

## NAVIGATING THE BLUE PARADOX: POLICY, POWER, AND PARTICIPATION IN PAKISTAN'S MARITIME TOURISM

**Saba Javaid**

*PhD Scholar, Institute of Business, Management & Administrative Sciences,  
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur  
Email: [sabashahzadali@gmail.com](mailto:sabashahzadali@gmail.com)*

**Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal**

*Director, Institute of Business, Management & Administrative Sciences,  
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur  
Email: [jawad.iqbal@iub.edu.pk](mailto:jawad.iqbal@iub.edu.pk)*

### Abstract

*Maritime (blue) tourism is now considered one of the fastest-growing sectors of the world tourism economy. It significantly contributes to the livelihoods of the coastal population, promotes economic diversification, and supports sustainable development. However, its potential as a key driver of socio-economic and environmental sustainability is often overlooked in the policy frameworks across many coastal nations in the Global South, including Pakistan. This qualitative study examines the governance, institutional, and community dimensions that can shape the sustainable development of blue tourism in Pakistan's coastal regions. The primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including industry experts, policymakers, and civic stakeholders (N=10). Thematic analysis of the interview data was performed to explore barriers and enablers of sustainable blue tourism. The study findings reveal that the policy effectiveness was undermined due to symbolic stakeholder engagement and elite-driven policy planning. The study highlights some community-led initiatives (although very small) that show the potential of participatory models to turn around conservation and livelihood diversification efforts. Utilizing Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Theory as its theoretical foundation, the study finds that fragile collaborative mechanisms and misaligned power relations can influence sustainable tourism outcomes. The study recommends that a shift from centralized development agendas to grassroots-level models can provide the framework for socio-cultural and sustainable development in coastal regions. The paper contributes to the literature by integrating actor-level and governance-level perspectives on blue tourism in the context of the Global South and offers policy-relevant insights for strengthening institutional coordination, promoting inclusive governance, and advancing sustainable blue tourism development.*

*Keywords: Maritime (Blue) Tourism; Tourism Policy; Sustainable Development; Global South; Pakistan.*

### Introduction

Maritime (blue) tourism is a thriving sector within the global tourism industry (Martínez Vázquez, Milán García *et al.*, 2021) and annually adds about USD 11.5 billion to global tourism (UN 2022).

Approximately, coastal and marine tourism (CMT) has a 50% share in the global tourism industry (Necesario 2024), encompassing tourism infrastructure, impacts, visitation, and spending. The sector significantly contributes to the economies of coastal regions by generating revenue, creating jobs, and advancing local businesses (Reddy and Sailesh 2024). It also represents one of the most significant economic contributors for most Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and many coastal states (Rudge 2021). Globally, around three billion people are dependent on the maritime (blue) economy for their livelihood (Geng, Wu *et al.*, 2024), out of which a vast majority live in developing countries (Pauli 2010). The evidence suggests that the developing economies are expected to see a higher growth rate in the blue economy than the developed nations (Northrop 2020, Islam and Sarker 2021).

In South Asia, the economic development of the ocean has gained popularity (Hossain, Islam *et al.*, 2024, Liza, Majumder *et al.*, 2025). As per the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), South Asia holds a substantial tourism potential, with rapidly accelerating demand standing at 5% (Comerio and Strozzi 2019, Kumar, Armah *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, Southeast Asia has been ranked third among thirteen tourism markets globally, with an annual visitor inflow of 125.78 million. This industry contributes 12% of GDP and 4% of employment (Aini 2024). The countries and regions, such as the Maldives, Singapore, Thailand, and India's Kerala state, have implemented effective governance and strategic planning for the advancement of maritime tourism and consequently achieved remarkable progress (Fatima and Akhtar 2021).

Pakistan has a long coastline spanning over 1001 kilometres and thus holds great potential for the maritime tourism sector development. A recent study found that the travel and tourism sector is growing at 6.75% annually and will reach USD 5.5275 billion by 2029 (News 2025). It should therefore be the subject of long-range planning; however, the imperatives for promoting maritime tourism in Pakistan have not been developed. Thus, the country has a distinctive opportunity to formulate a maritime tourism policy that maximizes the economic potential of its extensive coastline (Ramzan, Ullah *et al.*, 2025). If these areas are given appropriate attention and developed as per the international standards, maritime tourism has the capacity to turn around economic growth (Gul and Shakir 2024), as well as to sustain environmental and cultural sustainability (Alam and Azam 2023). Despite possessing numerous natural, cultural, and religious attractions, research has been limited on how governance, community participation, and tourism sustainability can be integrated to advance blue tourism development in Pakistan.

### **Potential of Maritime (Blue) Tourism in Pakistan**

Pakistan has a total population of about 241.49 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.55%, making it a big domestic tourism market (PBS Pakistan). The natural beauty of the country, as well as its cultural diversity, is similar to many European travel destinations (Ahmed, Rahpoto *et al.*, 2024). But the contribution of tourism towards the GDP figures is only about 2.8% in comparison to other neighboring regions (Khan 2018).

Since Pakistan's blue economy remained underutilized, the potential of maritime tourism has been largely untapped (Gill and Iqbal 2021). The estimates show that the blue economy currently contributes to only 1.5 to 3% of GDP; however, this share could increase to 10 to 15% of GDP over the next few decades by adopting the right policies (Mukhtar 2025). By 2030 to 2035, the

shipping business could generate USD 8 to 10 billion annually, while fisheries and aquaculture might contribute USD 17 to 18 billion worth of goods annually, and maritime tourism, along with renewable energy projects and ship recycling from Gadani, may help push the total revenues from the blue economy above USD 40 billion (Tariq 2025).

The travel and tourism market is expected to generate about USD 4 billion by 2025, with an annual growth rate of 6.75% until it reaches USD 5.53 billion in 2029 (News 2025). More than 100,000 tourists from Pakistan travel to tourist destinations such as Thailand, the Maldives, and Dubai each year for coastal holidays, and the expenditures by these tourists amount to foreign exchange outflows that could instead be made at home (Fatima and Akhtar 2021).

The maritime tourism sector contributes to GDP in many ways. Primarily, the hospitality sector, including hotels, restaurants, and resorts grow with additional tourist inflows. Another avenue is transport services benefiting from greater flows of people utilizing air transport, various types of cruises, and passenger schedules of various kinds of transport operating locally. A great number of small businesses in the national economy could benefit from increased demand, such as tour operators, water sports providers, souvenir vendors, and handicraft sellers (Manzoor, Wei *et al.*, 2019, Ullah, Naveed *et al.*, 2021, Shaikh 2022, Ahmed, Rahpoto *et al.*, 2024).

