

Potential of Blue Economy for Pakistan: A study of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Dr. Salma Naz

Assistant Professor, Faculty of social Science & Humanities, Minhaj University, Lahore(MUL), Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Ansari

Assistant Professor, Department of General Education(FHSS) University of Central Punjab, Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Dr. Syedah Sadia Kazmi

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science and International Relations (DPSIR)

School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH)

University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore

Dr. Ruqia Kalsoom

Assistant Professor

Virtual university, Pakistan

Dr. M. Qadeer (corresponding author).

University of the Punjab Secondary Dept. IER

Abstract

Earth is called "the blue planet "because 70% surface consists of water. The ocean is vital to the world's economy approximately 3.5 billion people depend on the ocean for the sustenance of their lives and livelihoods. Having about 1,050 km long coastline and the Exclusive Economic Zone covering about 240,000 sq. km. Pakistan is a key maritime country in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan has immense potential in the blue economy the only possibility for Pakistan to sustain its deteriorating economy is to focus on the growth of its blue economy. In this connection, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) not only boosts the traditional economy of Pakistan but also can play a vital role in the growth of the blue economy. This study explores the potential of the blue economy for Pakistan from the perspective of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The nature of the research is qualitative and the case study method is applied to the present study. Descriptive and exploratory approaches are applied to discover the answers to the research questions and analysis of this study will help to find out many possible findings of the Potential of the Blue economy of Pakistan in perspective of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Keywords: Blue Economy, The China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Potential Of The Blue Economy, Growth Of The Blue Economy

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1. Introduction

The ocean performs a vital function in regulating the climate and offering significant ecosystem services but a sign to the global economy. Ocean shares approximately US \$3 to \$6 trillion of world income. Similarly, over 58% of the population settles in an area of 100 kilometers of coastline, and twelve megacities are coastal. Fisheries and aquaculture shares per year approximately hundred billion US dollars, and two hundred and sixty million jobs in the world economy.

Instead of the fact that the blue economy provides the ocean chances for nations because of its comprehensive approach towards human beings, planet Earth as well environment, many states still did not focus on maritime resources. However, the United Nations has declared 2021-30 as the "Decade of Ocean

Science for Sustainable Development" that focused on attempts towards a more secure future through world capacity building that will guarantee ocean science can completely help states in producing better circumstances for sustainable development of the Ocean.

Consequently, states across the globe are taking an interest in the exploration of their blue economy potential seeing its significance for the economy of the country. But, instead of this fact that Pakistan is a maritime state and has a 990 km long coastline divided into two portions, the Makran coast and the Sindh coast have 720 km and 270 km area respectively, still as compared to other states far behind in fully utilizing of its capabilities regarding ocean economy. From the perspective of the potential of the blue economy China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is estimated to be booming the maritime capabilities of Pakistan.

2. The Potential of Blue Economy

The concept of "blue economy" rests upon the idea presented by Gunter Pauli, who defined blue economy as "the sustainable usage of the resources without damaging the environment"(Senaratne & Zimroff 2019). This phenomenon originated in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In the report of The Economist, The Intelligence Unit of 2015 described the blue economy as: "the blue economy is sustainable usage of maritime resources for economic progress, better living, and employment, and marine ecosystem health"(World Bank & United Nations 2017). The blue economy is completely reliant on oceans. Countries by recognizing the potential of the ocean economy are now involved in advancing it and expanding their economies to be more competitive in this age of globalization.

From the perspective of the natural asset on the planet, the ocean has many benefits for humanity. Some economic benefits are as follows (Hudson, 2018).

- 1) It provides approximately fifteen percent of the world's protein needs.
- 2) 90 percent of world trade is possible via the shipping sector. It provides hundreds of millions of employment, in aquaculture, shipping, fisheries, energy production, tourism, and other sectors.
- 3) It is also the source of approximately thirty percent of the global oil and gas resources.
- 4) Approximately four billion of the world's population depends on the sea and coastal resources for their sustenance and living.
- 5) Small-scale fishing supplies approximately half of the global harvested seafood.

