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# An overview of maintenance management strategies for corroded steel structures in extreme marine environments

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## Abstract

Maintenance is playing an important role in integrity management of marine assets such as ship structures, offshore renewable energy platforms and subsea oil and gas facilities. The service life of marine assets is heavily influenced by the involvement of numerous material degradation processes (such as fatigue cracking, corrosion and pitting) as well as environmental stresses that vary with geographic locations and climatic factors. The composition of seawater constituents (dissolved oxygen, salinity and temperature content) is one of the major influencing factors in degradation of marine assets. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance management strategies can have a significant impact on operational availability and reliability of marine assets. Many research studies have been conducted over the past few decades to predict the degradation behaviour of marine structures operating under different environmental conditions. The utilisation of structural degradation data – particularly on marine corrosion – can be very useful in developing a reliable, risk-free and cost-effective maintenance strategy. This paper presents an overview of the state-of-the-art and future trends in asset maintenance management strategies applied to corroded steel structures in extreme marine environments. The corrosion prediction models as well as industry best practices on maintenance of marine steel structures are extensively reviewed and analysed. Furthermore, some applications of advanced technologies such as computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), artificial intelligence (AI) and Bayesian network (BN) are discussed. Our review reveals that there are significant variations in corrosion behaviour of marine steel structures and their industrial maintenance practices from one climatic condition to another. This has been found to be largely attributed to variation in seawater composition/characteristics and their complex mutual relationships.

**Keywords** Maintenance management; Steel structures; Degradation; Marine corrosion; Extreme climatic conditions.

## 33 1. Introduction

34 The maritime sector plays an extremely important role in the economic growth of many  
35 countries around the world [1]. However, the costs associated with maintenance and repair of  
36 the assets operating in this sector (such as ship structures, offshore renewable energy platforms  
37 and subsea oil and gas facilities) are extremely high and continue to rise. Currently, the  
38 maintenance costs in the maritime sector account for between 20 and 40 percent of the total  
39 operating expenses (OPEX) [2–5]. The high cost of maintenance for marine assets is mainly  
40 attributed to the involvement of various degradation/deterioration processes in aquatic  
41 environments which pose detrimental effects on technical integrity, safety and reliability of the  
42 assets.

43 The degradation of marine assets usually occurs due to a variety of mechanisms such as  
44 fatigue cracking, corrosion, pitting, scour, etc. Many recent research studies have identified the  
45 *corrosion* as the most prominent degradation mechanism in the maritime sector, which can  
46 result in catastrophic failures [6, 7]. The marine assets are either totally or partially immersed  
47 in corrosive seawaters. Most of the fixed and floating marine structures located near the harbors  
48 are exposed to domestic or industrially polluted seawaters, which further accelerate the pace of  
49 structural degradation, in particular corrosion. Additionally, non-submerged structures in the  
50 vicinity of coastal areas are vulnerable to corrosion damage due to the accumulation of salt and  
51 other corrosive compounds in marine environments.

52 To control the rate of degradation, increase the operational uptime, reduce the life-cycle  
53 costs, and extend the service lifetime in marine assets, a number of maintenance practices  
54 including preventive maintenance (PM), condition-based maintenance (CBM), risk-based  
55 maintenance (RBM), and structural health monitoring (SHM) have been deployed by marine  
56 industry professionals [8]. In today's world, the improvement of operational and environmental  
57 safety has been the prime objective of maintenance operations in the maritime sector.  
58 Historically, maintenance was seen as more of an economic liability than an effective tool to  
59 improve productivity in organisations. However, after experiencing some serious incidents and  
60 environmental disasters such as Macondo oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, it has become  
61 incumbent for the industry to comply with requirements set out by regulatory bodies such as  
62 the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA),  
63 United States Coast Guard (USGC), etc. [9–11]. These regulations have created enormous  
64 hurdles for maritime operators, necessitating continuous improvement in their existing  
65 monitoring systems and maintenance regimes. One such example is the IMO law on sulphur  
66 content control in fuel, which is going to be implemented from 2020 onwards. It dictates that  
67 the sulphur content which is currently 3.5% m/m (mass/mass) (equivalent to 35,000 ppm) must  
68 be capped at 0.50% m/m (equivalent to 5,000 ppm) [12]. Such legislations will increase the  
69 pressure on maritime industries to develop more reliable, risk-free and cost-effective  
70 maintenance strategies for their critical assets.

71 The commercial maritime industry is currently more reliant on conventional time-based  
72 maintenance procedures, which in general are inefficient and labour intensive. In order to  
73 increase safety, operational uptime, effectiveness and reliability while reducing maintenance

74 costs [13, 14], the maritime industry must adopt risk-based and reliability-centred asset  
75 maintenance practices from some other industries such as the aerospace, nuclear, and chemical.

76 The maintenance management of marine assets is a complex task because of the  
77 uncertainties involved in long-term prediction of the corrosion damage under different  
78 environmental conditions. It is a proven fact, supported by the scientific literature, that the  
79 selection of a maintenance strategy for marine assets is highly influenced by climatic conditions  
80 such as temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, etc. Therefore, it is logical to  
81 apprehend that the implementation of the same maintenance regime for systems operating in  
82 different environmental conditions and with different degradation modes will not result in an  
83 optimal outcome. To optimise maintenance practices and achieve greater reliability,  
84 throughput, cost-effectiveness and safety in the marine sector, several advanced data-driven  
85 models integrated with condition monitoring (CM) and non-destructive testing (NDT)  
86 technologies as well as risk assessment tools have been proposed over the past few decades.

87 This paper presents an overview of the state-of-the-art and future trends in asset  
88 maintenance management strategies applied to corroded steel structures in extreme marine  
89 environments. The corrosion prediction models as well as industry best practices on  
90 maintenance of marine steel structures are extensively reviewed and analysed. In this regard,  
91 we identify several deterministic and probabilistic models that have been developed to predict  
92 the corrosion rate of marine steel structures as a function of the exposure period, environmental  
93 conditions and material properties. It is shown that the existing models involve considerable  
94 uncertainties in data collection and analysis for accurate modeling of the combined effects of  
95 environmental factors on overall corrosion loss in marine structures. To overcome this  
96 drawback, some applications of advanced technologies such as computerized maintenance  
97 management system (CMMS), Bayesian network (BN), artificial intelligence (AI), and multi-  
98 criteria decision analysis (MCDA) to maintenance optimization of corroded steel marine  
99 structures will be discussed. Our review reveals that there are significant variations in corrosion  
100 behaviour of marine steel structures and their industrial maintenance practices from one  
101 climatic condition to another.

102 The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes various contemporary  
103 maintenance strategies and their significance in the marine industry. Section 3 presents the  
104 impacts of surrounding climatic conditions on the structural degradation (in particular  
105 corrosion) of marine assets. Section 4 reports the results of a literature review on various  
106 maintenance strategies applied to marine steel structures in corrosive environments. Section 5  
107 provides an overview of some advanced techniques that can be used for corrosion prediction  
108 and maintenance planning of marine steel structures. Section 6 discusses the results of the  
109 critical analysis of the identified literature. Finally, Section 7 concludes the study with a brief  
110 summary and future directions.

## 111 **2. Maintenance strategies**

112 A maintenance strategy delineates an organization's vision on how to preserve the health and  
113 safety of assets throughout their life-cycle. Generally, it is comprised of procedures for  
114 survey/inspection, repair, upkeep and renewal of the systems, subsystems, and components

115 [15]. In the search for greater efficiency and lower cost, a number of maintenance strategies  
116 have been conceived by the researchers over the years [16]. Figure 1 shows the evolution of  
117 key maintenance strategies in the marine sector. These strategies are briefly introduced in the  
118 following subsections:

119 **\*\* Figure 1 \*\***

120 **Figure 1.** Evolution of maintenance strategies in the marine sector.

121 *2.1. Corrective maintenance*

122 In corrective maintenance or run-to-failure (RTF) strategy, a correction action is taken to bring  
123 the equipment back to a functional state after it unexpectedly stops working. This action  
124 includes either repair or replacement of failed component and it can be carried out as and when  
125 required. Therefore, this maintenance strategy is preferred only on those equipment whose  
126 failure consequences are considered minimal. The investment required for the execution of this  
127 maintenance strategy is much less than any other maintenance strategy, however, it may incur  
128 additional repair costs and increase downtime when applied to critical equipment [17].

129 *2.2. Preventive maintenance (PM)*

130 The PM is an interval-based maintenance procedure which is implemented on an operational  
131 equipment so as to avoid any potential failure or severe degradation that may impact system  
132 reliability in near future [18]. The frequency of PM tasks is often chosen based on the  
133 experience of technicians or recommendations from original equipment manufacturers  
134 (OEMs). PM strategy has been able to offer higher system availability, reduced failure rates,  
135 longer equipment lifespan, and lower cost compared to the corrective maintenance. PM is  
136 currently practiced in many marine industries as the most preferred maintenance strategy [19].