Further, it could lead to more employment generation, both directly through tourism-related businesses and indirectly through various supply chain manufacturing industries supportive of a greater tourism industry, plus the possibilities of self-employment for residents of coastal communities engaged in such activities as making craft goods or fishing, and or conducting tours (Manzoor, Wei *et al.*, 2019, Ramzan, Ullah *et al.*, 2025). These are the opportunities in the maritime tourism sector, although they are presently limited due to the highly fragmented planning and lack of an integrated tourism development strategy (Ullah, Naveed *et al.*, 2021, Hussain, Sun *et al.*, 2024).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The instant study draws its theoretical foundations based on two theories: stakeholder theory and collaborative governance theory. Stakeholder theory posits that organizations and projects are embedded in networks of interdependent stakeholders, whose needs, expectations, and influence shape outcomes (Freeman, 1984). The study employs the stakeholder theory as a lens to understand the interests, roles, and power dynamics of the stakeholders in the sustainable blue tourism development in the context of Pakistan. These stakeholders, in accordance with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2013) are foreign development aid organizations, national government, local government, tourism entities, private sector firms, workers and related bodies, NGOs, training and educational bodies, communities, and tourists. By implementing stakeholder theory, tourism firms can encourage sustainable blue tourism techniques, which demonstrate the desire and requirements of every stakeholder (Agapito, Kronenburg *et al.*, 2023). The government, as a crucial stakeholder, performs an important role in the creation and implementation of policies, ensuring their long-term viability and equality for every stakeholder (El Archi, Benbba *et al.*, 2023, Sharma 2023). It encourages environmentally friendly tourism techniques that adapt to the interests as well as requirements of diverse stakeholders, especially visitors, the local population, environmental groups, and governments. Since the study explores how community engagement

and tourism policy contribute to ensuring sustainability in the blue tourism regions, the stakeholder theory helps explain why elite-driven planning and the neglect of local voices can lead to stalled projects, ineffective implementation, and sustainability failures.

Similarly, collaborative governance theory provides a framework to examine the institutional and structural dimensions of policy and project implementation. Duran (2013) describes tourism governance as “*a procedure of performing collaborative activities between public, private, and social actors in the tourism system to develop synergies*”. Many researchers in the sustainable tourism sector (Bramwell and Lane 2011, Pasape, Anderson *et al.*, 2015) have established an identical idea of tourism management and highlighted the significance of governance to enhance collaboration between the parties necessary for the development of tourism. Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as “*a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative, and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets*”. Collaborating with communities plays an important role in the growth of tourism regulations that empower local customs and cultural traditions and minimize adverse environmental effects (Bishwokarma, Harper *et al.*, 2023, Thananusak and Suriyankietkaew 2023). The study suggests that implementing collaborative governance mechanisms can promote effective collaboration and long-term sustainability. Both stakeholder theory and collaborative governance theory provide a dual lens for analyzing both actor-level dynamics and systemic governance challenges, offering a robust framework for understanding sustainable tourism development in blue tourism regions of Pakistan.

### Methods & Techniques

The population of interest for this qualitative study is every person and entity benefiting from the ocean, seas, and blue tourism directly or indirectly. However, only blue tourism and maritime experts, having considerable experience and expertise, were considered for data collection purposes. So, the study utilized the purposive sampling technique for selecting the study participants. Emails and WhatsApp requests were sent to twenty-five experts in the maritime field, especially those who had prior experience in blue tourism. Seventeen replies were received from the participants. The researchers could, however, conduct ten interviews as they reached saturation. Out of ten participants, seven were male, and three were female. Through semi-structured interviews, the study provided direction to the participant while allowing them to express their opinions and observations freely (Gill, Stewart *et al.*, 2008). The interviews were conducted in four months, from June 2024 to September 2024. Physical interviews were conducted in Karachi and Islamabad. To capture the important details, an interview protocol was used together with written notes taken throughout the interviews (Van Der Wal, Nisbet *et al.*, 2021). All interviews were conducted by the same team members using the same interview guide for all participants. After obtaining informed consent, the interviewees were asked about their point of view and experience using varied open-ended questions. The responses were noted and recorded. The recorded responses were transcribed. Thematic analysis was performed to extract results from the qualitative data following the step-by-step thematic analysis procedure as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes and patterns of the transcribed data were identified using thematic analysis, ensuring the prevention of the addition of the researcher’s point of view and potential

bias (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this procedure, the researcher applied open, axial, and selective coding during data analysis as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2014).

## **Thematic Analysis**

### **1. Policy & Governance Deficits**

The legacy policies, such as the National Tourism Policy 1990, included coastal tourism elements like beach development and water sports (especially in Sindh and Balochistan). Still, these have become largely obsolete and ineffective, particularly following the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, which devolved tourism and environmental responsibilities to the provincial level without adequate coordination frameworks (PIDE, 2021). While the thematic finding regarding a governance deficit in blue tourism policy design and implementation in Pakistan is well-founded, it is important to acknowledge the nuanced policy landscape and recent assertions made in this regard. As of 2025, Pakistan has no formal, fully operational, and comprehensive blue tourism or maritime tourism policy. However, several overlapping policy frameworks, such as those related to the blue economy, maritime development, and tourism sector reforms, include partial references to marine or coastal tourism. Notably, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs is currently spearheading efforts to formulate a Blue Economy Policy, which aims to harness Pakistan's marine resources, including coastal tourism, as part of a broader strategy to unlock over USD 100 billion in potential annually (Pakistan Information Department, 2023). Furthermore, the National Maritime Policy Workshop 2025, hosted in collaboration with the Pakistan Navy, discussed initiatives like Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), blue flag beach certifications, and ferry connectivity between coastal zones, suggesting growing policy interest in marine tourism (KPT, 2025). However, these efforts remain in the emerging and draft stages, lacking actionable implementation mechanisms, regulatory coherence, or measurable conservation enforcement.

This broader theme can be further discussed as follows:

#### ***1.1 The Knowing-Doing Gap in Policy Implementation***

The first research question aimed to investigate the effectiveness of current policies in balancing the potential of maritime tourism with the sustainable use and conservation of maritime resources. The study participants frequently lamented the knowing-doing gap, i.e., between policy formulation and its execution on the ground. The insights derived from the expert interviews describe a multi-layered outlook of governance inefficiencies that avoid the twin goals of advancing blue tourism and protecting marine ecosystems.