Table 1. Classification and Definition of Major Ocean Industries

Region	Main countries
Europe	France ,England, Ireland , Spain
Americ	America, Canada
Asia-Pacific	New Zealand, China, Malaysia ,Korea, Australia, Japan, Vietnam,Thailand ,Indonesia and. Philippines.

Source: Wang, X. (2016). The ocean economic statistical system of China and understanding of the blue economy. Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics, 2(2), 10.

The blue economy is simply separated into two wider areas of industries which are centered on:

I. Maritime Industry

II. Marine-related industry

I. Maritime Industry

It contains the main marine industries and a few of them are listed below(Wang, X. 2016).

- Oil and gas industry
- Communication and transportation
- Shipbuilding
- Electric power industry
- Sea water utilization
- Salt manufacturing industry
- Chemical industry
- Marine Engineering
- Marine Biomedicine
- Scientific research

II. Marine related industry

This industry includes the enterprises that connect the main ocean industries. It creates resources for the Marine sector or uses the benefits of products from the way of production (OECD, 2016). A secondary type of this economy.

Coastline Economy:

Coastline Economy is subcategory of the marine economy. (Colgan 2007), describes the coastal economy as comprised of all economic activity in the coastal area, and therefore embodies employment, wages, and output in all of the regions described as a portion of the coastal economy.

The Potential of Blue Economy for Pakistan

Pakistan is rich in blue resources, natural ports, and incessant sea trade and has a vast shoreline. The potential blue economy of Pakistan consists of approximately a hundred billion US dollars. About coastal length Pakistan is placed 74th out of 142 coastal countries in the world with a coastline-to-area ratio of 1:36(Muhammad, et., al 2021) Consists of a continental shelf having approximately 240,000 sq km area with an Exclusive Economic Zone.

Table 1: Different Sea Zones of Pakistan

Sr. No	Type of Zone	Range (Nautical Miles)
1	Extended Continental Shelf	350
2	Adjoining Zones	24
3	Exclusive Economic Zone	200
4	Territorial Waters	12

Source: Syed, R., & Safdar, A. (2021). Revisiting Blue Economy: Challenges and Prospects for the Maritime Sector of Pakistan. *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, 10(2), 16-37.

In an era of globalization seaports and seaborne trade in Pakistan have important shares in socioeconomic development, so strengthening economic connections among countries of many regions. Likewise, Gwadar port of Pakistan appears as the best center port in the region because of its significant strategic location to invite trade from west China, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and other states owing to its nearness to the Strait of Hormuz (SoH), which is the key shipping way and connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Nowadays, Gwadar's geostrategic location allows it to watch and regulate the trade routes of oil and Sea Lines of Communications (Shehzad, 2020).

3. CPEC

A significant part of the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative is The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which joins Asia, Africa, and Europe with China through a trade way and is also recognized as the New Silk Road Economic Development Corridor (Wolf 2016). The objectives of the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor are to join Kashgar (an area of the city of province Xinjiang northwest area of China) to the Gwadar port in Balochistan through a network of highways, airports, railways as well as energy pipelines to achieve the objectives of promotion of trade and tourism(Salik 2018).

With The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor , 46 billion dollars will be spent by China, mostly on energy plants,CPEC, industrialization, Gwadar Port, and the development of infrastructure in economically less developed regions. (Markey, D. S., & West, J. (2016).

China thinks The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is its leading venture, as Pakistan connects two main economic passages: The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and Maritime Silk Road(SREB will join more than 68 states and 4.4 billion population across Central Asia to South Asia, Russia, Middle East, and Europe and Southeast Asian and Maritime Silk Road which will join the South China Sea to East Africa, Indian Ocean, East Africa, Mediterranean, and the red sea) (Du 2016).

The SRF (the Silk Road Fund) with US\$40bn and AIIB(The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank)with US\$100bn prepared to offer financial help to The Belt and Road Initiative. Exim Bank ,China Development Bank, Sovereign Wealth Fund, and Foreign Exchange Reserve are prepared to provide further funding to this massive initiative. Concerning domestic progress, it has been emphasized that domestic workers would acquire job chances during urbanization and infrastructure growth.

