

# How Tourism Situation Could Improve In Pakistan | Tourism Essay

Pakistan is a federation of four provinces, a capital territory and a group of federally administered tribal areas. The government of Pakistan exercises de facto jurisdiction over the Pakistan stern parts of the disputed Kashmir region organized as two separate political entities (Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). Prior to 2001, the sub-provincial tier of government was composed of 26 divisions with two further tiers (districts and tehsils) administered directly from the provincial level.

Pakistan is a multilingual country with more than sixty languages being spoken. English is the official language of Pakistan and used in official business, government, and legal contracts, while Urdu is the national language.

Pakistan is a great place for tourism as it has the most appealing and breathtaking views of mountains, plateaus and deserts. It has the high potential to attract a large number of foreign tourists, along with that, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) had set up 27 motels and 3 restaurants for the convenience of these foreign tourists, PTDC need to intensify their marketing ability in order to attract tourists from countries like, China, Middle East Korea, Japan, and many other countries. Moreover Pakistan government need to take certain actions, in order to promote and acknowledge Tourism in Pakistan, as doing so will not only benefit us financially but will also bring unity, compatibility and harmony among nations. Moreover government also need to encourage private sector to develop tourism-friendly environment which will result in financial stability.

## Research methodology:

Most of the data obtained for this research will come secondary sources including book, internet, magazine etc. but to increase the accuracy of information I will conduct primary research to validate my results from secondary data .

### Tourism in Pakistan

Due to its diverse culture, people and landscape, Tourism is growing industry in Pakistan, even after considered as one of the most dangerous country in the world, According to British Magazine "The Economist". In Pakistan there are number of varieties of attraction that ranges from the ruins of ancient civilization such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Taxila, to the Himalayan hill-stations, that attract those interested in field and winter sports. Moreover, Pakistan has several mountain peaks of height over 8,000 metres (26,250 ft), that attract adventurers and mountaineers from around the world, especially to K2. Many domestic and International tourist visit these areas most often in the month starting from April to September. Tourism has become the source of income for local people.

In 2009, Pakistan was ranked 113 out of 130 countries to visit, According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (TCR). Although due to Political instability, suicide attacks, religious conflict, kidnapping of foreigner and uncertainty in the country had badly affected the Tourism throughout the country, especially NWFP, which is currently renamed as Pakhtoonkhwa.

For decades, Ecotourism has become the significant part of the tourism business in Pakistan, As it has offered many tremendous experience along with the stunning mountains of NWFP, attracting number of tourists all over the world for hiking, skating, forest camping, climbing, and exploring the region's natural parks and forests. Pakistan ecotourism destination is unforgettable for those who have ever visited it.

Especially, Swat, Hunza, Ayubia, Abbottabad, Murrree, Naran and Kaghan have yet been known as the ideal tourists spot for both summer and winter season. The snow-peaked mountains, the natural parks and the wildlife in the forests offered an thrilling experience especially for the one who are in search of adventure.

The natural beauty of these mountainous scenery have attracted number of tourists generating vital jobs for local people in the hospitality-related businesses. Moreover the Swat valley alone – known as the “Switzerland of the East” – has become the centre for 800 hotels. Over 40,000 local people Pakistan employed directly in hospitality.

### **Impact of war on tourism in Pakistan:**

Over the past decade, and especially since 2007, the rapid spread of terrorism have not only created uncertainty in the country but also crushed the major sector of economy that causes unemployment, Suicide bombing has become common in everywhere likewise, in shops, markets, public places, business centres and institutes. War and conflict is not limited to a particular city. Its effect is everywhere, anybody can be victim of it.

Due to fight between military and religious forces, the NWFP- which is considered 70% of the country's tourists site, and where millions of people involved in the tourism industry are badly beaten. Continuous war and terror has weakened both the economy and defence of the area.

Due to worst security situation and many of the popular location are converted into war zones, hardly few travelers now visit Pakistan. Although after 9/11 attack in USA, there was a slow decline of tourists in Pakistan but the recent military operations and suicide attacks have been the last nail in the smashing of tourism industry.

Since the initiation of the major religious and military offensive, The earning that come from tourism has been declining dramatically. From Rs 16 billion in 2007, revenues halved in 2008, with a further major fall in 2009. The industry is now facing a \$50 million annual loss as a result of the military operations.

The hospitality business had experienced a major fall of 40% in room occupancy countrywide. Moreover in NWFP, the insurgency has caused the shutdown of tourist industry. From the last three years the hotels have been closed while the industry has lost of Rs 600 billion. Moreover the transport industry is also going through tough times. Due to huge job losses in tourism and other related industry, majority of the people have migrated to other cities in the search of employment

Moreover the revenue that was generated from tourism has been declined by 11.8% in 2008, while 12% in 2009. The average family involved in tourism business used to earn around 40,000 per month and soon after war their earning has dropped to 5000/ month.