One of the participants remarked that:

*“The existing policies always call for the safety of marine biodiversity, but their implementation on the ground is weak”.* (Interviewee 1)

Another participant viewed that the current policy framework was not sufficient to obtain the twin goals of promoting tourism activity and ensuring protection and conservation of marine biodiversity:

*“I fail to assume that the existing policy ably offers a strong basis to attain this dual objective, if we especially speak of blue tourism in Pakistan's context”.* (Interviewee 10)

### ***1.2 Federal-Provincial Coordination Failures and Jurisdictional Ambiguities***

Whilst Pakistan possesses a skeletal framework of policies that regulate coastal zones management, the dearth of coordination among the federal and provincial governments, the absence of effective implementation, the lack of scientific integration, and discouragement of inclusive governance undermine the efficacy of the existing policies and regulatory framework.

One of the participants highlighted that:

*“Pakistan has positioned several policies in the past that may help sustainable blue tourism whilst safeguarding its coastal ecosystems. However, implementation remains a distant dream. One of the key challenges is the lack of ownership and coordination between federal and provincial authorities”.* (Interviewee 9)

Most of the interviewees were of the view that these policy frameworks, though they might be well-intended, remain a far cry. The reason is their poor enforcement mechanism, ambiguities of jurisdiction, and bureaucratic inertia.

It was mentioned that:

*“...there is confusion between the federal and provincial governments about who manages the coastal and maritime resources. This lack of clarity leads to indecisions and delays, especially in the approvals of sustainable development projects, and creates bureaucratic lacunas discouraging private sector investments in eco-tourism”.* (Interviewee 2)

### ***1.3 Absence of Scientific Integration in Policymaking***

The qualitative data also revealed the need to adopt the scientific approach for policy-making processes. The deficiency in incorporating the latest scientific data has left policy and regulatory frameworks obsolete and reactive rather than anticipatory. The continuous ecological shifts triggered by climate change, coastal and marine pollution, compounded by tourism pressure as access to remote coastal regions increases, remain quite underrepresented in policy discourses.

This deficiency was highlighted by the study participants in the following words:

*“There is a disconnection between policymaking and relevant scientific data. Often, outdated research is cited in policy discourses, ignoring the rapid changes in marine ecosystems caused by climate change, pollution, and increasing tourism activities. On the other hand, political instability hinders continuity of policy implementation”.* (Interviewee 5)

### ***1.4 Stakeholder Exclusion and Limited Collaboration***

A systematic approach is needed for collaboration between stakeholders, and an equal share in governance is vital for realizing the future goals. Overlooking the stakeholders' apprehensions, particularly the local population, policymaking processes reduce the effectiveness of the government to ensure sustainability. This issue could be best described as the exclusion of stakeholders' participation in policymaking processes, which has a deep impact on the local population and the environment. The partnership of local communities can develop a sense of ownership, rather than the threat of relocation. The need of the hour is to facilitate the residents of the coastal regions, rather than excluding them from their share in development.

This phenomenon was highlighted in the following words:

*“Conservation efforts such as designating marine protected areas are often seen as restrictive measures. Inclusive frameworks that can involve all stakeholders for their common benefits are seldom witnessed”.* (Interviewee 7)

Public and private partnership is a significant element in the blue tourism sector. It must be applicable rather than symbolic. It is also important to comprehend that local communities play the role of co-architects of blue tourism in their localities. Stressing the pressing role of the local community.

The study participants viewed that:

*“Community-driven initiatives have shown the most promise. For instance, local cooperatives managing eco-tourism facilities ensure that benefits are equitably distributed while maintaining a focus on conservation. However, local communities are rarely consulted during the planning stages of tourism projects. When they are involved, such as in mangrove restoration efforts, the outcomes are significantly more sustainable”.* (Interviewee 10)

These findings also revealed that while the intent to collaborate is evident across sectors, the mechanisms for doing so remain vague and superficial. Furthermore, the private sector has introduced green investments such as renewable energy, waste management, and water preservation in coastal regions. This collaboration is vital for sustainable projects. However, such investments are at stake unless tied to social structure and environment rather than mere technological solutions.

Interviewee 1 viewed that:

*“There is a dire need for collaboration between the stakeholders for the success of blue tourism in Pakistan, but it is still fragmented. Many private sector investors have started to adopt sustainable practices such as waste reduction, energy preservation, and promotion of eco-friendly tourism. However, their efforts are one-sided, and the government cooperation is missing”.* (Interviewee 1)

### ***1.5 Lack of Awareness & Environmental Degradation***

There is a general lack of awareness among business enterprises and the community at large regarding responsible tourism practices, which undermines the ability to balance conservation and development. The widespread business-as-usual approach has also exacerbated environmental challenges in the blue tourism regions.

It was highlighted that:

*“... awareness among local communities and businesses about responsible tourism practices is limited, making conservation efforts even more difficult”.* (Interviewee 9)

Another factor is the poor cognizance among various government authorities regarding blue tourism. The study participants noted that over 90% of untreated domestic and industrial waste in Pakistan flows freely into marine ecosystems, a highly disturbing fact that reflects the appalling gap between tall policy claims and poor enforcement.

One of the participants shared that:

*“Blue tourism is critically linked to the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources. The governments in Pakistan cannot even provide treatment plants for millions of gallons of domestic and industrial waste directly going into rivers, wetlands, and the sea”.* (Interviewee 6)

Further, the effect of global commitments such as the 2012 Rio Conference and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (life below water), was acknowledged, but their localization in Pakistan’s context is constrained by poor commitment to policy adaptation.

One of the participants informed that:

*“Policies seem well-intentioned, but they are skewed toward economic growth at the expense of environmental safeguards”.* (Interviewee 3)

## **2. Institutional & Capacity Constraints**

As mentioned above, bridging the policy-science-community gap, revisiting priorities to balance conservation with economic growth, and galvanizing inter-departmental coordination are critical imperatives towards sustainable blue tourism. Hence, there is a crucial need for a unified and long-term governance vision that regards environmental and social sustainability as a foundational element of blue tourism development. The study participants stressed that blue tourism governance critically needs effective federal-provincial and inter-departmental coordination, cross-sectoral integration, and the institutionalization of scientific and civil society support for policymaking itself. Moving beyond rhetoric and transitioning into policy and governance backed by actionable empirical data, institutional capacity building, enforcement of environmental laws and obligations, and the inclusion of local voices are crucial aspects to consider.

### **2.1 Weak Institutional and Technical Capacities**

The insights from the study participants unfolded a complex web of institutional, socio-political, and structural issues. These issues severely hinder the effective transition of sustainable tourism policies into practical outcomes. The study highlighted the absence of intent, data, and skilled professionals for proper implementation.