137 Despite several intrinsic benefits, PM does not guarantee elimination of all unexpected  
138 failures as it does not take into account the present health state of components. For this reason,  
139 PM sometimes results in unnecessary machinery downtime, excessive repair costs and  
140 maintenance-induced failures [20, 21]. Some researchers reported that conducting time-based  
141 PM actions may lead to misjudgement about the equipment's health condition as the rate of  
142 usage may not be constant over time [22].

143 *2.3. Condition-based maintenance (CBM)*

144 The CBM includes use of modern CM methods to precisely diagnose faults and predict the  
145 future working condition of the system [23]. According to this strategy, a maintenance is  
146 performed when one or more indicators show that equipment performance is degrading or that  
147 the equipment is about to fail [24]. In other words, the CBM decision is made based on a set of  
148 indicators associated with system's physical condition or performance [25]. Many researchers  
149 have shown that the CBM strategy is more effective than the time-based PM strategy. It is  
150 reported in the literature that the use of CM techniques may extend maintenance overhaul  
151 cycles by up to 50% and save between 25% to 45% of maintenance costs [26]. This  
152 maintenance strategy is based on the output data collected either online and off-line from  
153 different CM technologies, such as vibration analysis, ultrasound analysis, infrared

154 thermography, oil analysis, wear particle analysis, acoustic emission testing, etc. The collected  
155 data is analysed to extract meaningful patterns and predict the time for future maintenance.  
156 Some researchers have considered diagnostic and prognostic as main features of a CBM system  
157 (for example, see [27]).

158 Even though the CBM is able to deliver substantial savings in maintenance cost and  
159 reduction in failure risks, the current surveys reveal that only 10% of industries in the marine  
160 sector use CBM as their preferred maintenance strategy [15]. One of the reasons for slow  
161 adoption of CBM is the limited access to highly skilled personnel for execution and further  
162 interpretation of the results [28]. Nevertheless, with the advancement in prognostic and health  
163 monitoring (PHM) methods, the reliance on CM and active/passive SHM techniques in  
164 equipment maintenance has grown exponentially in recent years [29].

#### 165 2.4. *Reliability-centred maintenance (RCM)*

166 The RCM concept was conceived for the first time in American Aviation industry in mid-  
167 1980s. It is a planned maintenance program that retains the essential functions of a system  
168 while improving its reliability, maintainability and availability (RAM) [30, 31]. It is reported  
169 in the literature that if the RCM is employed correctly with a thorough understanding of its  
170 essence, it can be helpful to reduce maintenance effort by 40% to 70% compared to other  
171 maintenance strategies such as the corrective maintenance, scheduled overhaul, scheduled  
172 replacement, and scheduled on-condition tasks [32]. The maintenance decisions in RCM are  
173 made based on qualitative risk information mainly derived from the knowledge/skills of the  
174 operators. RCM necessitates the default maintenance actions to counter failure situations which  
175 arise due to unavailability of effective proactive maintenance procedures. These default actions  
176 include failure finding, run to fail, and redesign [33].

177 Within the marine sector, RCM is commonly used for the maintenance of ships and their  
178 associated equipment. The RCM strategy uses techniques such as Failure Mode Effect Analysis  
179 (FMEA), Failure Mode Effect and Critical Analysis (FMECA) and Fault Tree Analysis (FTA)  
180 to identify possible causes of each failure, as well as some statistical techniques to estimate  
181 mean time between failure (MTBF), mean time to repair (MTTR), etc. [34, 35]. The FMEA is  
182 the essence of RCM, as it provides a procedure to identify and recognize function(s), failure  
183 modes, failure causes, and effects and consequences of a failure on the operability of a  
184 particular equipment, system or process [36]. For comprehensive literature on RCM and its  
185 implementation, readers are referred to [37–41].

#### 186 2.5. *Risk-based inspection (RBI)*

187 The concept of RBI was originated from the nuclear industry in the 1970's. Over the years, it  
188 has been adopted by other sectors such as petrochemical, electrical systems, offshore energy  
189 sector and, to a lesser extent, shipping. The RBI emphasizes on the factor of risk in the overall  
190 maintenance of equipment. The risk is evaluated based on the likelihood (probability) of  
191 occurrence of a hazard and its consequent effects on the operation of the equipment [42, 43].  
192 RBI is an optimized maintenance strategy which offers greater safety and provides an overall  
193 risk mitigation plan to minimise the frequency of undesirable events [44, 45]. In this strategy,  
194 the risk analysis outcomes are utilized for maintenance scheduling and decision-making. Risk

195 analysis permits flexibility for the use of qualitative/quantitative methods or a combination of  
196 both. Some researchers have proposed a risk-based approach for the inspection and  
197 maintenance of ship vessels, where the RCM is recommended for mechanical systems and RBI  
198 for hull and structures. For further information on RBI, the readers can refer to [46–49].

## 199 2.6. *Other contemporary maintenance strategies*

200 In recent years, several other developments in maintenance management systems have been  
201 evolved and implemented in the marine sector. Reliability database (RDB) is one of novel  
202 concepts proposed for the management of reliability datasets. It is a prime source of  
203 information for design, development and initial deployment of advanced, cost-effective and  
204 optimized maintenance systems. RDB records all significant maintenance activities with a core  
205 focus on equipment failures. This is considered to be the prime enabler for maintenance  
206 strategies such as Total Life Cycle Systems Management (TLCSM) and CBM plus (CBM+).  
207 The TLCSM deals with the total system performance (including hardware, software, and  
208 human), its operational effectiveness, and suitability, survivability, safety, and affordability  
209 [50]. The CBM+ is a novel maintenance concept which was developed on the basis of CBM  
210 strategy but by including various advanced tools and procedures, acquired from real-time  
211 health monitoring and sensor technologies [51]. The CBM+ facilitates the shift from  
212 conventional maintenance regimes (e.g. time-based PM) to proactive/predictive methods  
213 governed by CM programmes.

214 The term remaining useful life (RUL) in maintenance implies the remaining time of a  
215 system/subsystem to perform its function prior to failure or end of useful life [52]. The RUL  
216 estimation models are either deterministic or probabilistic, but they generally incorporate  
217 degradation factors, material properties, and environmental conditions [53]. The RUL  
218 estimation models can be classified into four categories: analytical (physics-based), model-  
219 based (data-driven), knowledge-based, and hybrid (fusion) (see Figure 2) [54–57]. The RUL  
220 methods can be further refined into a more accurate maintenance model by the use of statistical  
221 and Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques [58]. Sometimes, manufacturers use accelerated life  
222 testing (ALT) data to predict the lifetime of equipment under different operating and  
223 environmental conditions. Typically, the OEM’s maintenance recommendations are based on  
224 ALT results [53]. These tests are simulated on an accelerated time scale and then the reliability  
225 of the equipment is estimated based on specified failure data settings, operating conditions and  
226 design stresses [59].

### 227 **\*\* Figure 2 \*\***

228 **Figure 2.** Classification of RUL prediction techniques [55].

## 229 **3. Impact of environmental conditions on corrosion of marine structures**

230 Marine structures are often exposed to severe and corrosive environmental conditions such as  
231 high or low temperatures, high salinity, high or low pH values, etc. These conditions accelerate  
232 the material degradation rate and thus shorten the time to failure of structures. The reliability

233 of steel structures in marine environments is highly influenced by the variations in ambient  
234 climate, loading conditions, applied protective measures, and the adopted maintenance  
235 strategies [60]. Corrosion and fatigue are the most prominent degradation mechanisms in  
236 marine steel structures which adversely affect their reliability by inducing strength losses,  
237 brittle fracture, thickness reduction, cracking, etc. Static and shock loads, erosion, and turbulent  
238 seawater velocity are additional factors contributing to the failure of marine structures. Some  
239 research studies have reported that over 90% of ships' structural failures are caused by  
240 corrosion [61].

241 The key factors affecting the corrosion process in marine steel structures have been  
242 categorised into different types of physical properties, chemical properties, and biological  
243 contents in seawater [62–66]. The most influential factors in physical, chemical and biological  
244 properties have been studied widely in the literature. Table 1 lists the most influential factors  
245 in the marine corrosion process, including seawater temperature and velocity, pressure, pH  
246 level, dissolved oxygen (DO), salinity, pollutants, etc. Some researchers have shown that the  
247 biological factors such as sulphur reducing bacteria (SRBs) are the most contributing element  
248 in the anoxic seawater conditions.

#### 249 **\*\* Table 1 \*\***

250 **Table 1.** A list of factors affecting the marine corrosion in steel structures.

