

The overlooked potential of Pakistan's blue-economy

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Outline

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: The blue economy is growing in the modern world. While Pakistan has overlooked the blue economy, it has numerous potential to stabilize the economy of Pakistan. However, the blue economy in Pakistan has been overlooked due to some challenges. By addressing those challenges, the country can get the full potential of a blue economy.

2. The current status of Pakistan's blue economy

3. The overlooked potential of Pakistan's blue economy

- (a) Maritime ports are ignored by the Government, it undermines the blue economy.
- (b) Pakistan's Government has failed to notice the fishing industry.
- (c) Coastal tourism can contribute to

Date: _____

- prosperity, but it is noticed by authorities.
- (d) Pakistan can create clean energy in coastal areas due to strong winds, but authorities have neglected this.
- (e) With the help of marine-biotechnology, the state's economy can progress, yet the government has failed to capitalize on this opportunity.
- (f) Pakistan is blessed with extra nautical miles; the government can extract valuable treasures from sea mining, but policymakers ^{to promote economic growth} have ignored this untapped wealth.
- (g) By reviving Pakistan's shipbuilding and repair industry, various employment opportunities can be created, but government has shown little initiative in this regard.

4. Challenges that hinder Pakistan from utilizing the potential of the blue economy

- (a) Lack of awareness about the blue economy in the government and among the public.
- (b) Pakistan's government focuses on agrarian

Date: _____

Policy-making for the economy

- (c) Underdeveloped infrastructure of seaports, causing inefficiencies in trade and discouraging foreign investment
- (d) Minimal participation in sea trade, resulting in lost revenue and geopolitical irrelevance in maritime affairs

5 Solutions to address challenges

- (a) Public awareness campaigns about the blue-economy should be intensified
- (b) Seaports must be modernized with advanced infrastructure and technology to boost efficiency and trade capacity

6. Conclusion

Essay

"Is it still a blessing if you never recognize it as one?" The ocean has always been a source of life, trade, and wealth. But in Pakistan's case, it remains a background feature; rarely celebrated, mostly sidelined. The blue economy of Pakistan is similarly a blessing, but it is overlooked by the government of the country. The government of the country has ignored the maritime ports of the country and it has also failed to noticing the advantage of fishing industries. Not only fishing industry but also the coastal tourism is overlooked by authorities despite of the reason that it can contribute to prosperity. Moreover, the country can generate the energy by strong winds on coastal line, yet it is also neglected by the government, and marine biotechnology can help in growing economy of Pakistan, again authorities have failed to capitalized this opportunity. Further, due to some extra nautical miles,

Date: _____

sea minerals, and other precious metals can be extracted, but again policymakers have ignored. Apart from these, there are some challenges that hinder Pakistan from utilizing the potential of blue economy such as. there is a lack of awareness about blue economy in the government and public among the public. Furthermore, the government of the country focuses on agrarian policy-making and for the economy. and the underdeveloped infrastructure of seaports, is also causing the negative impact on trade and foreign investment. However, by taking some robust measures these issues can be solved, like by spreading awareness about blue-economy and by modernizing the seaports with advanced infrastructure.

~~Nonetheless~~, the blue economy is growing in the modern world. While Pakistan has overlooked the blue-economy, it has numerous potential to stabilize the economy of Pakistan. However, the blue-economy in

Date: _____

Pakistan has been overlooked due to some challenges. By addressing those challenges, the country can get the full potential of a blue-economy.

The Geographic position of Pakistan has blessed it in many ways and one of them is its coastal line. The coastline of the country is stretched over 1,050 kilometers and exclusive economic zone encompassing approximately 290,000 square kilometers, holds substantial maritime potential. It also gives the advantage of marine resources and key trade routes. Moreover, the blue-economy offers various opportunities in sectors such as fisheries, maritime transport, coastal tourism, offshore energy and others. Despite these potential, this sector of the country remains underdeveloped. It has no proper infrastructure, poor budget allocation etc. Institutions that manage maritime affairs lack the capacity of harnessing the resources. The blue-economy contributes

Date: _____

merely 1.5% to 3% of the national GDP. Moreover, the ~~cost~~ share of the country in Global Blue economy exports stands at a modest 0.25%. (The Express Tribune/ Dr Shahid Hussain/ December, 2024).

However, with policy reforms and planning, the Blue economy can become a pillar of national economic development. But government has ignored the potential of blue economy in Pakistan.

There are several potentials that are overlooked, chief among them is the ^{being} maritime ports of Pakistan ^{that} are being neglected by the government. Despite their strategic importance and potential to drive economy of the country, these are ignored by the authorities. These routes hold importance due to their geographical location such as Gwadar, due to its immense importance the Gwadar port is overlooked by government. For instance, Gwadar port is looked as a gateway to regional connectivity under the China-Pakistan Economic

Date: _____

Corridor (CEPEC), it still lacks the potential of proper operational capacity and basic facilities. It shows that government is not taking this seriously. The neglect of such crucial maritime port not only impacts trade negatively but ~~limited~~ limits the economic opportunities. Hence, above ^{the} argument shows that government has overlooked the maritime ports, and it undermines the blue economy for sustainable development.