It was viewed that:

*“The policymakers often lack the technical expertise to implement sustainable tourism policies. Owing to the absence of skilled professionals, the country does not possess the ability to design practical solutions for sustainable tourism policies in Pakistan. No authentic data specific to tourism and its ecological and socio-economic aspects is navigable in Pakistan”.* (Interviewee 1)

Many participants noted governance impediments and resource constraints as vital issues. They explained that:

*“The challenges for implementation of projects cannot be tackled without the eradication of corruption and lack of accountability”.* (Interviewee 8)

While lamenting the siloed approach of the government institutions, the participants pointed out fragility and institutional capacity gaps obstructing the blue tourism development in the country:

*“...every agency follows its own agenda without considering a harmonized strategy. Such isolated measures often lead to fragmented outcomes”*. (Interviewee 7)

*“The federal, provincial, and local governments in Pakistan neither have the will nor the capacity to develop and implement policies on blue tourism”*. (Interviewee 6)

## **2.2 Fragmented Governance and Decentralization Challenges**

Almost all participants mentioned the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment during the discourse and considered it an obstruction rather than an enabler for blue tourism development. The participants viewed that while decentralization should bring governance closer to the people, it has, in practice, led to a fragmented policy landscape. The participants highlighted reliance on generalized policy templates that do not reflect local realities. Further, the decentralization has contributed to fragmented authority, delaying project approvals and futile implementation.

One of the participants remarked that:

*“Policymakers and practitioners in Pakistan must face multiple barriers to implement sustainable tourism practices. These policies require inputs and approvals from several departments under the federal and provincial governments. The decentralized structure of the government after the 18th Amendment has made coordinated management of tourism and preservation quite difficult. The Sindh Coastal Development Authority (SCDA) and Balochistan Coastal Development Authority (BCDA) are facing limited access at the federal level. This resulted in poor policy management and a slow process of the blue tourism projects”*. (Interviewee 10)

## **2.3 Weak Monitoring, Evaluation, and Follow-Up Mechanisms**

The study participants highlighted that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms were either weak or completely absent in many blue tourism projects.

One of the interviewees highlighted that:

*“The policymakers lack the tools to assess the effective implementation of the policies, which limits their capability to adopt and improve strategies”*. (Interviewee 8)

Another hurdle to effective evaluation is the lack of feedback and a proper follow-up mechanism. It is quite essential to consider that the lack of feedback systems undermines trust and continuity in monitoring and evaluation efforts. Although practical approaches often suffer from ad-hoc-ism, recommendations are rarely implemented.

One of the participants explained that:

*“Different forums related to effective planning are significant for the stakeholders and policy dialogues. However, these forums often fail to translate recommendations into actionable policies due to a lack of follow-up mechanisms”*. (Interviewee 4)

The participants also discussed sustainability risks linked to profit-driven motives of certain stakeholders, which go unchecked, given the fragility of M&E mechanisms. It was highlighted that private and non-government sector actors frequently participate in blue tourism projects under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs or to gain access to international climate financing, without a genuine commitment to environmental or social goals. Profit-driven and

exhibitionist motives can easily ignore sustainability imperatives, disregarding monitoring and regulatory enforcement for real impact.

One of the participants disclosed that:

*“They have been collaborating on environmental projects such as mangrove plantations and efforts to regenerate the coral reefs, but the intent is mostly to acquire international funding and CSR budgets of MNCs”.* (Interviewee 4)

The above phenomenon necessitates that there must be a well-conceived M&E mechanism to nab such anomalies and externalities consistently threatening sustainability efforts.

#### **2.4 Role of Academia and NGOs**

The study participants also highlighted the significant role of academia and research institutes as well as educational initiatives of NGOs to overcome the existing knowledge gaps in the blue domain.

One of the participants stated that:

*“NGO-led educational initiatives and universities have created useful platforms for knowledge sharing. One of the examples of such initiatives is workshops on marine biodiversity that help provide a useful collaborative platform for policy analysis. Some international organizations have brought resources and expertise on blue tourism. However, local stakeholders mostly dislike external programs as these are deemed not to be aligned with their values and cultures”.* (Interviewee 8)

The above theme and subsequent sub-themes elucidate that structural reforms in governance, capacity building, and participatory planning are imperative to further tourism potential in the blue tourism regions of Pakistan.

### **3 Inclusive Approaches to Sustainability**

There was consensus among the participants that sustainable blue tourism cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. It requires an inclusive and accountable framework that bridges the gap between vision and action.

#### **3.1 Community Participation & Sense of Ownership**

Many communities of coastal regions are fully aware and participating in the sustainable tourism development projects in Pakistan. The success stories that emerged from these regions provide useful feedback to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike. These stories also reflect that development must be started at the grassroots level with the inclusion of local communities for sustainable development. The study participants shared several examples of community-based efforts to restore mangrove forests aimed at enhancing the conservation of the ecosystem and amplifying socio-cultural festivities in the respective areas. The approach reflected the strong commitment to safeguard both natural and cultural heritage. One interviewee revealed that:

*“It is very important to involve the local communities in the development projects for long-term goals. Through this approach, projects could be appreciated, and they welcome such projects with great pleasure”.* (Interviewee 1)

When local communities share the benefits of the tourism projects, they not only become the beneficiaries but also provide their services for sustaining change while taking the central stage to design, implement, and achieve the success of blue tourism ventures.

The study participants noted that:

*“It is crucial to introduce revenue-sharing projects in coastal areas, as these have been implemented in Sindh. This will overcome the insecurities of local communities as they receive a handsome profit from the tourism activities, which can promote economic stability and promote awareness as well”.* (Interviewee 8)

The qualitative data further highlighted that community empowerment can increase the sense of ownership and is crucial for the development of tourism. Local well-being and satisfaction are foremost for the development of blue tourism projects. Hence, the engagement of local communities opens new avenues for sustainable tourism initiatives in the blue tourism regions.

One of the participants described that:

*“There are many ways to engage the local population in sustainable tourism, and some projects are already in progress across the coastal areas of Sindh. The restoration of mangrove forests has successfully engaged the local fishermen in tourism activities. By allowing them to guide eco-tours, these projects preserve traditional livelihoods while educating visitors about environmental conservation”.* (Interviewee 2)

### **3.2 Youth Engagement, Capacity Building, and Future Opportunities**

The study unveiled that when the young members of the coastal communities are being mobilized as tour guides, sailing and diving instructors, and conservation advocates, it demonstrates the effects of empowerment in the blue tourism regions of Pakistan. However, the study participants were of the view that it is just a beginning and there is a long road ahead to achieve the desired ends.