251 The characteristics of marine conditions and seawater specifications are found to be  
252 immensely variable across the globe. For example, the temperature of surface seawaters varies  
253 from  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$  along poles to  $35^{\circ}\text{C}$  along the equator. Consequently, the corrosion rate as well as  
254 the health state of marine structures will be different from a region to another [67, 68].  
255 Furthermore, the corrosion rate may be altered with inspection, maintenance and repair actions,  
256 which makes the RUL prediction process for marine structures more complicated [69].

257 Although majority of the marine steel structures are protected with coatings to inhibit  
258 corrosion and stress corrosion cracking (SCC), an inspection is needed to assure that the  
259 corrosion protection system is working [70, 71]. The prominent corrosion resistant methods  
260 used on external surfaces of the ships or offshore structures include: sacrificial anodes,  
261 impressed current cathodic protection (ICCP), various types of anti-fouling, anti-corrosive  
262 paints, and ultrasonic guided wave methods [72]. However, some marine systems such as heat  
263 exchanger tubes are not yet provided with a surface coating, causing them to be more  
264 vulnerable to corrosion damage. The maintenance practices in such cases are even more  
265 dependent on operating ambient conditions and proportion of detrimental corrosion factors in  
266 the seawater composition.

#### 267 **4. Findings of the literature review**

268 This section reports the results of the literature review performed on various maintenance  
269 practices and asset management strategies adopted for marine structures in extreme corrosive  
270 environments. Our review covers journal papers, conference proceedings, books, academic  
271 dissertations, industry reports and government guidelines. The identified studies are

272 categorised with respect to some criteria such as the type of marine structure under  
273 consideration (e.g. offshore platforms, ships, oil rigs, subsea pipelines and offshore wind  
274 turbines), degradation mechanisms and maintenance planning methodologies, and some key  
275 findings will be reported.

#### 276 4.1. Findings on maintenance management strategies for marine steel structures

277 Marine structures are designed for operation in hostile environments subject to corrosive sea-  
278 water, hot and cold temperature extremes, and static/dynamic loading conditions. Although the  
279 corrosion affects the performance of an assets throughout the life cycle, the extent of the  
280 damage varies depending on many factors such as the designed allowance for corrosion loss,  
281 the effectiveness of preservation methods, and severity of dynamic environmental conditions  
282 [73]. The main function of a reliable maintenance scheme is to identify the critical components,  
283 functions, failure modes, causes, effects and consequences, and then recommend a cost-  
284 effective repair policy to attain optimal operational availability. Nowadays, different aspects  
285 of maintenance are considered during the design phase of marine structures; however, some  
286 modifications, additions/alterations in the existing engineering design may be necessary in later  
287 stages during the operation. Marine structures usually deteriorate more rapidly under extreme  
288 conditions than under normal conditions. This causes the gap between designed capability and  
289 current performance to become greater and greater over time. The deterioration of the design  
290 performance in marine structures over time is illustrated in Figure 3.

### 291 \*\* Figure 3 \*\*

292 **Figure 3.** Deterioration of design performance over time [15].

293 In commercial ships, the operators/owners either rely on OEM's recommendations or seek  
294 the expertise of engineers to determine maintenance support requirements [56]. OEM's  
295 maintenance procedures are often based on the age of the ships, not real-time degradation data.  
296 The tendency of shifting from time-based PM to CBM, online monitoring, and predictive  
297 maintenance is emerging over the years in the marine sector. CBM is considered to be an  
298 efficient approach to improve the reliability and reduce the operating costs of marine systems,  
299 especially for those assets involving high safety risks. Emovon [4] conducted a comparative  
300 study on the application of different maintenance strategies to ships, and finally, offline-CBM  
301 was found to be the most effective method for maintenance of seawater pumps in a marine  
302 diesel engine. More recently, Michala *et al.* [74] presented a novel concept of CBM on ships  
303 using wireless systems, where the CM data about ship machinery components is transmitted to  
304 the onshore maintenance experts through a decision support system (DSS).

305 Lazakis and Ölçer [5] presented a Reliability and Criticality Based Maintenance (RCBM)  
306 strategy using fuzzy multi-attributive group decision-making (FMAGDM) technique to  
307 identify an optimised maintenance strategy for maritime assets. The study concluded that the  
308 time-based PM was the best maintenance strategy, followed by the predictive maintenance.  
309 Cicek and Celik [75] used risk priority number (RPN) in FMEA methodology to enhance the  
310 reliability and operational safety while decreasing the failure probability of marine diesel

311 engines. Similarly in a comparative study of onshore and offshore wind turbines, Shafiee and  
312 Dinmohammadi [76] proposed a FMEA-based risk evaluation methodology integrating  
313 qualitative (expert-driven) and quantitative (data-driven) information to formulate a  
314 maintenance strategy for wind turbines. Tang *et al.* [77] proposed a novel model based on  
315 Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Fuzzy Borda Count (FBC) for identification of the most  
316 risky items in offshore oil and gas equipment. Some researchers opined that the use of RCM in  
317 the marine sector is culturally different than that in the aviation sector. Therefore, it is more  
318 sensible to consider RCM as a philosophy rather than a methodology [78]. From the  
319 commercial ship owners' point of view, the RCM is considered to be exhaustive, time-  
320 consuming and complex [3]. Wabakken [79] reported that the RCM is a long-term strategy  
321 which requires time and resource-intensive effort. Therefore, RCM has been hesitantly adopted  
322 by maritime companies.

323 RBI is becoming a popular maintenance strategy in the marine sector, in particular for  
324 ship's hull and structures. Cullum *et al.* [22] proposed an RBI scheduling framework for naval  
325 vessels and ships and concluded that shifting from RCM strategy to RBI is more convenient  
326 than shifting from PM or CBM to RBI. Dong and Frangopol [80, 81] proposed quantitative  
327 risk assessment (QRA) models for ship structures subject to corrosion and fatigue. The genetic  
328 algorithm (GA) and Bayesian networks were used to provide an optimal inspection/repair plan  
329 and reliability/risk updating for overall mitigation of lifecycle risk. Similarly, Turan *et al.* [82]  
330 proposed an RBI model to estimate the overall reliability of ships and diving support vessels  
331 and prioritize the maintenance tasks.

332 A comprehensive distribution of journal articles and conference papers based on  
333 maintenance strategies is shown in Table 2.

334 **\*\* Table 2 \*\***

335 **Table 2.** Distribution of journal articles and conference papers based on maintenance strategies.

336 Numerous NDT and SHM methods are used for detection, quantification, and prognostics  
337 of surface and subsurface defects (such as cracks, gouges, pits, and erosion/corrosion loss) due  
338 to various structural degradation mechanisms like corrosion, pitting, or fatigue cracking [90].  
339 Photographic imaging has been used to measure and bifurcate appearance of marine pitting  
340 corrosion [91]. Recently, visual imaging and high-resolution photography were used with  
341 integration on remotely operated vehicles (ROV) or autonomous underwater vehicles (AUV)  
342 for enhanced safety and efficiency and reduced cost of underwater repair activities. These  
343 vehicles can utilize videos that are able to diagnose structural corrosion and anode wear, and  
344 thus facilitate the inspection of difficult-to-access areas [92–94]. From literature review, the  
345 following CM or SHM techniques were identified for use by marine operators: [95, 96]:

346 Visual and optical testing; radiographic testing; ultrasonic testing (conventional phased  
347 array, and guided waves); metallographic examination; electrochemical and electromagnetic  
348 testing; liquid penetrant testing; magnetic particle testing; acoustic emission testing; infrared  
349 and thermal testing; mass loss; X-ray; eddy current.

350 Some newly introduced technologies in metal and composite structures are acoustic  
351 emission and guided waves ultrasonic testing (GWUT). These technologies utilize  
352 active/passive transducers and contact/non-contact techniques to detect structural cracks,  
353 corrosion under insulation (CUI), pits and corroded portions in metallic and composite  
354 structures [97–99]. The guided waves have been considered as a useful defect detection  
355 technique for large structural assets and as antifouling, ice detection and de-icing missions on  
356 marine and aircraft structures. Recently, marine inspection robotic assistant (MIRA) system  
357 and micro-aerial vehicle-based have been used for structural fault identification of ship  
358 structures [100].

#### 359 4.2. Findings on factors affecting structural corrosion in marine environments

360 Structural degradation in marine environments is a time-dependent process, primarily  
361 occurring due to corrosion and fatigue [101]. These processes also encourage several other  
362 degradation processes such as strength reduction, brittle fracture, buckling, etc. [102, 103]. In  
363 a study about reliability-based maintenance of ship's hull under corrosion effects, the  
364 replacement of affected plate was recommended to be carried out when the thickness reduces  
365 below 75% of its designed thickness [104].

366 Corrosion is an electrochemical process occurring in marine environments because of  
367 reaction between various ingredients of the metallic surface and sea water. It occurs due to the  
368 availability of water along with an electron acceptor element, like oxygen [105]. The marine  
369 steel structures generally experience several forms of corrosion under immersion state. The  
370 most common types of corrosion in ships and offshore structures and their effects on material  
371 degradation are presented in Table 3.

