Gwadar (Mohamed, 2021).

#### ***Chabahar Port: The Emergence Of A Challenge For Gwadar***

Sharing the Asian region with Pakistan's Gwadar Port is Chabahar Port situated in Iran and its development presents a new reality on the geopolitical map. India has seen Pakistan positioning itself in the region with Gwadar causing its threat through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) therefore it has strategically decided to invest and build Chabahar. Several factors make India wary of Gwadar. Initially, New Delhi analyzes Gwadar as a positional threat to constrain India's role in the region. This potentiality of the port to increase China's naval capabilities in the Indian Ocean deepens India's fears. Consequently, through investing in Chabahar India aims to check China's maritime dominancy, earn access to Central Asia, and possibly overtake Pakistan as a transit point for trade. (Zamir, 2023) The cutthroat competition between Gwadar and Chabahar has turned the Indian Ocean into a geopolitical battleground. Gwadar is developed mostly for China's access to Pakistan and the Central Asian States whereas Chabahar is intended to provide connectivity between India, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Central Asian States. Thus, both ports aim at being strategic centers of trade and transport in the regions, serving the same market and exchanging the same products. In February 2018, an agreement was endorsed between India and Iran to give functional power of the Chabahar port to India for the following year and a half. However, with regards to involvement in a war or conflict, the two ports have different strategic stance and affiliations. (Nisar, 2019) Gwadar plays an important role in the whole picture of China's BRI, which indicates the pivotal role of Pakistan in China's vision for global prosperity. However, Chabahar serves India's Act East policy to boost its naval power in the IOR and extend its trade & diplomacy parameters in the region. Several issues require focus at Gwadar and Chabahar, it is noteworthy that the rivalry between the two ports also has security consequences. The availability of two major ports may lead to great physical interactions in the form of naval mobilization which may increase tension between India and Pakistan. Also, this competition could affect the security situation of the other large surrounding regions because both countries will seek to protect their infrastructure investments (Tanoli, 2016)

#### ***Gwadar Port: Lack of full participation of China in the security and administration***

Despite being one of the flagship projects of China's BRI, the development of Gwadar Port has posed many problems from which questions about Beijing's seriousness can be asked. Gwadar, despite the government's initiatives to turn into the dominant transportation of oil, still faces shortcomings in infrastructural development and insecurity. An important problem is also a small role of China in the management of the port's security. Although Pakistan has provided a strong security contingent of about 500 Chinese staff, Beijing has remained highly averse to committing its own security for the project. This is a stark difference compared with the levels of security used widely in Chinese projects in other countries. The Chinese armed police and naval forces are not stationed in Gwadar; therefore, the

strategic location has been subject to various threats, which affects its roles in acting as a central pillar for trade and energy points in the region. Also, the basic facilities required in Gwadar are still lacking. Lack of oil terminals, refining, and a sufficient number of berths for large ships also remain a problem of the port limiting its capacity to work with the large amounts of oil planned in the conceptualization phase. Concerning the organizational capacity, it is apparent that the established objectives for Gwadar are still unattainable due to the low number of working berths (Khan et al., 2024)

### **Internal Challenges to the Gwadar Port**

#### ***Gwadar's Fishing Community Under Threat***

The particularity of this province where Gwadar Port that has developed at a very fast pace has had an impact on the fishing community with majority of the people of this area fully depending on fishing business and is the main occupation of people in this coastal area. Among the effects that could be observed are that some of the former productive fishing zones have been developed into structures that have affected the source of income of thousands of people. Present growth in the East Bay Expressway (Demizar Expressway) and Marine Drive has some areas that used to be the primary fishing areas for these neighborhood fishermen. Despite the fact that these regions were generally used for fishing recognize, they are at this point still not set open because of security and different issues, and the public authority having failed to work out a sensible different. Moazzam Khan a specialized consultant of WWF Pakistan agrees to the fact of existence definite eagerness for the constructions of the embankment in Padi Zar that is sure to continue a livelihood of enduring for the fishers. He regards late improvement drives as wonderful for the neighbourhood fishing local area, including however not confined to the show of privately acquired fish on the worldwide stage, yet additionally passing on better access to a worldwide assortment of business sectors. However, closer fishermen remain unsatisfied with the actions of the public authority. Earlier state leader of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif instantiated the segment of 2,000 motors for Anglers, while concerning the remuneration about 900 Anglers who have received Rs. 250,000 each categorizing leaving many others of the fishing community with ignored issue. Aside from the fish which is being directly hunted by the fishermen, every other thing and every other being pertaining to the marine life and the marine environment in general is in danger. The construction of roads especially at the coastal regions as well as the constructions of the breakwaters have affected the marine environment and the social issues that arise include water pollution and depletion of the fish stock. Few efforts in environmental conservation by the government have been observed, such as, reduction of pollution through reusing sewage water and planting of trees; however, the sustainability of such measures cannot be ascertained (Baloch, 2023).