It was stated that:

*“Much more work needs to be carried out to empower the local people to take advantage of being coastal populations, especially focusing on improving their livelihood. Capacity building programs, such as hospitality training in Gwadar, empower locals to participate in tourism”.* (Interviewee 3)

The participants also highlighted the role of NGOs to create awareness and capacity development among the local community to align their traditional practices with sustainable (blue) tourism.

It was underlined by one of the participants that:

*“Educational workshops led by NGOs help communities understand how to align their traditional practices with sustainable tourism”.* (Interviewee 2)

### **3.3 Cultural Heritage Revitalization and Gender Inclusion**

The data analysis revealed that some communities are revitalizing traditional knowledge systems and cultural heritage by embedding these within tourism experiences. The cultural festivals, local

food stalls, handicrafts, and folk music are part of the tourism projects, as these significantly utilize the services of local hosts. Further, the community-led tourism activities in Pakistan are aligned with cultural preservation and environmental oversight.

One of the participants highlighted that:

*“The cultural festivals attracted the visitors towards their heritage and increased the interest of local communities. These events, led by the local community, ensured the profit share for local communities and proved to be a source of income for residents as well as preserved cultural heritage. But there is a dire need to expand these activities at large scale to involve all stakeholders”.* (Interviewee 8)

### **3.4 Community Entrepreneurship and Conservation-Based Tourism**

The researcher observed this type of entrepreneurship during the visit to Mubarak Village, near Hawksbay, Karachi. The community established beachside huts, food stalls, and boat tours. This type of microbusiness is not only for income purposes but also spreads ecological awareness. Some residents are also helpful in the coral reef monitoring programs at Churna Island. In the same way, community-based dolphin-watching and bird-watching tours in the mangrove forests are a clear example of the conservation of the ecosystem. These practices are important for the development of the area and can benefit the stakeholders.

One of the participants expressed that:

*“Local people have already taken several initiatives to promote sustainable tourism activities. A clear example of this community-led initiative is dolphin-watching tours in Sindh. Local guides exhibit their expertise in marine biodiversity to earn a living and promote awareness as well. Tourists are invited to enjoy recreational and educational activities”.* (Interviewee 10)

These interesting narratives provide insights into creating opportunities for the participation of local communities in tourism activities. The shift from centralized development models to grassroots level models can provide the framework for socio-cultural and sustainable development in coastal regions of the country.

## **Findings & Discussion**

An important theme arising from the qualitative data was that Pakistan does not have a national maritime tourism policy. Further, the available policies and frameworks are not fully implemented to facilitate blue tourism. The findings suggest that the knowing-doing gap is not merely administrative but structurally embedded in fragmented governance arrangements and capacity deficits. These constitutional and governance pitfalls have also been mentioned by several researchers (Khan, Bibi *et al.*, 2020, Hayat and Azamtullah 2024, Hussain, Hussain *et al.*, 2024). The participants acknowledged that Pakistan’s signing up to international sustainability agendas (SDGs) was a reflection of its commitment to the marine environment and resource conservation (Waheed, Khan *et al.*, 2025, Zhang, Wu *et al.*, 2025), yet the implementation itself was slow, disjointed, and politically infested.

The study insights also reported policy spaces plummeting to bureaucratic inertia and siloed governance. The decentralization of administrative power in Pakistan following the 18<sup>th</sup>

constitutional amendment left perplexing questions of jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments and executing agencies, which then resolves itself in a debilitating decision-making paralysis, inconsistent enforcement actions, or overall stalling of tourism projects. Sustainable tourism project delays are caused largely due to role ambiguities, vagueness, and repetitions of mandates, while attempts to respond by key actors on the provincial and local sides are often inhibited by a lack of awareness and incompetence. All of which compromises the realization of sustainable tourism objectives, which could also be seen to be endorsed through a systematic review of contemporary literature on tourism (Kamran 2020, Ullah, Naveed *et al.*, 2021, Gillani, Israr *et al.*, 2024, Shahzad and Wang 2025).

The implementation gap was the most common theme across every other interview, and nonetheless, the most alarming one. Policy documents might epitomize the greenest sustainability ambitions; however, the reality on the ground belies those very dreams. Implementing them became a larger conundrum due to a lack of institutional capacity, paucity of funds, and a skilled workforce, along with a lack of accountability (Sabir 2023). Similar studies by Arif and Mahsud (2024) and Wazir, Khan *et al.*, (2024) argued the same way that the plans are continually stalled due to political unwillingness and lack of coordination. As far as the development of tourism schemes in Pakistan is concerned, the interview insights offered that policymaking is generally dominated by elite actors, who tend to overlook the ground context. The hidden power relations in policy and governance, political patronage, and gratification overthrew sustainability arguments whenever it comes to Pakistan (Mahid , Bramwell and Lane 2011, Bajwa and Ansari 2018).

The study participants also noted that no authentic data specific to tourism and its ecological and socio-economic aspects are available in Pakistan. The participants also proposed building integrated data platforms with embedded local monitoring systems to guide decision-making. Such recommendations exist in various studies advocating for informed policy regimes, including in sustainable tourism governance (Aaqil, Mahmood *et al.*, 2023, Alyas, Almansour *et al.*, 2024, Mehdi, Ali *et al.*, 2025). The study insights also revealed a pivotal role of academia (universities, research institutes, policy think tanks) and NGOs in bridging the prevalent knowledge gaps. As major stakeholders, these entities can play a decisive role in supporting evidence-based and knowledge-informed decision-making processes. The study endorses that it is essential to get the benefit of international learning practices and resources on blue tourism while adapting these to our indigenous circumstances. On addressing the governance issue, the need to strengthen the capacities of all stakeholders through creating and promoting a culture of learning was also underscored in many recent studies (Shabbir, Mughal *et al.*, 2020, Ahmed, Rahpoto *et al.*, 2024, ESCAP 2025, Mehdi, Ali *et al.*, 2025, Pervaiz, Manzoor *et al.*, 2025).

While communication and cooperation among all stakeholders are highlighted as essentials for sustainable tourism and related blue governance, the participants lamented the policy failures on the ground. They claimed that, though occasionally, policy dialogue and debate on issues such as coastal management existed to some degree, they often lacked real actions and did not prioritize stakeholders' inputs (Amantha 2025, Wenninghoff 2025). The cooperation between government departments, NGOs, and private actors has always been project-based, and there has been little or no sustained effort to ensure a long-term channel of communication and feedback.