### 372 **\*\* Table 3 \*\***

373 **Table 3.** Main types of corrosion in ships and offshore structures.

374 The general corrosion and pitting corrosion are more common in marine applications than  
375 other forms of corrosion such as galvanic, crevice, SCC, groove, and edge corrosion [106–  
376 108]. In general corrosion, the thinning phenomenon occurs uniformly on the surface of a  
377 metallic surface. On the other hand, pitting is a highly localized type of corrosion that occurs  
378 randomly in various stages over certain areas; hence it results in perforation and thickness  
379 reduction in specific regions of the metal surface [109–111].

380 When the corrosion attack on metal structures is non-uniform (i.e. pitting or crevice  
381 corrosion), the collection of corrosion rate data via conventional methods can be misleading  
382 [112]. This phenomenon is more common where the coatings or the base metal itself are  
383 deteriorated [113]. Some research studies reveal that the reduction of tensile strength in  
384 presence of pit corrosion is 2.5 times more than that in presence of general corrosion [114].  
385 The number of pits increases with the deterioration of coatings which in turn leads to corrosion  
386 growth independently [115]. During the pit formation, cathodic oxygen reduction occurs on  
387 the adjacent surfaces of pits to reduce the corrosion process. Engelhardt and Macdonald [116]

388 categorized the pitting process into three phases, including: nucleation (pit initiates),  
389 propagation (pit grows), re-passivation (pit growth stops).

390 In general, the marine corrosion can be categorized into short-term and long-term  
391 corrosions, depending on duration of the exposure in seawater. The duration of short-term  
392 corrosion typically ranges between 6 to 24 months of initial exposure, when the corrosion  
393 process is led by activation, concentration, and diffusion phases. Then the long-term corrosion  
394 takes place, which is led by biological activities and nutrients in seawater [117]. Some  
395 researchers have shown that the duration of short-term and long-term corrosions depends on  
396 the constituents of seawater (biological and chemical) and its physical properties, temperature  
397 in particular [118].

398 Marine steel structures exhibit significant variance in corrosion rates with changing zones  
399 with respect to the sea surface. These zones include tidal, atmospheric, splash, and submerged  
400 zones. Some research literature reported that highest rates of corrosion are observed in splash  
401 zones followed by low tidal zones. In the natural seawater conditions, Melchers [62–66]  
402 showed that the highest corrosion losses occur in splash zone and immersed zone, followed by  
403 half-tide and coastal atmosphere. Figure 4 presents the corrosion rates of marine steel structures  
404 in different exposure zones.

405 **\*\* Figure 4 \*\***

406 **Figure 4.** Corrosion rates of marine steel structures in different exposure zones [62–66].

407 In natural seawaters, the corrosion rate of low carbon steel structures is estimated to be  
408 between 0.1mm and 0.3mm/y; however it can rise up to 2–4 mm/y in the severe marine climatic  
409 conditions [72]. It is widely believed that the rate of corrosion decreases with the exposure  
410 period, possibly due to the hindrance offered by corrosion deposits for free exchange of ions.  
411 However, some studies have reported that the rate of corrosion may increase with the exposure  
412 period in cases where the structure is subject to dynamic loads, higher velocity, and pollutant  
413 factors in seawater [119, 120]. In moderate marine climates, the corrosion content accumulated  
414 on steel structures is primarily comprised of lepidocrocite ( $\gamma$ -FeO(OH)), goethite ( $\alpha$ -  
415 FeO(OH)), maghemite ( $\gamma$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) and magnetite (Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) [121]. In case of atmospheric marine  
416 corrosion, iron samples are initially corroded into lepidocrocite ( $\gamma$ -FeO(OH)) – an unstable rust  
417 form. However, because of continuous interaction between oxygen and water in surrounding  
418 environment, it is converted into goethite – a more stable form of rust [122, 123]. The corrosion  
419 in marine steel structures is oxidation of ferrous iron ions which yields a reddish brown ferrous  
420 oxy-hydroxide (FeO(OH)) compound, i.e. rust. As an initial step of oxidation, the rust layer  
421 starts building up on to the surface of the metal structure due to the presence of free oxygen in  
422 sea water and its continuous access on to the metallic surface. With the increase in exposure  
423 period, the surface deposits on metal skin barricade the interaction between free oxygen and  
424 metal skin. Subsequently, the rate of metal loss will vary non-linearly [124–126]. Faraday’s  
425 law is generally used to estimate the initial corrosion rate in which the effects of bacterial  
426 actions, corrosion deposition and biofilms are assumed to be negligible [127].

427 The Pourbaix Potential-pH diagram graphically demonstrates the electrochemical aspects  
428 of corrosion process, and it has applications in the corrosion of metals subjected to an aqueous  
429 electrolyte, batteries or fuel cells. It is used to establish the types of reaction and stable phases  
430 of reaction products in an equilibrium state of a chemical process. This diagram gives a very  
431 effective and deep understanding of the possible reactions and yielding products, including  
432 passivity regions in a corrosion process. It however cannot predict the rate of corrosion and  
433 chemical processes at a given temperature in electrolytic solution [111, 128].

#### 434 4.2.1. Environmental factors

435 The environmental conditions play a significant role in degradation of offshore metallic  
436 structures and, thus, in selection of the inspection method and its frequency. The metal alloys  
437 selected for use in marine structures generally have good corrosion resistance. Melcher [129]  
438 reported that the composition of metal structures significantly influences the initial corrosion  
439 phase (kinetically controlled oxidation) and the long-term anaerobic corrosion phase, whereas  
440 the diffusion phase of oxidation was found to be independent of the alloying constituents. The  
441 weather conditions and seawater constituents vary enormously across various oceans around  
442 the globe. The seawater reservoirs in colder regions have low seawater temperature and salinity  
443 level; thus the DO concentration is higher. However, in the hot countryside of tropical/ sub-  
444 tropical regions, the sea surface temperature and hence the salinity levels are higher and DO  
445 content ranges up to 3.5–4 mg/L. Typically, the salinity of major natural seawaters ranges  
446 between 32,000 to 45,000 ppm [130].

447 In summer, the sea surface temperature in some tropical regions may reach up to 33–35°.   
448 The seawater temperature of the Gulf of Mexico is reported to be in the range of 20–32°C.   
449 Nergis *et al.* [131] studied the range of various prominent seawater parameters in the Arabian   
450 ocean and reported the seawater surface temperature range to be from 28°C to 41°C in summer   
451 seasons. Higher corrosion rates have been reported in warm seawater regions. The significance   
452 of seawater temperature can be estimated from the fact that corrosion rate of marine steel   
453 structures at a temperature of 25 °C was twice of that at 10 °C [125]. During a research study   
454 on atmospheric corrosion in coastal regions of the Arabian sea, Jamil *et al.* [132] found out that   
455 the corrosion rates were in the category C5, which is placed in ‘very high’ corrosive   
456 environment according to BS EN ISO 9223 [133, 134]. More recently, Jilani [135] discussed   
457 various levels of pollutants in coastal waters of the Arabian sea and their impacts on the   
458 transformation of intrinsic open seawater properties (like pH, DO, total solid content, etc.). The   
459 results of her analysis are presented in Table 4.

460

### \*\* Table 4 \*\*

461 **Table 4.** The monthly average level of pollutants in coastal waters of the Arabian sea.

#### 462 4.2.2. Physical and chemical factors

463 The physical and chemical factors are closely interrelated in contributing to marine structural  
464 corrosion. The temperature, DO, salinity and wetting duration are the dominant factors in  
465 marine immersion corrosion [136]. The seawater may contain different concentration levels of

466 chlorine ions, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) and ammonia [137]. A higher  
467 quantity of these compounds adversely affects the surface of the metallic structure by  
468 accelerating the rate of corrosion. Higher content of H<sub>2</sub>S, CO<sub>2</sub>, and seawater temperature have  
469 harmful effects on metallic marine structures [138]. The combined action of the chloride as  
470 well as the salt deposit provide a conducive environment for flourishing microbial activities,  
471 which often results in crack formation in metals [136]. With the initial exposure of metal  
472 structures in seawater, a passive layer is formed on its surface that resists further corrosion.  
473 Dissociated chloride ions (Cl<sup>-</sup>) in seawater may penetrate this protective film and initiate  
474 crevice/pitting corrosion. The hydroxide ions (OH<sup>-</sup>) in aqueous electrolytic solutions assist in  
475 passive layer formation, whereas, Cl<sup>-</sup> ions damage the layer and facilitate further corrosion and  
476 pit development [91].