Thus, the outcome of the fishing community is somewhat tied with the progressive development of Gwadar city in a balanced manner. As viewed, the fishing community may be confronted with many circumstances, which, if not addressed properly, translates to social instabilities and reduces the overall potentiality of the said region (Baloch, 2023).

#### **The Balochistan Conundrum: A Challenge for Gwadar Port's Success**

The ambitious development plans for Gwadar Port face a significant hurdle: instability in internal security and its constant changes coupled with the Balochistan political crisis. Ironically, Balochistan is one of the richest provinces of natural resources – gold, copper, gas, coal – yet is one of the most under developed regions in Pakistan. The balochs feel they are exploited and hence desolate which has led to six rebellion movements since the inception of Pakistan. One major issue that can be raised is that these grievances will contribute to more energy to Baloch separatist movements. In case these two important projects including the CPEC and Gwadar Port also fail to provide facilities and revenues to Balochistan then there are chances these projects may fall in to the hands of insurgents or may remain unproductive. This concern is not unfounded, especially when it is expressed by such a high-profile official as the former Chief Minister of Balochistan, Abdul Malik Baloch, who stressed would finally start caring for the people of Balochistan. He cautioned that devoid of support from the locals, endeavors such as Gwadar Port as well as CPEC are going to face plethora of problems. Baloch nationalist leaders also share similar concerns with relation to the demography of these mega-projects. Increased now by inter-provincial movement of workers, which the survey suggests to be ranging between one and two. 5

million, regarding the prospective of Baloch being a minority within their own province. This fear has been construed for having led to the recent increased attacks on non-Baloch workers and residents (Khan, 2018)

More over terrorism activities have increased tremendously in Balochistan and this has led to so many casualties. As per South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) records, it was observed that 2022 saw drastic increase in fatality rate in the province as compared to that in the year 2021. This surge indicates a new high in the death toll according to the country's statistics, especially given that the year 2012 is considered the most indicative of the presence of terrorism in Pakistan. That leaves the data showing a rather worrisome trend on the part of violent actors to escalate their attacks on security forces. Casualties of security forces have increased progressively in recent years, which depicts the increased difficulty that authorities in the region would encounter when having to quell insurgency. As far as the security situation is concerned, the situation remains volatile in Balochistan as civilians, security forces, and the militants suffered the most in the incidents. To a lesser extent, these numbers also show the versatile security threat in Balochistan and the continuous existence of militancy. To counter this problem, it is necessary to apply multifaceted measures that will involve both the military and those focused on development (Khan et al., 2024).

#### ***Political Instability and Governance Issues***

At present, it can be noted that there are certain major issues, which hamper the achievement of maximum potential of Gwadar Port, as well as the goals and objectives of the CPEC framework namely political instability of Pakistan and governance-related problems. We discovered that mega-projects have a long gestation period, hence long-term funding structures which are hard to come by due to political risk arising from unstable government leadership and unpredictable policy environments. This uncertainty hinders one's ability to invest in ventures because stable and predictable policies are lacking. Fluctuations in government goals and objectives together with changes in the legal framework of the country might hamper project schedules, costs and discourage investors from overseas (Akhtar, 2024).

For example, fluctuations in taxation policies, companies' regulation, or labor relations may pose risks to the investors in the Gwadar zone. Another chronic pathology for Pakistan's development environment is corruption. A flood absorbs public funds, skews rivalry, and undermines the population's faith in governmental organizations. It can cause high costs of projects, project implementation issues, and redirection of funds away from necessary infrastructure projects in the case of Gwadar and CPEC. Besides, poor institutional capacity and impotent law enforcement agencies ensure that criminals enhance their operations through smuggling, drug lords, and even terrorism. These problems do not only have negative impact on the economic development but also security in the port and operation of the same. Open government processes do not exist, and the process of performing their duty is very obscure, making it worse. Non-clarity as well as inconsistency create problems in the form of bureaucratic complicatedness that harms businesses and investors differently, for instance, through delays and higher cost (Khan et al., 2024).