Some participants shared that while a few businesses actively work toward conservation and eco-tourism, most of these focused only on profits, without social and environmental considerations for outcomes (Beeters and Centley 2025). Further, the deficit in government oversight of private actors and their CSR programs was also discussed by many participants (Forliano, Battisti *et al.*, 2025). The study participants expressed concern about the absence of accountability measures in place and the need for transparency and participatory governance.

The participants highlighted that public-private collaborative partnership is not only important for community resilience but also improves biodiversity. These collaborative models could help achieve long-term goals and generate employment opportunities for local communities. There are several examples that indicate the shift towards community-led tourism models in Pakistan. A few examples of partnerships were mentioned, for instance, the partnership between NGOs and local coastal communities in Sindh to restore mangroves.

During the discussions, community participation emerged as a cornerstone of sustainable tourism. Across various coastal areas of Balochistan and Sindh, localized initiatives led by community-based tourism (CBT) models were reported to yield significant benefits (Baig, Ali *et al.*, 2024, Isani, Bhatti *et al.*, 2025, Tabatabaei, Oshriyeh *et al.*, 2025). The study participants reiterated that meaningful engagement and moving away from tokenism-style participation are a prerequisite for facilitating community buy-in and ownership of projects and for community satisfaction and overall project success (Sultan 2022).

The participants shared several accounts of successful grassroots initiatives, such as the eco-tourism project in Hingol National Park, the Indus Delta Mangrove Restoration Project, and grassroots marine biodiversity awareness campaigns in Mubarak Village and coral reef monitoring programs at Churna Island, where community efforts and stewardship are seen securing conservation and creating livelihoods (Pakistan 2016, Fatima and Akhtar 2021, Isani, Bhatti *et al.*, 2025). The Indus Delta Mangrove Conservation Project in Sindh is an attractive example that provides the local fisherfolks to present their services for the restoration of mangrove forests and employ eco-friendly fishing techniques. Another example of local people's involvement is Hingol National Park, where residents provide guiding services during wildlife tours, hiking, and taking care of tourist sites. The participants recommended that sufficient financing and technical support could further enhance these efforts on a large scale.

Other initiatives, such as training programs for youth and women, local community cooperatives, and support to community-run tourism enterprises, can help promote socio-economic inclusion and cultural revitalization. It was highlighted that in Balochistan, women's handicrafts are reviving the old traditional patterns. The production of handicrafts for tourist markets has increased due to the mounting interest of tourists in handmade crafts. These artisans are supported by NGOs and provide opportunities to women where they can showcase their talent and revive their traditional culture for economic purposes. The participants also noted that though these avenues are welcoming, however these need further push to reach out to the maximum beneficiaries. Such initiatives truly create a sense of involvement and ownership, and strengthen project resilience through building social capital and ensuring that the benefits of the economic activities through

tourism are equitably distributed (Quiñones and Benjamin 2015, Miller 2020, Leotaud, Laidlow-Ferdinand *et al.*, 2024, Tariq 2025).

### **Conclusion & Recommendations**

The extant study aimed at exploring how tourism policy, governance structures, and community engagement affect the sustainability of blue tourism development in the blue tourism regions of Pakistan. The study findings, derived from thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the experts in the field of maritime tourism, reveal that the viability of blue tourism is attributed to ingrained issues of governance and fragility of the state apparatus, despite being blessed with rich natural beauty and cultural heritage. Pakistan does not have a formal, fully operational, and comprehensive blue tourism or maritime tourism policy. However, several overlapping policy frameworks, such as those related to the blue economy, maritime development, and tourism sector reforms, include partial references to marine or coastal tourism. Whilst Pakistan possesses a skeletal framework of policies that regulate coastal zones management, the dearth of coordination among the federal and provincial governments, the absence of effective implementation, the lack of scientific integration, and discouragement of inclusive governance undermine the policy efficacy. The findings also show a widespread knowing-doing gap since the tall policy claims for promoting sustainability are seldom translated into policy actions and tangible outcomes. Also, there is a general lack of awareness regarding blue tourism and capabilities among various government institutions. The study also highlights an important factor that undermines balancing conservation and development: a lack of awareness among the community and enterprises at large, and the widespread business-as-usual approach. Moreover, the exclusion of stakeholders' participation in policymaking processes has a deep impact on the local population and the environment. Further, lack of skilled professionals, unavailability of authentic data, weak monitoring & evaluation mechanisms, and poor accountability systems add fuel to the fire and hamper the governmental oversight capacity to ensure tourism activities and conservation of marine ecosystems in a befitting manner. Conversely, the study emphasizes the necessity of inclusive approaches and well-coordinated governance mechanisms that actively involve public, private, and community actors guided by stakeholder theory and collaborative governance. The study revealed that the blue tourism governance critically needs effective federal-provincial and interdepartmental coordination, cross-sectoral integration, and the institutionalization of scientific and civil society support for policymaking itself. Moving beyond rhetoric and transitioning into policy and governance backed by actionable empirical data, institutional capacity building, enforcement of environmental laws and obligations, and the inclusion of the local communities are essentially required, along with a major shift from centralized policymaking and development approaches to participatory and grassroots-level efforts. The instant study adds to the academic literature on blue tourism in the Global South as well as offers both theoretical and practical insights for advancing sustainable tourism and community-based development in Pakistan by integrating actor-level experiences with governance-level analysis.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, discussion, and conclusions derived, the study made the following recommendations for promoting sustainable tourism in the blue tourism regions of Pakistan.

The study recommends to:

- Develop a holistic Maritime tourism policy that clearly defines the role of all stakeholders
- Create cross-jurisdictional bodies to harmonize federal, provincial, and local mandates on coastal tourism and marine conservation
- Embed participatory mechanisms that ensure community representation in all planning, budgeting, and review processes. Prioritize community-led, community-owned, community-operated initiatives, as the indigenous coastal and marine communities are the primary stakeholders in blue tourism policy, development, and governance
- Develop targeted training for planners, conservationists, and community leaders to operationalize sustainable tourism strategies and promote responsible tourism
- Tie business licenses and CSR incentives to verifiable sustainability outcomes, with public reporting requirements and stronger accountability and oversight mechanisms
- Support the establishment of national and regional databases for monitoring marine biodiversity, tourism trends, and socio-economic impacts
- Fund and mentor local eco-tourism ventures, cooperatives, and conservation programs to ensure equitable benefit-sharing
- Empower coastal development research activities through enhanced mandates of universities, NGOs & policy think tanks, budgetary support, and inter-agency access

### Limitations & Future Research

This qualitative study has certain limitations necessitating the conduct of further scholarly investigations to unfold the research phenomenon in diverse ways. Further investigation is required to understand the role and influence of all major stakeholders in the governance framework. The future studies should focus on formulating, implementing, and evaluating innovative and co-managed governance models that define mandates and decision-making structures for transparency and accountability across federal, provincial, and local levels. The phenomenon needs to be further explored with alternative theoretical perspectives, diverse methodological, and analytical lenses. Employing different mixed-method designs, comparative policy designs, or longitudinal analyses may yield diverse and more comprehensive results and subsequently enhance the generalizability of the research findings.