477 The corrosion factor is more detrimental in hot and moist seawater conditions of ship  
478 ballast tanks, as it contains a high concentration of entrapped oxygen even at higher  
479 temperatures [139]. Some researchers have reported the significant effect of temperature, pH,  
480 calcium carbonate solubility, and exposure time on corrosion of structural steels in seawater,  
481 brackish and freshwater (see [117, 140]). Melchers [141, 142] showed that the corrosion rate  
482 in moderate- and low-temperature seawaters is doubled for each 10°C temperature rise when  
483 controlled by kinetic process; whereas during the diffusion process it is doubled after every  
484 30°C rise in temperature, given the DO concentration is constant [143]. A series of seawater  
485 corrosion tests at various temperatures were carried out by Chandler [144]. It was found out  
486 that the corrosion loss of carbon steel at 25°C was nearly twice larger than that at 10°C. In the  
487 open seawaters, DO is able to discharge freely with increasing the temperature. Corrosion rate  
488 tends to increase with temperature up to 80°C, then onwards it declines sharply due to the rapid  
489 decrease in solubility of oxygen.

490 The standard fluctuation of pH in seawaters lies between 7.8 and 8.2 and it has been  
491 reported by several researchers that this variation does not have significant impact on corrosion  
492 rate. However, it can indirectly influence accumulation of calcium carbonate on cathode  
493 protected structures [118, 144]. The pH variations may exert an active influence on pitting and  
494 crevice corrosion of active-passive metals [145].

495 In ferrous alloys, the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> on corrosion loss is far less than DO at same  
496 concentration level. At a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 20 mL/L and same temperature conditions,  
497 oxygen is found to be ten times more corrosive than CO<sub>2</sub> [145]. Presence of O<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> in  
498 seawater can reduce its pH value from slightly alkaline to acidic, which in turn can enhance  
499 the corrosion of steel. Several research studies have highlighted that in case of short-term  
500 corrosion, the nominal pH level does not affect the corrosion process; whereas, CO<sub>2</sub> can upset  
501 the pH value in long-term exposure. The overall pattern of corrosion in marine steel structures  
502 is nonlinear. Although the short-term corrosion may initially exhibit a linear pattern, it has been  
503 asserted by various researchers that the short-term corrosion pattern can be highly erroneous if  
504 it is used for prediction of long-term corrosion. The influencing factors which control the long-  
505 term corrosion are identified as exposure time, temperature, salinity, microbiologically  
506 influenced corrosion (MIC), SRBs, water velocity and alloy effects [146–148].

507 Increasing chloride content in seawater can aggravate the pit corrosion in submerged metal  
508 [149]. Moreover, the combined effect of DO and chloride concentration highly accelerates the  
509 corrosion rate. The corrosivity of structural steel specimens along the coastline of a heavily  
510 industrialized region in Baltic Sea was investigated by Zakowski *et al.* [150]. It was concluded  
511 that the corrosion rate in low-salinity seawaters is significantly lower (0.0585 mm/year) than  
512 that in nominal ocean conditions. Table 5 gives the salinity levels across various sea regions  
513 throughout the world. As can be seen, the salinity level is highest in seawaters of hot sea regions  
514 (e.g. Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean) and lowest in the cold countryside (e.g. Baltic and  
515 Caspian seas) [151].

516 **\*\* Table 5 \*\***

517 **Table 5.** Salinity levels across various sea regions throughout the world.

518 The DO concentration in seawater is a function of the following factors: temperature, water  
519 velocity, salinity and biological activities. The oxygen solubility decreases at a higher  
520 temperature. Under standard atmospheric pressure at sea level, the DO concentration is found  
521 to be 8.26 mg/L at 25°C and 12.77 mg/L at 5°C [152]. Oxygen is the main electron acceptor  
522 for the corrosion process; hence its quantity decreases at elevated temperatures which may  
523 reduce the overall rate of corrosion. However, this decreasing corrosion factor is compensated  
524 by the increasing temperature and salinity level; therefore, the corrosion rate typically increases  
525 with the rise in temperature. In addition to temperature effect on DO, its percentage in seawater  
526 reduces with an increase in the chemical and biological content, particularly in polluted  
527 seawaters. In a study about corrosion on austenitic steel, Malik *et al.* [149] reported that the  
528 content of DO decreases with the increase in water temperature. Corrosion rate was found to  
529 increase within the temperature range of 25-65°C; however then onward, the critical pitting  
530 potential ( $E_{pit}$ ) was found to remain constant. The DO concentration in seawater as a function  
531 of salinity and temperature is presented in Table 6.

532 **\*\* Table 6 \*\***

533 **Table 6.** Oxygen concentration in seawater as a function of salinity and temperature.

534 The influential parameters of seawater vary with the sea depth and this variability is also  
535 dependent on the geographical location and season. As the water depth increases, the  
536 temperature reduces but the hydrostatic pressure increases; however, the latter does not pose  
537 any significant effect on corrosion rate [153]. Due to higher nutrients and higher seawater  
538 temperature, the corrosion rate in the shallow sea environment is found to be higher than that  
539 in the deep sea environment. In a research study, Venkatesan *et al.* [145, 154] showed that the  
540 short-term corrosion rate of mild steel in surface water of Indian ocean is four times more than  
541 that in deep water. Melchers [155] showed that the effect of water depth on corrosion rate is  
542 subject to the variation in temperature, DO and nutrient levels.

543 The photosynthesis process in marine ecology system causes a significant increase in DO  
544 concentration. Similarly, the air bubbling produced by the wave propagation in open sea serves  
545 for seawater oxygenation. Various researchers have reported that the DO concentration in

546 seawater changes with regional surface seawater temperature from about 8.0 mL/L in the Arctic  
547 seas to 4.5 mL/L or even less in the tropical seawater. In certain harbour conditions, it further  
548 reduces due to the presence of nutrient-rich waters, pollutants and industrial wastages [156–  
549 158]. Figure 5 illustrates the relationships between various seawater parameters.

550 **\*\* Figure 5 \*\***

551 **Figure 5.** The relationships between (a) conductivity and salinity (b) dissolved oxygen and salinity  
552 [151].

553 Effects of seawater velocity on the corrosion rate of immersed or semi-submerged metallic  
554 structures have been investigated by several field/laboratory experiments and the results are  
555 presented in [159, 160]. Corrosion rate was observed to increase nonlinearly with the water  
556 velocity (0 to 1 m/s). This effect was found more prominent in the early phase but slowed down  
557 gradually with the rise in growth of biofouling, marine growth, and corrosion products on steel  
558 coupons [105, 161]. The material loss in some metals (such as iron, copper alloys, and steel)  
559 tends to be higher beyond a critical velocity [162], however minor velocity changes can be  
560 ignored during corrosion studies on structural steel [163]. The effect of velocity on marine  
561 structural corrosion can be more damaging when the accumulated corrosion growth is removed  
562 mechanically or naturally by the wave action [164, 165].

#### 563 4.2.3. Microbiological factors

564 The exposure of steel structures into the marine conditions rapidly initiates a complex chain of  
565 electrochemical reactions which include colonization of marine growth, biofilms and various  
566 forms of bacteria. The structural degradation under the influence of biological activities  
567 (microorganism, bacteria, biofilms, etc.) is commonly known as microbiological induced  
568 corrosion (MIC) [166]. The microbiological ingredients play a vital role to nourish oxygen  
569 depleted regions/anaerobic conditions during the latter phases of corrosion and promote  
570 localised corrosion, particularly during long-term corrosion phase. These effects can be visible  
571 in all exposure zones; the tidal, splash and coastal atmospheres [167]. The microbial biofilms  
572 and biofoulings are undesirable micro-organism/bacterial cells which deposit on metal surface  
573 and encourage a conducive environment for anaerobic corrosion [144]. The marine biofouling  
574 may be comprised of flora and fauna in the form of micro and macro bio-organisms. SRBs  
575 encrusting algae, fungi, seaweeds, molluscs, barnacles, zebra mussels, worms, sea squirts,  
576 barnacles, hydroids are few common types of biofoulings in marine environment [72, 127,  
577 168]. The pollutant addition in seawater aggravates the concentration of hydrogen sulphides  
578 ( $H_2S$ ) and nutrient content in the form of dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) which  
579 significantly elevate the corrosion rate of low carbon steel [134, 169, 170]. The models  
580 presented in Figure 6 highlight the above phenomena as well as the effects of temperature and  
581 DO variations on corrosion process.

582

## \*\* Figure 6 \*\*

583 **Figure 6.** (a) A model indicating the effect of nutrient level on corrosion (b) A model indicating the  
584 effect of temperature and DO on corrosion [134].

585 The heated oil or lubricants inside the ship tanks encourage the growth of microbiological  
586 contaminations (MBCs), which further leads to a higher corrosion rate. The seawater  
587 temperature in the range of 20-50°C is found to be ideal for the growth of SRBs. Presence of  
588 crucial compounds in seawater such as hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S), other sulphides and sulphates  
589 form an unstable/corrosive passive film on metal surfaces, which permeates the interaction of  
590 these detrimental compounds with the metal surface and aggravates the corrosion process  
591 [171]. In addition to the growth of general and localized corrosions, the micro-biofoulings can  
592 induce various other types of corrosion such as hydrogen embrittlement and SCC [127, 172].  
593 Seawaters in coastal regions are also engulfed with numerous metal and non-metal ingredients  
594 with the addition of industrial and domestic effluents. These factors enhance corrosion of steel  
595 structures through galvanic reaction, acidic hydrolysis and cathodic reaction [135, 173].