All the main cities of Pakistan like Gawadar, Badeen, and Thattts, etc. would be rebuilt and urbanized. Furthermore, a completely new market is developing for linguistics. There is an increasing necessity for translators and linguists who would be required to interpret and translate Chinese, English, Urdu, and other languages spoken in different areas of Pakistan. Moreover, a national workforce would be needed to develop the agriculture sector under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Sultana, T., & Fatima, Z. 2021).

The expansion of fishing sectors and port yards in littoral regions would create jobs for indigenous fishermen. Likewise, new markets would be opened for its livestock industry and Pakistan might arise as the main meat exporter. Consequently, workers would be paid high wages in the growth of businesses. The cottage industry of Pakistan would be capable to contest with global markets. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises would grow by applying the innovative plans of entrepreneurs. Likewise, the service sector and development of the planning industry would also emerge in Pakistan because it will perform as one of the main centers of One Belt One Road in the shape of CPEC (Xie, et al., 2015)

In contrast to China, the Benefits of The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Pakistan are more local and seem to function at the micro level. The investment has been started from \$46 billion which raised to \$55 billion and then extended to \$62 billion (Siddiqui, 2017). \$4 billion would be spent on manufacturing railway networks and motorways and \$34 billion would be used on the national grid to produce 17,000-megawatt energy. The remaining amount has been allocated for the development of the city of Gawadar, the growth of special economic zones, and the layout of fiber optic cables(Rahman & Shurong, 2017)

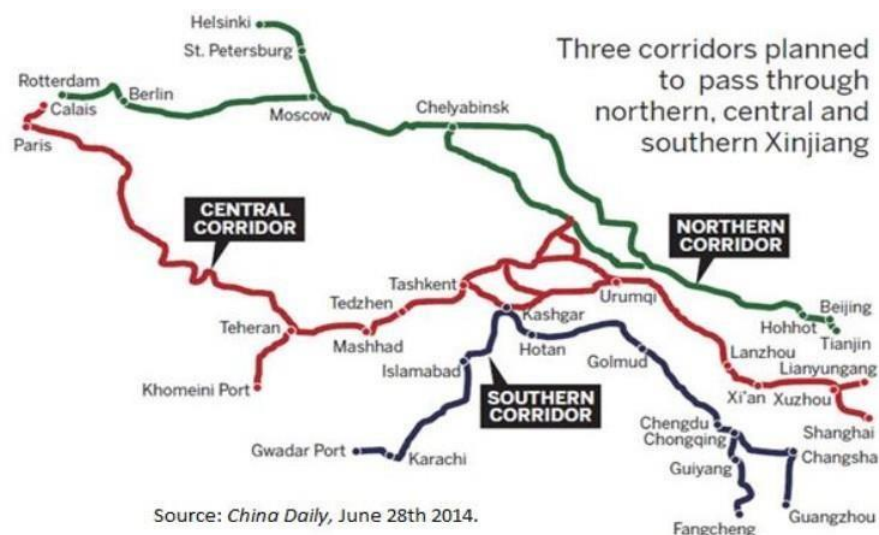
Energy Plans under CPEC

Sr.No.	Plans Name	MV
Completed Plans		
1	Sahiwal Coal-fired Power Plant	1320
2	UEP Wind Farm, Jhimpir, Thatta	100
3	China Hub Coal Power Project, Hub Balochistan	1320
4	Hydro China Dawood Wind Farm, Thatta and Gharo,	50
5	Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur)	1000
6	Coal-fired Power Plant at Port Qasim Karachi	1320
7	Engro Thar Coal Power Project	660
8	Three Gorges Second and Third Wind Power Project	100
9	HUBCO Thar Coal Power Project (Thar Energy)	330
10	Sachal Wind Farm Thatta,Jhimpir	50
11	Matiari to Lahore ±660 KV HVDC Transmission Line Project	4,000 MW Evacuation Capacity
12	Karot Hydropower Project,Punjab /AJK	720