### References

- Aaqil, A., *et al.*, (2023). Evaluation in Pakistan. The Institutionalisation of Evaluation in Asia-Pacific, Springer: 273-321.
- Agapito, D., *et al.*, (2023). "A review on destination social responsibility: towards a research agenda." Current Issues in Tourism **26**(4): 554-572.
- Ahmed, K., *et al.*, (2024). "Tourism in Pakistan: An Economic Analysis." Journal of Development and Social Sciences **5**(2): 434-446.
- Aini, Y. N. (2024). "Sustainable tourism in Southeast Asia: Balancing economic growth, employment, and carbon emissions through evidence-based strategies." Jurnal Kepariwisata Indonesia: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kepariwisata Indonesia **18**(1): 157-174.

- Alam, S. and M. Azam (2023). "Challenges and prospects of blue economy for Pakistan." Journal of Asian Development Studies **12**(3): 1516-1527.
- Alyas, T., *et al.*, (2024). Enhancing Governance in Pakistan Through E-Government: The Role of Evidence-Based Monitoring Systems. 2024 International Conference on Decision Aid Sciences and Applications (DASA), IEEE.
- Amantha, G. K. (2025). "Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Dynamics in Improving the Quality of Life of Coastal Communities amidst the Coastal Waste Crisis in Bandar Lampung." Jurnal Public Policy **11**(2): 125-132.
- Ansell, C. and A. Gash (2008). "Collaborative governance in theory and practice." Journal of public administration research and theory **18**(4): 543-571.
- Arif, M. I. U. and M. I. Mahsud (2024). "Disentangling Pakistan's Climate Change Governance Challenges: Trajectories and Underpinnings." PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF LAW, ANALYSIS AND WISDOM **3**(10): 36-53.
- Baig, S., *et al.*, (2024). "Exploring the interplay of tourism impacts, quality of life, and community engagement in developing sustainable nature-based tourism in Pakistan." GeoJournal **89**(1): 38.
- Bajwa, F. and S. H. Ansari (2018). "UNDERSTANDING THE HIDDEN POWER RELATIONS IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF PAKISTAN." ISSRA Papers **10**(2).
- Beeters, A. and L. Centley (2025). "From Sustainability to Regeneration: The Evolution of Responsible Tourism." Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development **1**(1): 24-54.
- Bishwokarma, D., *et al.*, (2023). "Sustainable tourism in practice: synthesizing sustainability assessment of global tourism destinations." International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology **30**(6): 671-684.
- Bramwell, B. and B. Lane (2011). "Critical research on the governance of tourism and sustainability." Journal of Sustainable Tourism **19**(4-5): 411-421.
- Braun, V. and V. Clarke (2006). "Using thematic analysis in psychology." Qualitative research in psychology **3**(2): 77-101.
- Comerio, N. and F. Strozzi (2019). "Tourism and its economic impact: A literature review using bibliometric tools." Tourism economics **25**(1): 109-131.
- Corbin, J. and A. Strauss (2014). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory, Sage publications.
- Duran, C. (2013). "Governance for the tourism sector and its measurement." UNWTO Statistics and TSA. Issue Paper Series: 1-34.
- El Archi, Y., *et al.*, (2023). "Systematic literature review analysing smart tourism destinations in context of sustainable development: Current applications and future directions." Sustainability **15**(6): 5086.

- ESCAP, U. (2025). "Urban transformation in Asia and the Pacific: from growth to resilience."
- Fatima, N. and M. Akhtar (2021). "Maritime Tourism: Global Success Stories and the Case of Pakistan." P-JMR **2**(1): 1-1.
- Forliano, C., *et al.*, (2025). "Mapping the greenwashing research landscape: a theoretical and field analysis." Review of Managerial Science: 1-50.
- Geng, B., *et al.*, (2024). "How can the blue economy contribute to inclusive growth and ecosystem resources in Asia? A comparative analysis." Sustainability **16**(1): 429.
- Gill, P., *et al.*, (2008). "Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups." British dental journal **204**(6): 291-295.
- Gill, S. A. and J. Iqbal (2021). "Exploring the role of Blue Economy in sustainable development: A perspective from Pakistan." P-JMR **3**(1): 141-192.
- Gillani, S. M. A. H., *et al.*, (2024). "STABILITY AS A BRAKE IN DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS OF THE PARADOX IN PAKISTAN'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION." Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review **2**(04): 1872-1882.
- Gul, S. and H. Shakir (2024). "Pakistan and Indian Ocean Region Geopolitics: Strategies and Counter Strategies." Journal of Nautical Eye and Strategic Studies **4**(1): 38-52.
- Hayat, R. and D. Azamtullah (2024). "Tourism in Pakistan: Policies, Potential and Challenges." Remittances Review **9**(1): 2198-2214.
- Hossain, M. A., *et al.*, (2024). "Pathway toward sustainable blue economy: Consideration of greenhouse gas emissions, trade, and economic growth in 25 nations bordering the Indian ocean." Journal of cleaner production **437**: 140708.
- Hussain, K., *et al.*, (2024). "Interpretive structural modeling of barriers to sustainable tourism development: A developing economy perspective." Sustainability **16**(13): 5442.
- Hussain, S., *et al.*, (2024). "Sustainable tourism development in Pakistan and China: A comparative analysis of practices and policies." Social Science Review Archives **2**(2): 1016-1027.
- Isani, M. M., *et al.*, (2025). "Harnessing Ecotourism Potential along Pakistan's Coastal Line: Challenges, Opportunities, and Sustainable Strategies." Available at SSRN 5103215.
- Islam, M. W. and T. Sarker (2021). Sustainable coastal and maritime tourism: A potential blue economy avenue for Bangladesh, ADBI Working Paper.
- Kamran, M. (2020). "Global sustainability overview and role of policy instruments for sustainable tourism management in Pakistan."
- Khan, A., *et al.*, (2020). "Tourism and development in developing economies: A policy implication perspective." Sustainability **12**(4): 1618.