### 596 4.3. Findings on corrosion prediction models for marine structures

597 Over the years, several corrosion prediction models for marine steel alloys have been proposed  
598 in the literature. These models can be divided into different types of empirical,  
599 phenomenological (qualitative analysis based on experimental data), probabilistic, and  
600 physical models. The empirical models are based on historical data or measurement of  
601 corrosion loss, whereas the physical models are based on actual corrosion process [174, 175].  
602 Accurate prediction of corrosion is a challenging task because the available data sometimes is  
603 highly scattered due to the involvement of extremely dynamic environmental conditions.  
604 Earlier research studies proposed deterministic and linear models for corrosion prediction.  
605 However, in recent research, several nonlinear and probabilistic methods have been proposed.  
606 In some cases, the uncertainty of prominent corrosion factors are also included in the form of  
607 random variables (such as coating life, corrosion rate, and thickness margin) so as to develop  
608 more accurate and precise corrosion models [176]. Southwell was the first researcher who  
609 proposed two linear and bilinear corrosion models for steel structures [166]. These models are  
610 given by:

611 - *Southwell's linear model:*

$$612 \quad d(t) = 0.076 + 0.038t \quad , \quad (1)$$

613 where  $t$  is the time period or exposure time and  $d(t)$  represents the corrosion thickness.

614 - *Southwell's bi-linear model:*

$$615 \quad d(t) = \begin{cases} 0.09t & , 0 \leq t < 1.46y \\ 0.76 + 0.038t & , 1.46 \leq t < 16y \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

616 The Southwell models were later improved by Melchers for corrosion prediction of marine  
617 structures [177]. These corrosion prediction models are given below.

618 - *Melchers-Southwell's non-linear model:*

619 
$$d(t) = 0.84t^{0.823} , \quad (3)$$

620 - *Melchers' tri-linear model:*

621 
$$d(t) = \begin{cases} 0.170t & , 0 \leq t < y \\ 0.152 + 0.0186t & , 1 \leq t < 8y \\ -0.364 + 0.083t & , 8 \leq t < 16y \end{cases} , \quad (4)$$

622 - *Melchers' power law model:*

623 
$$d(t) = 0.1207t^{0.6257} . \quad (5)$$

624 The ship hull and offshore structures are often applied with various protective measures  
 625 (metallic and non-metallic paints including antifouling paints) as corrosion shields. Therefore,  
 626 some researchers have divided the corrosion process on marine structures into three phases: (i)  
 627 no corrosion phase or coating ( $T_0$  or  $T_c$ ), (ii) transition between no corrosion and corrosion  
 628 initiation ( $T_i$ ), and (iii) the progress of corrosion ( $T$ ). In the first phase, it is assumed that no  
 629 corrosion occurs due to the protective coating being applied on structures; while in the second  
 630 phase there are slight changes in different models. Some of the most popular nonlinear  
 631 corrosion models are presented in below:

632 - *Yamamoto-Ikegami's non-linear corrosion model* [115]

633 
$$d(t) = C_1 (t - T_0 - T_t)^{C_2} , \quad (6)$$

634 where  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are corrosion constants,  $T_0$  is no corrosion zone during which the durability  
 635 of protective coating is assumed to remain intact, and  $T_t$  is the transition period between coating  
 636 durability and corrosion initiation.

637 - *Paik's nonlinear model* [175]:

638 
$$d(t) = c_1(t - T_{cl})^{c_2} , \quad (7)$$

639 where  $c_1$  and  $c_2$  are fixed coefficients and  $T_{cl}$  is the life of coating. The coefficient  $c_2$  is usually  
 640 assumed to be 1/3 or 1, while the coefficient  $c_1$  is the symbolic corrosion rate per year. Paik *et*  
 641 *al.* [178] proposed three types of curves for general and localized corrosions on ship structures.  
 642 These include a convex, a concave and a linear model as shown in Figure 7. The convex curve  
 643 shows that the corrosion rate rises initially but it tends to slow down with the increase in  
 644 exposure time, because of the deposition of corrosion content on metal surface. This curve is  
 645 typically applied to marine structures under statically loaded conditions. Alternatively, in the  
 646 concave model, the corrosion rate is accelerated with aging. It is considered to be a more  
 647 suitable trend in structures with dynamic loading conditions because the corrosion trend  
 648 generally decreases with the exposure period. Paik's model is the only model which shows  
 649 increment in the corrosion rate with the exposure period, specific to the loaded structures. In  
 650 some cases, the effects of nutrients and biological content can also increase the corrosion trend;  
 651 however, the same has not been considered by the Paik's model, purely based on statistical  
 652 observations.

653

**\*\* Figure 7 \*\***

654

**Figure 7.** Paik's corrosion prediction model [178].

655

The implications in Paik's model have been addressed by the nonlinear model of Soares and Garbatov [106] as given below:

656

657

$$d(t) = d_{\infty} [1 - e^{(-\frac{t-T_c}{T_t})}], \quad (8)$$

658

where  $d_{\infty}$  is the thickness loss during the long-term corrosion,  $T_c$  represents the coating life of metallic structure,  $T_t$  is the transition time (i.e., the period during which the corrosion process initiates). As shown in Figure 8, the corrosion process in this model is divided into three phases. During the first phase, no corrosion occurs because of the corrosion protection system. The corrosion begins during the transition period ( $T_t$ ) and increases to a certain depth in plate thickness, until it stops at a depth of  $d_{\infty}$ . The model has been adopted by numerous studies such as [126, 139, 179–181].

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**\*\* Figure 8 \*\***

666

**Figure 8.** Soares and Garbatov's corrosion prediction model [106].

667

Qin and Cui [61] proposed a prediction model using Weibull distribution, showing an increase in corrosion rate in the second phase and a decrease in the third phase. This model is illustrated in Figure 9. As can be seen, it describes the corrosion process in three stages:

668

669

670

- $[0, T_{st}]$ : There is no corrosion as the corrosion protection system is completely active,
- $[T_{st}, T_A]$ : Corrosion process begins and the corrosion rate increases linearly,
- $[T_A, T_L]$ : It associates with general corrosion,

671

672

673

where  $T_{st}$  is the time when corrosion begins,  $T_A$  is the corrosion accelerating life,  $T_L$  is the life of corrosion protection system where general corrosion starts. Generally  $T_L$  ranges between 2 to 10 years, depending on the quality of the protection layer and severity of climatic conditions [182–184].

674

675

676

677

**\*\* Figure 9 \*\***

678

**Figure 9.** Qin and Cui's corrosion model [61].

679

All the aforementioned corrosion models are purely based on statistical principles and theoretical or field experimental data. Melchers [142, 185] is the first to propose a five-phase phenomenological corrosion model (encompassing both short- and long-term corrosions) for marine steels, as shown in Figure 10. This model does not consider the surface protection and its age variability factors, which itself is a complete and complex science with a different scope. The research revealed that the long-term corrosion in marine structures is as a result of a complex collaboration between electrochemical process and bacterial colonization in natural (oxygenated) and anoxic seawaters. A nonlinear corrosion equation was formulated for almost every phase of the corrosion model. The DO concentration, seawater temperature, and water

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688 velocity have been considered to be the main influencing factors, which may exhibit certain  
689 interrelation with the depth of sea [186].

690 **\*\* Figure 10 \*\***

691 **Figure 10.** Melchers' general corrosion model for steel structures [60].

692 As can be seen in Figure 10, the first three phases (phases 0, 1 and 2) of the Melchers'  
693 model illustrates the short-term corrosion pattern and these phases are almost similar to the  
694 post  $T_{st}$  or  $T_0$  phase in previous models. The uniqueness of Melchers' model is the explanation  
695 of long-term corrosion mechanism with the demonstration and justification of rapid rise in  
696 corrosion rate (phases 3 and 4) after a stagnated period. This sharp rise is attributed to the  
697 involvement of massive biological activities and nutrients in anaerobic conditions. The  
698 stagnation phase of corrosion is generally attributed to the accumulation of corrosion and  
699 fouling deposits on the metal surface, which splits its connection with external and stimulates  
700 anaerobic conditions. Furthermore, Melchers later extended his model for corrosion prediction  
701 of other alloys (aluminium and copper alloys) in marine conditions, fresh water as well as in  
702 the coastal or atmospheric conditions. For further reading about corrosion prediction models,  
703 the readers are referred to [187–193].