Another key point to note is the fishing industry of Pakistan has been neglected by the governments. Despite its ^{that} immense potential of generating revenue for the country, it is failed to be recognized by the government. Due to the fact that, the National Policy of Fisheries was introduced by government nearly 14 years ago. It has not been updated since, it reveals the lack of attention on this matter by authorities. As per article published in Dawn, the fishing industry of Pakistan holds an export potential worth of

Date: _____

9

\$4 billion if proper procedures and modern practices are adopted. (At-Karam Faraz Zafar/August 27/Dawn). Above evidence has illustrated that Pakistan can produce but it does not produce which means it is neglected by the government. Therefore, without focusing on fisheries industries, Pakistani government ~~will~~ risk a vital avenue for economic growth.

This leads to ^{the} next important point which is coastal tourism, but that can contribute to prosperity of the economy but it is ~~not~~ unnoticed by government. The coastal tourism has the potential to significantly contribute to the economy of Pakistan. It has potential to generate colossal amount of revenue. Because, Pakistan has 1000 kilometers of well-positioned coastline, with largely beautiful and aesthetic landscapes. Balochistan has amazing coastline, by promoting tourism, these the problem of employment, local economy, and others will be solved. According to the World Bank's Pakistan Blue Economy Report

Date: _____

, coastal and marine tourism remains an untapped opportunity due to limited infrastructure, weak regulatory frameworks, and lack of strategic planning. (World Bank/Pakistan Blue Economy Report/2022). As this report suggests that Pakistan can boost coastal tourism ~~but it also~~ helps in economic growth. However, ~~that ultimately~~ the government has not paid proper attention to get advantage. Hence, above argument ~~the~~ demonstrates that coastal tourism can contribute to prosperity, but it is noticed by authorities.

Moving on to the next aspect that ~~is building blue economy through the marine biotech~~ is creating the clean energy in coastal areas but it is also neglected by authorities. Wind corridors along the coast, particularly in Sindh and Balochistan, offer ideal conditions for developing wind power projects and reduce the dependence of the country on imported hydrocarbons and coal, it will also help in ~~to~~ stabilizing foreign reserves. As per ~~the~~ report of World Bank

Date: _____ M

Pakistan country climate and Development, harnessing renewable energy sources such as wind and solar could significantly lower energy costs and contribute to long-term economic growth. (World Bank/Pakistan Climate and Development report/ 2022). This report shows that wind power energy is cost effective and contributors in long-term economic growth.

Thus, by looking at the above argument, it is highlighted that Pakistan can create clean energy from high winds of coastal line but authorities has neglected this opportunity.

In the same way, with the help of marine-biotechnology, the economy of the state can progress but again it is not given enough attention by the Government. Marine biotechnology holds huge power to advance the economy of Pakistan through innovations in pharmaceuticals, biofuels, and aquaculture. Coastal line and marine biodiversity offers valuable resources to generate new medicines, industrial enzymes and sustainable food resources. However, Government

Date: _____

has failed to capitalize on this due less to research funding and policy making.

Despite having rich coastal biodiversity, ^{the} country is unable to support innovative step. According to the World Bank, Pakistan invests only 0.2% of its GDP in research and development, significantly lower than other developing countries, which hampers the growth of sectors like marine biotechnology. As this report shows that due to lack of funding and attention marine biotechnology sector also suffers. Nevertheless, the government ^{Ergo} has ignored the opportunity of economic growth through working on bio-marine-biotechnology.

Not only marine biotechnology is being overlooked by government but also the blessing of extra nautical miles is ~~is~~ ignored the ~~authorities~~ authorities, that can help in boosting economy of the country by mining minerals and other valuable things from sea floor. Moreover, The country is blessed with 290,000 square kilometers, sea mining and resource extraction area. This maritime territory holds valuable reserves

13

~~153~~

Date: _____

such as, polymetallic nodules, methane, and other rare earth elements that could significantly contribute to the growth of economy but due to the lack of interest of policymakers, this opportunity is facing ignorance. According to a report by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Pakistan's deep-sea resources remain unexplored despite their potential to reduce import dependency and enhance industrial development. (National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)) As this report, has illustrated that Pakistan has many valuable resources in ocean. Thus, neglecting this untapped maritime wealth reflects that government is ignoring this, a thing that can grow the economy of the country.

In like manner by reviving the shipbuilding and repairing industry of Pakistan, various employment opportunities can be created, but the government has not shown enough interest. The Reviving the shipbuilding and the repairing industry holds numerous advantageous potential for the economy of the country, as it will boost the employment, and being attached with

Date: _____

key sea-trade it will attract many ships. These things will help in growing the economy of the Pakistan. However, the industry remains underdeveloped due to outdated infrastructure and the absence of policy making for maritime industries. A report of Pakistan Business Council has revealed that the shipbuilding sector could create over 50,000 direct and indirect jobs if modern facilities and international standards are adopted. (Pakistan Business Council/ Report/ 2022). Thereupon, investing in shipbuilding and repairing industry and reviving it can increase job opportunities in the country but the government has overlooked this potential.