- Khan, Z. (2018). "Development of coastal tourism in Pakistan: prospects & way forward." The Beacon: 54-68.
- Kumar, A., *et al.*, (2024). "Tourism and Hospitality Research Trends in South Asia: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis from 1992-2021." Journal of Scientometric Research **13**(1): 123-136.
- Leotaud, N., *et al.*, (2024). "Towards sustainable blue tourism in the Caribbean: Policy pathways to support community-based coastal and marine tourism." Blue Tourism Initiative Diagnostic Study. CANARI: Port of Spain. The PDF.
- Liza, J. I., *et al.*, (2025). "Scrutinizing the impact of blue economy factors on the economic growth in Bangladesh: An empirical study." Marine Policy **173**: 106542.
- Mahid, Y. "Decoding the Politics Behind National Climate Policy-Making Process: Whose Voices and Stories Shape a Country's Future?" Available at SSRN 5235700.
- Manzoor, F., *et al.*, (2019). "The contribution of sustainable tourism to economic growth and employment in Pakistan." International journal of environmental research and public health **16**(19): 3785.
- Martínez Vázquez, R. M., *et al.*, (2021). "Analysis and trends of global research on nautical, maritime and marine tourism." Journal of Marine Science and Engineering **9**(1): 93.
- Mehdi, H., *et al.*, (2025). "Tourism, Sustainability And Growth: An Empirical Investigation Of Long-Run Economic Impacts In Pakistan." Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review **3**(1): 1479-1493.
- Miller, M. (2020). Economic development at the community level: Creating local wealth and resilience in developing countries, Routledge.
- Mukhtar, A. (2025). Pakistan's untapped blue economy. The Express Tribune.
- Necesario, K. C. (2024). "The role of the Philippine coast guard toward sustainable coastal and marine tourism in relation to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."
- News (2025). "Pakistan's tourism market to generate \$4 billion in 2025: Report." from <https://92newshd.tv/about/pakistans-tourism-market-to-generate-4-billion-in-2025-report>.
- Northrop, E. (2020). Opportunities for Transforming Coastal and Marine Tourism: Towards Sustainability, Regeneration and Resilience'.
- Pakistan, M. (2016). "A handbook on Pakistan's coastal and marine resources." MFF Pakistan, Pakistan.
- Pasape, L., *et al.*, (2015). "Assessment of indicators of sustainable ecotourism in Tanzania." Anatolia **26**(1): 73-84.
- Pauli, G. A. (2010). The blue economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs, Paradigm publications.
- Pervaiz, B., *et al.*, (2025). "Sustainable Tourism Development in Pakistan: Economic Opportunities and Environmental Challenges." Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences **13**(1): 123-133.

- Quiñones, B. R. and R. Benjamin (2015). Social and solidarity economy in Asia: A South-South and triangular cooperation perspective, ILO.
- Ramzan, M., *et al.*, (2025). "POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN PAKISTAN: UNRAVELING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES." Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review 3(1): 1823-1834.
- Reddy, K. and B. Sailesh (2024). "Integrating marine tourism into the blue economy framework." Journal of Environmental Management & Tourism(3): 501-520.
- Rudge, P. (2021). Beyond the Blue Economy: Creative industries and sustainable development in small island developing states, Routledge.
- Sabir, S. A. (2023). "Assessment of Sustainable Practices in the tourism Businesses in Northern area of Pakistan." The Asian Bulletin of Green Management and Circular Economy 3(1): 93-104.
- Shabbir, S., *et al.*, (2020). "The future of Pakistan tourism industry: A review paper." Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 5(10): 657-661.
- Shahzad, S. and B. Wang (2025). "Geographical Indications and Sustainable Development: Bridging Policy Gaps in Pakistan's GI Framework for Socio-Economic Growth." Sustainability 17(11): 5114.
- Shaikh, S. (2022). Internet of things: designing digital eco-systems for competitive tourism related micro and small enterprises in Pakistan. Technology Application in Tourism in Asia: Innovations, Theories and Practices, Springer: 349-365.
- Sharma, R. (2023). "Hospitality sustainable practices, a global perspective." Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes 15(3): 212-219.
- Sultan, C. U. (2022). "Development Strategies in the Tourism Sector in Pakistan According to the Sustainable Tourism Potential and Factors. Affecting Tourism." SSRN Electronic Journal. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4091533>.
- Tabatabaei, F., *et al.*, (2025). "Towards sustainability: exploring community involvement in tourism development." Tourism Planning & Development 22(4): 498-528.
- Tariq, A. (2025). "Unlocking Pakistan's \$40bn blue economy." from <https://www.pakistangulfeconomist.com/2025/03/10/unlocking-pakistans-40bn-blue-economy/>.
- Tariq, M. U. (2025). Community-led tourism and social equity: A regenerative approach to sustainable development. Regenerative Tourism for Social Development, IGI Global Scientific Publishing: 339-360.
- Thananusak, T. and S. Suriyankietkaew (2023). "Unpacking key sustainability drivers for sustainable social enterprises: A community-based tourism perspective." Sustainability 15(4): 3401.
- Ullah, Z., *et al.*, (2021). "Towards the development of sustainable tourism in Pakistan: A study of the role of tour operators." Sustainability 13(9): 4902.
- UN (2022). "Making waves for a blue economy." from <https://www.un.org/en/desa/making-waves-blue-economy>.

- UNWTO (2013). Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook - Enhancing capacities for Sustainable Tourism for development in developing countries, UNWTO.
- Van Der Wal, C., *et al.*, (2021). "A qualitative exploration of the causes and consequences of workplace bullying in the Australian hospitality industry." Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism **22**(5): 517-538.
- Waheed, A., *et al.*, (2025). "Assessing environmental policy coherence in Pakistan: implications for the sustainability of belt and road initiative's China-Pakistan economic corridor Plan (2017-2030)." Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning: 1-26.
- Wazir, A., *et al.*, (2024). "National climate policy framework and international obligations."
- Wenninghoff, M. (2025). Strengthening Relocation Pathways in Puerto Rico: A Community -Informed Approach to Coastal Hazards, Land Use, and Policy Integration, Harvard University.
- Zhang, S., *et al.*, (2025). "Developing an ocean governance regime for China-Pakistan economic corridor: a comparison of the marine environmental legislation and policy framework by utilizing CRILL methodology." Frontiers in Marine Science **12**: 1577975.