## 704 **5. Advanced maintenance management techniques**

705 The conventional maintenance management practices in the marine sector are rapidly shifting  
706 towards advanced solutions such as e-maintenance, computerized maintenance management  
707 systems (CMMS), and remote SHM. The e-maintenance and CMMS can provide refined data  
708 at the right time to facilitate decision-making for maintenance. From the literature review,  
709 several intelligent techniques, statistical and stochastic analysis tools and MCDA methods were  
710 identified that can be used for improved maintenance management of corroded steel marine  
711 structures. Some of these modern asset maintenance techniques include BN, genetic algorithms  
712 (GA), artificial neural network (ANN), deep learning and fuzzy inference systems [194–196].

713 Numerous mathematical models have also been proposed to predict the complex nonlinear  
714 relationships between corrosion rate and **varying environmental conditions** [181]. The  
715 evolution of advanced modelling and simulation techniques has enabled more sophistication in  
716 corrosion prediction of aging marine structures. Various artificial intelligence (AI) and  
717 machine learning (ML) tools (such as ANN, support vector machine (SVM)) as well as  
718 probabilistic techniques (such as BNs, Markov chain, Monte-Carlo simulation) have been  
719 proposed by researchers for corrosion modelling and risk/reliability-based inspection planning  
720 of marine structures [197–199]. The results acquired with the use of these methods have been  
721 found to be very promising and more accurate (see [68, 107, 200]). The most prominent  
722 methodologies used for marine maintenance and corrosion prediction modelling are briefly  
723 discussed in followings:

### 724 5.1. *Fault tree Analysis (FTA)*

725 FTA is one of the most important analytical methods used for fault identification and reliability  
726 assessment of systems/components [201]. It is a graphic tool comprised of sequential  
727 combinations of faults, which can subsequently result in the occurrence of undesirable events  
728 [202]. A typical fault tree consists of a top event and a set of basic events organized with the  
729 logic gates (AND, OR, etc.) [203]. FTA has been used for both qualitative as well as  
730 quantitative reliability **analyses** in many industries. Various researchers have used this method  
731 individually or in combination with other techniques (such as event tree analysis (ETA),  
732 Markov chain Monte-Carlo (MCMC) and BN) for failure analysis of marine  
733 structures/equipment [24, 204–206]. Laskowski [207] performed a structural reliability  
734 analysis on the marine diesel engine of a ship and its components using qualitative FTA.  
735 Lazakis *et. al.* [19] developed a hybrid FTA-FMEA strategy for identification of critical  
736 systems/subsystems in a marine engine.

### 737 5.2. *Bayesian network (BN)*

738 BN is a probabilistic graphical method which uses Bayes' theorem for updating the prior  
739 occurrence probability of failures. It indicates a set of random variables and associated  
740 conditional dependencies in form of a directed acyclic graph (DAG), containing a set of nodes  
741 to represent variables and edges to denote probabilistic causal dependence [208]. It involves  
742 independent and dependent variables known as causes and consequences respectively, which  
743 are connected via direct arrows pointing from the causes to the consequences [209, 210]. BN  
744 signifies the joint probability distribution and it is flexible to perform predictive (forward) as  
745 well as diagnostic (backward) analysis [148]. In recent years, BNs have been extensively used  
746 for modelling of corrosion in marine structures as well as optimising the RBI plans [148, 191,  
747 211–214]. For an inclusive understanding of BNs, the readers are referred to [210, 215, 216].

### 748 5.3. *Statistical and stochastic models*

749 Numerous statistical and stochastic techniques have been employed for degradation modelling  
750 and maintenance planning of marine assets. These methods have been instrumental to develop  
751 the relations between various dependent/independent process variables and estimate the  
752 likelihood of occurrence of events. The statistical/stochastic techniques that are commonly  
753 adopted by researchers include: multivariate analysis, regression models, Copulas, Markov  
754 process, Poisson process, Monte-Carlo simulation, Cox's approximation, and Weibull analysis  
755 [35, 56, 118, 217]. Detailed deliberation on the maintenance procedures, their planning,  
756 inspection and prediction trends using various statistical models and methodologies are  
757 explained in details in [33, 66, 218–220].

### 758 5.4. *Multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA)*

759 The MCDA techniques have gained a huge momentum in decision making for the selection of  
760 an efficient and effective inspection/maintenance strategy. This approach comprises a finite set  
761 of alternatives (i.e. maintenance strategies) amongst which the decision-makers have to select,  
762 evaluate or rank, in accordance with the weights of a finite set of criteria (attributes). Each  
763 substitute is given an evaluation rating using a suitable measure followed by the aggregation

764 process to acquire the prioritized alternatives from the best to the worst [221]. The simple  
765 additive weighting (SAW), AHP, analytic network process (ANP), TOPSIS, PROMETHEE  
766 and the elimination and choice translating reality (ELECTRE), etc. are some MCDA methods  
767 used in maintenance management [222]. Several research studies on maintenance strategy  
768 selection using MCDA techniques were reviewed in [223].

#### 769 5.5. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)

770 AI models and ML techniques have been used as a revolutionary tool in the corrosion and  
771 fatigue modelling as well as the optimization of risk/reliability-based maintenance [19, 181].  
772 They require certain input parameters which are processed through single or multiple layers to  
773 generate outputs. These methods are sometimes also known as Soft Computing Techniques  
774 [55]. Some commonly adopted AI techniques are ANN, fuzzy logic, SVM and GA. Recently,  
775 Shirazi and Mohammadi [187] formulated a hybrid intelligent model to predict the corrosion  
776 rate of 3C steel using ANN and swarm particle optimization (PSO).

777 A detailed distribution of the journal papers by methodologies used to model marine  
778 corrosion and maintenance strategy is shown in Table 7.

#### 779 \*\* Table 7 \*\*

**Table 7.** Distribution of papers by methodologies for corrosion prediction modelling and marine maintenance.

## 6. Discussion and analysis

Over the past few decades, numerous maintenance procedures have evolved for an optimal management of physical equipment and effective planning of inspections to reduce cost and/or risk of failure. Literature reveals that the marine asset maintenance practices started from conventional RTF concept and then shifted towards time-based PM in early 1960s. The PM concept is still the most widely used maintenance strategy in the commercial maritime industry. However, in recent years, some advanced strategies such as CBM, RCM/RBI and CBM plus have been adopted as alternative strategies to achieve maximum system/subsystem availability/reliability with minimal cost, failure risks, manpower and material resources. The advancements in failure sensing equipment and data analytics approaches have provided superior platforms to inculcate improved online and offline health monitoring techniques. The generic concept of reliability-based maintenance has become more effective and optimised by digitalised revolution in marine maintenance industry and its integration with some other sophisticated tools such as NDT and SHM.

This review study has primarily focused on the corrosion aspects of submerged/partially submerged marine and ship structures. The environmental conditions considered in this study were mainly the seawater composition (chemistry), physical factors (such as temperature) and amalgamated pollutants from various domestic, agricultural and industrial sources into the seawater, which tend to affect the ratio of intrinsic seawater constituencies, especially in the coastal seawaters. The reviewed literature revealed that the degradation of marine structures

due to uniform and localised corrosions is far more than all other type of corrosion. Since the marine corrosion is known as a highly nonlinear process during the long exposures due to the involvement of numerous dependent/independent variables, a multidisciplinary knowledge of material science, structural mechanics, electrochemistry, topography, and hydrodynamic is required.

The corrosion prediction models developed up to date are subject to several limitations because of the complexities involved in understanding of the relationship between environmental factors and corrosion rate. Many researchers have highlighted the variation in corrosion behaviour in the various zones above and below the seawater surface; however, it has been agreed that higher corrosion rates are generally found in the splash zone, mean lower tidal region, and just below the low-tide level, respectively. The corrosion phenomenon in the latter region is known as accelerated low water corrosion (ALWC) which is more common in the pollutant near-coast seawaters and generally is attributed to the high presence of bacterial activities, and high DIN content [225]. Some researchers have also attributed the high corrosion to the formation of local galvanic cells due to the difference in corrosion potential in high and low aerated zones, just below the water line [226].

The water temperature, DO, salinity, water velocity, pH and biological activity are found to be the most influencing factors in corrosion of marine steel structures. Both laboratory and experimental based research studies have concluded that corrosion initiates rapidly within hours of immersion in seawater. However, there is a continuous variation in corrosion rate with the rise in exposure duration and the rate of corrosion stagnates during the diffusion phase of Melchers' modal, prior initiation of biological activity led by anaerobic conditions. The long-term corrosion mostly comes into play during anaerobic conditions with subsequent involvement of nutrients, SRB activity, MIC, biofouling. Due to highly nonlinearity in marine corrosion process, the prediction of long-term corrosion based on the short-term corrosion data is not recommended. Moreover, the field experiment results in comparatively larger corrosion losses than the simulated laboratory-based experiments using artificial seawaters, probably due to absence of biological corrosion factors in the controlled laboratory environments and higher variability in the influential corrosion parameters during the field experiments.