Despite its vast maritime potential, Pakistan faces several challenges that hinder the growth of its blue economy. One of the primary challenges is the lack of awareness about the blue-economy both among policymakers and public.

Pakistani Government and public is not well-aware about the wide range of sustainable

Date: _____

maritime activities and they are unfamiliar about it. Due to the fact that the curriculum of the country focuses on only agrarian and industrial economy, people are not aware about blue economy. Further, this lack of awareness results in less policymaking for blue economy. According to the Institute of Policy studies, the absence of awareness campaigns and educational ~~prog~~ programs has contributed to a weak public understanding of maritime resources and their economic values. ~~In~~ ^{As a} result, this knowledge gap hampers the economic prosperity through blue-economy.

Another major obstacle to the development of Pakistan's blue economy is the government's overwhelming focus on agrarian economic policy. The Government of Pakistan focuses on traditional economic policymaking only focusing on the agrarian sector. The sector of agriculture remains dominant in every national development policy while the

Date: _____

maritime sector suffers. However, this sector can give enough export supply of sea food, medicines and other things, but it remains neglected. According to ~~the~~ Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23, agriculture accounted for 23% of GDP, while the maritime sector received minimal investment and policy engagement. Therefore, the agrarian sector is a ~~challens~~ challenge for blue economy of Pakistan.

Equally concerning is the outdated infrastructure of Pakistan's seaports, which continues to limit trade efficiency and foreign investment potential. The seaports of Pakistan such as Gwadar and Karachi, suffer from outdated infrastructure and limited cargo space, and poor connectivity with inland transportation networks. These inefficiencies not only slow down trade process but also discourage the ~~foree~~ foreign investors who seek modern and reliable maritime infrastructure. As per ^{the} report of Pakistan.

Date: _____

Business Council, logistical delays and ports congestion have cost the country millions in lost trade opportunities annually. (Pakistan Business Council / Report / 2023.) Thus, without modern and proper infrastructure, the seaports of Pakistan ~~remains~~ ^{remain} the challenges for the blue-economy of the country and its economic growth.

Besides the outdated infrastructure, Pakistan's minimal participation in the global sea trade presents another setback to its maritime aspirations.

Despite having a strategic geographic location near the Strait of Hormuz and bordering key shipping routes, Pakistan plays a limited role in sea trade.

The dependence of Pakistan on imports and exports on foreign ships costs it with many financial losses and missed economic opportunities. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade Development, Pakistan ranks low in the global liner shipping connectivity

Date: _____

index, indicating weak integration into global maritime networks. This limited engagement result in economic loss.

(United Nations Conference on Trade Development (UNCTAD)/2022). Hence, without strengthening its maritime participation is sea trade Pakistan only faces lost of revenue generation.

While these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable.

The following measures can help in harnessing the potential of the blue economy of Pakistan. One of the first steps toward harnessing the potential of blue-economy is to start awareing public about the blue-economy. A lack of the awareness about blue-economy has contributed in overlooking it. By spreading awareness campaigns, this issue can be tackled such as government agencies, institutions, schools, universities, social media and other digital platforms must be used to spread awareness about the blue-

Date: _____

economy and its potential to boost economic growth of the country. Ultimately, raising awareness will lead to the laying foundation of ~~the~~ supporting blue-economic sectors.

& Last not ~~the~~ but not the least, seaports must be modernised with advance infrastructure and ~~technote~~ technology to boost the efficiency and trade promotion. Pakistan's trade has been impacted by the outdated ~~seaports~~ seaports. To address this, the government must invest in making the seaports modernized and digital logistics, and automated cargo handling to improve the effectiveness of seaports. Moreover, upgrading road and rail transportation is also important to send items timely. According to Pakistan Business Council 2023, modernizing seaports can significantly increase trade volume and position of Pakistan as a competitive regional maritime hub. Due to this reason, ~~the~~ investing in technological

Date: _____

advancement of seaports can lead to economic boost and effective global sea trade.

To sum up the whole discussion, the world is moving on the blue-economy, but Pakistan has overlooked its potentials ^{Like} like it has ignored maritime ports, fishing industry, tourism sector of coastal zone, clean and cost effective energy, and marine-biotechnology. Not only this but also it has ignored sea mining, and shipbuilding and repairing industry.

Despite its potential of blue-economy, some ~~challenge~~ challenges are ~~obstac~~ ^{obstacle} in the way of blue-economy. such as lack of awareness about it, extra focus of agrarian policymaking, underdeveloped structure of seaports and minimal participation in sea-trade. However, there are measures to address these issue such as, spreading awareness about blue-economy and modernizing the seaports to boost efficiency. By addressing these challenges Pakistan can pave the ways for sustainable economic growth.