Under Construction Projects		
13	1320 SSRL Thar Coal Block-I 7.8 mtpa & Power Plant (2×660MW) (Shanghai Electric)	1320
14	300MW Coal-Fired Power Project at Gwadar	300
15	Suki Kinari Hydropower Project, KP	884
16	HUBCO ThalNova Thar Coal Power Project	330
Under Consideration Plans		
17	Western Energy (Pvt.) Ltd. Wind Power Project	50
18	Azad Pattan Hydropower Project, AJK/Punjab	700
19	Cacho Wind Power Project	50
20	Kohala Hydropower Project, AJK	1124
21	Thar Mine Mouth Oracle Power Plant & surface mine	1320

Source: CPEC Authority Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives
<https://www.cpec.gov.pk/energy>

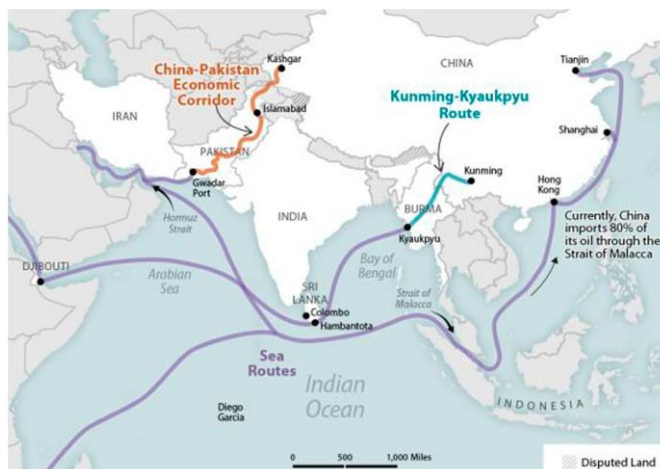
Figure 1: Corridors of One Belt and one Road Initiative



Source: China Daily, June 28th 2014.

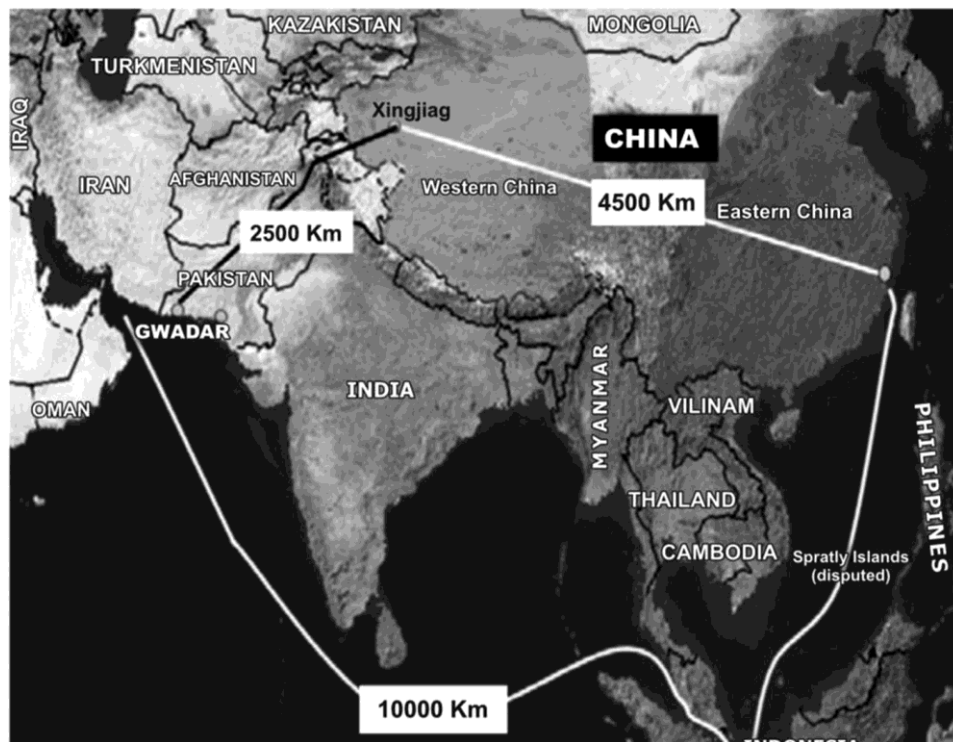
Source: Sial, S. (2014). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: An Assessment of Potential Threats and Constraints. Conflict and Peace Studies, 6(2), 11-40.