It has been deduced that certain interdependent relationships exist between some prominent environmental contributors, which further complicate corrosion mechanism in marine conditions. The DO in water generally tends to accelerate corrosion rate by rapid oxidation, however its concentration declines with the rise in temperature. Similarly, salinity goes high in warm seawaters and DO decreases in these conditions. A significant rate of corrosion has been reported with the increase in seawater velocity but it slows down with extended exposure durations because of the adhesion of marine growth and corrosion deposits on metallic skin. The DO and pH values of coastal seawater decrease and become more acidic with the influx of effluents and nutrients. Moreover, the corrosion rate in cold seawaters is found to be far less than the seawaters of hot countryside, because of the direct relationship between the corrosion rate and seawater temperature.

Although the changing climatic conditions across the globe are found to be highly effective in dictating corrosion rate of marine assets, an amalgamation of pollutants, various industrial

/agricultural wastes, heavy metals and effluents near coast regions further complicates the understanding and modelling of corrosion process. The final product formed after incorporation of these run-offs in seawater becomes highly detrimental towards structural deterioration. Therefore, it has been recorded from the literature that the severity of ambient conditions in harbours and coastal regions flooded with wastewater addition is more detrimental towards corrosion than the open seawater environments. It also implies that the installed marine assets (such as wind energy, oil rigs, and harbour infrastructures) and vessels stationed for long durations in pollutant mixed harbour or coastal areas may experience more rapid deterioration than seagoing vessels or fixed platforms, away from coastal/harbour areas.

The marine structures are protected from corrosion using various organic/nonorganic coatings as well as other protection methods. The life expectancy of the protective coating has been reported to range between 3 to 5 years, depending on the severity of climatic conditions, seawater chemistry, nature of pollutant contamination, etc. Some corrosion prediction models have been developed based on the assumption that no corrosion takes place as long as the protective coating is intact. Corrosion process is believed to kick on with the fracture initiation in the protective coating. The paint-fracturing phenomenon may also result in highly localized corrosion as the exposed bare metal acts as an anode, while the remaining protected areas act as a cathode. Similarly, several corrosion models have been developed based on historical data from ship structures applied with the protective surface coatings as well as other corrosion protection measures such as sacrificial zinc anodes and ICCP system. Therefore, it implies that actual corrosion rates are much higher in the bare surface metal. Hence, these models may underestimate the actual corrosion losses in the absence of any of the protective measures. Secondly, majority of the corrosion models in the literature have purely been developed statistically based on experimental data, which do not have any link with the theoretical knowledge of electrochemistry. Therefore, these empirical and mathematical models may have several limitations, particularly in the seawater with higher pollutant content where corrosion rates are mainly led by the biological activities and nutrients and sulphide content. The basic phenomenological corrosion models of Melchers [142, 185] have the ability to correlate the various phases of corrosion and variability in the environmental factors with the scientific knowledge on corrosion and electrochemistry.

It can be deduced from the detailed literature review that despite the enormous research studies on how to model the corrosion in steel structures, substantial uncertainties still exist because of the involvement of various potential contributors and their complex relation with the rate of corrosion. Therefore, there is still room for further improvement in corrosion modelling accuracy. Recently, various AI and ML algorithms (such as BN, ANN and SVM) have been successfully used to model the corrosion process with involving all influential environmental factors such as temperature, DO, pH level, salinity level, SRBs, etc. Inculcation of the sophisticated and rational digital technologies, such as big data, Internet of Things (IOT), AI, and digital twins can significantly improve the accuracy of corrosion process modelling.

From literature review, it has been revealed that the maritime sector is still more reliant on time-based PM concept. The CBM has also been used in recent years as part of the PM strategy. In the shipping industry, the RCM and CBM plus approaches have been widely adopted for the

maintenance of naval ships. Advanced technology driven fault diagnosis and prognosis, SHM, remote maintenance and e-maintenance technologies have provided great opportunities for the marine industry to adopt more efficient and optimised maintenance procedures. Using MCDAs, integrated maintenance methodologies, advanced sensing technologies, realistic prediction modelling for structural degradation mechanisms can be instrumental to develop data-driven, risk-based maintenance plans for the marine assets operating in extreme environmental conditions.

## **7. Conclusion and future works**

The aim of this review paper was to analyse the effect of marine environmental conditions on corrosion-based degradation of steel structures. It also highlighted the prognostic models on marine corrosion phenomenon and its impact on the reliability, health assessment, inspection intervals and overall maintenance strategy selection of assets. Due to significant variability of environmental factors, the corrosion in marine steel structures shows a great variation in different immersion zones. Hence, it is necessary to update corrosion models or their parameters according to the metal loss in different immersion zones, phases of corrosion, compositions of seawater, geographical regions, etc. Subsequently, it warrants a dynamic approach for inspection/maintenance planning of marine assets, capable of updating its interval according to the severity of climatic conditions by dynamic degradation prediction models integrated with the online/offline SHM tools.

In this review paper, the following conclusions have been deduced regarding the impact of environmental factors on corrosion mechanism, its complexities in marine steel structures, and the challenges associated with their maintenance:

- In natural seawater conditions, the sensitivity of environmental factors towards structural corrosion is fairly complex. This is partly because of the complicated relationships between the coexisting factors (e.g. temperature, DO concentration, salinity level, pH level, velocity, etc.) and corrosion rate of marine steel structures.
- For the same duration of exposure in natural seawater conditions, sensitivity of sea water temperature towards corrosion is found to be the most influencing factor. Therefore, the majority of the corrosion models are based on either seawater temperature or exposure period.
- Variability of temperature in natural seawater around the globe is enormous ( $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $35^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). Therefore, the corrosion rate tends to be tremendously higher in hot seawater conditions by the combined effect of high temperature and subsequently higher salinity level. Although DO concentration tends to reduce with higher seawater temperature, the influence of temperature surpasses the effect of DO. Subsequently, the rate of structural degradation as well as frequency of inspection and maintenance actions are also dependent on the extremeness of environmental conditions.
- Seawater salinity and pH level can influence the rate of corrosion; however, under normal sea conditions their sensitivity for corrosion loss is merely insignificant. Nevertheless, a great variation of seawater salinity has been found in specific hot regions, where corrosion

rates have been reported on the higher side than other regions. In the highly polluted seawaters, pH level tends to be more acidic (5.5-6.6); therefore, susceptible for accelerated uniform and localized corrosions.

- The influx of effluents causes significant chemical variation in seawater chemistry that can substantially increase the corrosivity factor by transforming the intrinsic specifications of seawater, such as DO content, salinity, bacterial content, total dissolved solids (TDS), heavy metal ion concentration, turbidity, and pH level. In addition, presence of nutrients in the form of DIN (compounds of nitrates, nitrides, ammonia) rapidly increases the rate of biological activity and promotes MIC.
- Influence of pollutants in seawater in the form of DIN, sulphides, etc. on corrosion rate can be far higher than the effect of physical factors such as seawater temperature.
- The inspection/maintenance of structures in polluted seawater conditions (rich in DIN and sulphides) needs to be more frequent than that in the nearest natural seawater condition because of the susceptibility for higher corrosion losses in polluted waters. A PM schedule in the absence of online/offline CM, SHM or prior knowledge of the corrosion rates in the specific climatic conditions will be likely to fail or ineffective to predict the PF curve for the exposed structure.
- Very few studies have been reported on integration of the outcome of degradation process models (such as corrosion and fatigue prognostic models) as an input for scheduling/optimizing the inspection and maintenance management system (see [227]).

The degradation of ships and other marine structures is a highly complicated phenomenon, mainly because of their inherent extreme operating conditions, corrosive environment, and extended operations away from maintenance facilities. The technology-driven advancement in marine equipment have its own risks and the maintenance demands have been amplified subsequently. Over the years, various maintenance practices and inspection methods have been adopted in the marine industry in order to attain higher reliability, safety and maintenance efficiency. It has been observed that the use of prognostic and health management (PHM) techniques, degradation prediction models, integrated risk- and reliability-based analysis and decision-making techniques have enhanced the overall maintenance paradigm of marine assets. However, with this need of highly skilled workmanship, the budget requirement for acquisition of advanced health monitoring technologies has also enhanced accordingly.

Developments in remote sensing and diagnostics, prognostics, SHM, and wireless data transferring methods play a significant role in the modern day maintenance of marine asset. To some extent, the novel maintenance strategies of RCM and CBM+ have been adopted by the naval shipping sector. The PM scheme currently holds the highest market share in commercial ship maintenance. Although a paradigm shift towards more advanced concepts such as CBM, RCM, and RBI has been noticed in recent years, the pace of this transformation may take several years. It is probably due to the certain precincts of the ship maintenance industry, including the high initial cost of implementing new strategies and training of operators/maintenance teams, prevailing hired maintenance concept in offshore energy and shipping sectors.

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