#### ***Economic and Infrastructure Challenges Facing Gwadar Port***

Gwadar port, even though situated with much potential in a natural sea-route linking Middle east to the Far East, has experienced economic and infrastructure problems that have hampered its potential as a transit point of trade and energy. One of them has been the very weak commercial activity at the port, which, inter alia, is significantly due to poor performance in Linking it with the right transport facilities. The main difficulties are the absence of direct effective road connections that connect Gwadar to China, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian states. A large number of roads have been developed in Pakistan but KKH that passes through the country still has a long way to go before it can absorb the heavy traffic. Furthermore, all those successful ports around the world have proper rail connectivity to the roads networks, but missing link is presently lacking in Gwadar. Where administration is lacking is in not providing quality repair and maintenance service providers for the ships that come to the port. Other rivals involve Salalah, Duqm, Jebel Ali, and Bandar Abbas all own such facilities; however, Duqm port alone has a ship repair yard and dry dock for facilitating vessels up to aircraft service. In the absence of



this core infrastructure, shipping lines might not venture to do business from Gwadar port (Kardon et al., 2020).

### Conclusion

Global economies like China, the US, and South Asia benefit from the Blue economy. China has pioneered maritime resource use in its Belt and Road Initiative. Despite lacking a government blue economy policy, the US's vast coastal zones provide great economic prospects. With its maritime resources and strategic strategies, South Asian nations have advanced the blue economy, but infrastructure and high-tech development are still lacking. Thus, Robert D. Kaplan's "center stage for the 21st century" idea underpins this research's geostrategic character. While World War 1 and 2 were Atlantic and Pacific, the following decade will be Indian Ocean-focused. Some think that whomever controls the Indian Ocean controls the world. Strategic locations would let Pakistan to influence the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has almost little experience with the blue economy, as described below. Thus, coastal agriculture and marine resources may be expanded, boosting the coastal economy's fisheries, coastal tourism, and ship construction sectors. Infrastructure development, sophisticated technology, and good planning are needed to eliminate inequality at this level. At least adopting the blue economy might boost Pakistan's GDP and provide many jobs for its citizens, promoting sustainable economic growth. Investing in the blue economy is one of the best ways for Pakistan, a regional and global market player, to assure long-term economic stability.

The Arabian Sea port of Gwadar, near the Persian Gulf, may change Pakistan's regional dominance and economy. Its general position will improve commerce, security, and economic growth, challenging Karachi and Port Qasim. Since Gwadar might become a trading hub, it could aid Pakistan and its neighbors, such as Afghanistan. Gwadar's location on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) attracts global investment and boosts industrialization. It may modernise Pakistani fisheries, boost tourism in Balochistan, and create jobs that would boost the economy. This many-fold relevance allows Gwadar to realign.

Thus, internal and external issues hinder Gwadar Port building and operation. From the outside, the territorial dispute with India, neighborly strife with China, and US power game worry Pakistan about building a safe and conducive Gwadar. Conflicts between Baloch separatists, poor economic and infrastructure, political instability, and neglect of local fisherman are domestic issues. Gwadar port development offers potential for strategic relations, economic transformations, and security for Pakistan. Effective diplomacy, security measures, well-planned development processes, and a governance structure that considers regional and local interests are necessary.

### Recommendations

These suggestions are essential for Pakistan's blue economy and Gwadar's potential. Initial focus is on improving government policies and regulations. This involves creating effective sustainable development, infrastructure, and political stability programs. All stakeholders, from locals to foreign investors, should be involved in policy design and compliance to reflect regional characteristics and ensure implementation. Secondly, the regional security must be addressed. Nations must be pressured to end territorial conflicts and geopolitical losses. Enhancing security in Gwadar and other coastal locations would boost business and FDI, according to this report. Regional integration by adjacent nations may boost security and economic position. Thirdly, valuable industries need blue economy infrastructure and technological improvements to enter the 21st century. Better Harbour infrastructure, transport and communications facilities, fishing gear, and Aquaculture methods will boost efficiency, profitability, and sustainability. The government should compensate local residents, especially fishermen, and ensure development for all strata to mitigate this detrimental effect.

Additionally, expanding the Blue Economy will reduce social and environmental impacts by promoting publicly vital environmental conservation and inclusive planning. Ensures that development does not harm the environment or local people by listening and working with them. Development projects must need EIAs and CMAs.

These ideas will help Pakistan capitalize on Gwadar and the Blue Economy, promoting economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice.

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