Figure II. Indo-Pacific Energy and Trade Routes.



Source: Rahman, Z. U., Khan, A., Lifang, W., & Hussain, I. (2021). The geopolitics of the CPEC and Indian Ocean: security implication for India. Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs, 13(2), 122-145.

Figure III. The shortest route from Western China to Gwadar.



Source: Khan, S. A. (2013). Geo-economic imperatives of Gwadar Sea Port and Kashgar economic zone for Pakistan and China. *Ipri Journal*, 13(2), 87-100.

The important advantage of the Pakistan –China Economic Corridor to Pakistan is a greater value of Gwadar port, established as a deep sea port by Chinese stockholders.

Figure IV. Gwadar port location at the mouth of Straits of Hormuz.



Source: www.google.com.pk

Gawadar is located near the Strait of Hormuz which regulates 1/3rd of the traffic of world oil trade. The Gwadar Port will offer China the shortest entry to the Indian Ocean through the Arabian Sea. China is flourishing as an industrialized state and it wants safe and easy entry to the sea for transportation. But the key industrial area has a long distance from Shanghai port and is situated approximately at 16,000 km of distance and requires 2–3 months of traveling (Naseem 2014).

Gwadar will support China to lessen this distance and expense. Gwadar port is considered to be useful for other landlocked neighboring countries with natural resources by carrying the chance to transport their

items to the port and other parts of the world (Conrad 2017). It also offers economic security to China and curtails the nautical distance from Shanghai to North America by 9,000 km (Akber, 2015). Successful accomplishment of CPEC would minimize the trade track from China to the Gulf of Oman from 12,000 km via sea to 2,200 km via Pakistan.

Economic Growth

The electricity generation projects, The local manufacturing industry will flourish with the development of CPEC projects. The planned 29 industrial parks, which comprise 21 mineral zones and 27 SEZs, would have significance for the trade and industrial sectors, and the proposed 9 km² Gwadar SEZ would benefit livestock, agriculture, energy, and minerals industries (Singh & Magray, 2017).

Resolve the issue of the Energy Crisis

Completion of planned projects would resolve the issue of energy shortcomings in Pakistan. The major portion of the investment of over \$33 billion would resolve the shortage of energy with the additional amount of energy. With the shortage of energy problem resolved, Pakistan in the future will be an economic hub and will be able to create domestic jobs, and will provide an advanced infrastructure in Pakistan (Ali, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the completion of energy projects will support to eradicate poverty (Huang, 2008). When 14 out of the 21 coal, gas, and solar energy schemes are accomplished, an extra 10,400 MW of energy will be provided. Economic progress will boost socioeconomic development and increase the living standard of the people.

Infrastructure Progress

CPEC will also help to uplift the infrastructure in Pakistan that not only increases the per capita income but also elevate the standards of living, links remote areas with economic centers, and in this way will reduce progress gaps in the country (Bhattacharyay, et al., 2012).

Promotion of Tourism

CPEC will possibly promote the tourism industry in Pakistan. Numerous tourist places are located along the CPEC way (Meher, 2017), particularly Gilgit-Baltistan because of the famous peaks of Nanga Parbat and K2 which are the topmost climbable mountains inviting a large number of mountaineers every year (Ali, et al., 2017).

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that Pakistan has great potential for a blue economy. From in perspective of the promotion of the blue economy, CPEC will most probably advantage for Pakistan. It is a leading part of China The Belt and Road Initiative. CPEC has the potential to give status of Pakistan as an economic center by inviting and benefiting regional investors like Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia States, and India, to improve economic relations with Pakistan.

China policies to spend \$46 billion in CPEC in which solar, coal gas and hydropower projects are also included which support overcoming the energy crisis in Pakistan and the progress of Gwadar Port, as well as the development of infrastructure in backward areas, particularly in KPK and the Baluchistan regions, helps the development of the economy.

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