With more than 25,000 people killed and more than a million displaced in the past year, planned hotel projects have been put on hold. The number of mountain climbers and foreign trekkers has reached zero. Barbarism and bloodshed now run rampant in places which once offered peace and tranquility. No-one would dream of visiting these places for pleasure now.

Moreover adding to the crises faced by these shattered tourism industry, the federal budget has also been cut by 36 percent for 2010-2011 comparatively with the previous year. The only project this year will be to reconstruction and renovation of existing buildings. There isn't any scheme introduced in order to help overcome terrorism.

With the Pakistani political leadership appears to unaware of the real potential of industry, that show little or no prospect in the coming years of tourism attaining momentum that it lost. With the whole industry standing on the boundary of collapse the future looks blank for Pakistan most spectacularly beautiful locations.

### **Pakistan strategy to control extremism:**

In the eighth year of the global war on terror, the international community has realized that it is a war of ideas that cannot be won through force. Eventually Pakistan see that countries today have adopted unique approaches towards deradicalization according to the requirements of their cultural, political situation, and social specification. The aim of these practicing deradicalization programmes in Middle East and South East Asia, at a collective level, is to change the worldview of the affected persons. Private

sectors or at some places government and private sectors together adopted the approach of 'rehabilitation and re-education of the detainees'.

The failing war on terror on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border has also some structural causes such as exclusion of Taliban from Afghan government, public perception of Pakistan's policies as a key US ally, use of force as a priority option, continued US drone attacks, denial of any relief and transitional justice to the victims of military operation, issue of Afghan refugees, and lack of trust between US, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

There exists a clear linkage between the lack of human security and the phenomenon of extremism. Rise in extremism can lead to human insecurity and vice versa. The governments of South Asian states have not been able to provide their people with the basic, minimum human security since these states became independent. Governments and ruling classes, instead of focusing on dealing with the issues of human survival and development, embarked upon perpetuating their pro Pakistan and influence. Subsequently, no South Asian country has been able to free itself from discriminatory and exploitative policies, which increased insecurity and led to the rising number of communal and terrorist outfits. Despite the problems these outfits have created, no serious efforts Pakistan made by the governments or the civil society to curtail the rise in extremist trends at the initial stages. All of the regional states are facing the menace of extremism and terrorism in one or other form.

The South Asian region currently faces grave security threats due to the increasing extremism and terrorism. There are various factors that have led towards this situation.

The politics of violence and extremism in South Asia is mainly the result of faulty national policies and interference of external powers. The region's vast potential is hostage to unresolved inter-state and intra-state conflicts. In most of the states, the governments (either democratic or military) have failed in providing good governance and solving social problems such as unemployment, social injustice, and poverty. The political culture in these states was unable to meet the imperatives of globalization. In addition, instead of promoting unity and integration (both at national and regional levels) it led to ethnic solidarities and identification with religion and culture.

### **How tourism situation could improve in Pakistan**

The tourism sector is being overlooked by the successive governments and quite tiny amount is allocated in Public Sector Development Programme that hardly cater for its demands. At global level, Pakistan is wrongly projected in the media and tourists are advised not to visit this south Asian country, which offer four-season tourism opportunities.

It's not just the security issue that haunts tourism as there are so many other factors that add to the woes of this multi-billion dollar trade the world over.

Lack of infrastructure, facilities for the tourists, transport, discouraging response from official circles etc. are some of the prime areas that need to be improved on war-footing.

Until and unless this (tourism) industry is on a priority basis, Pakistan is not going to see it flourishing. Pakistan also needs to put in maximum resources in our tourism sector,

Pakistan is the most blessed country on the map of the world and stands unique in the comity of nations owing to its diverse cultures, rich archaeological heritage, remains of ancient civilizations including Gaddara and Indus, five out of 14 mountain peaks above 8000 metres, serene valleys, gushing rivers, vast deserts of Tharparkar and Cholistan.

What has been explored so far in terms of tourism in Pakistan is a tip of an ice-berg with a lot more still awaiting to be discovered.

Pakistan will plan to explore more sites in Murree, Punjab, Balochistan where, Pakistan hopes, a tremendous potential exists. He opined that promotion of tourism could help Pakistan and its people forge friendly relations with the people and governments of neighbouring countries. Tourism could also be put to new dimensions if Pakistan improves relations with other countries.

Pakistan is a rich country in its diversity, culture, and adventure tourism, as we have four main provinces and seven destinations – the Gilgit-Baltistan, NWFP, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad, and Kashmir and Islamabad – each has its own attractions and different cultures. When visiting these regions, you feel that you are in another country. Also we have, at the same time, different weather, and you can enjoy the four seasons travelling in one trip. For example, you can [go from] the extreme cold [to the] extreme hot – we have summer in the north, and winter in the south.

Pakistan is a unique destination [and] offers unique products for tourists. People visiting us enjoyed their stay [because of] our hospitality and what we offer them, and trust me, that no other destination in the region has the diversity that [is] available in Pakistan. The features from region to region [are] different; the language, the culture is also different; the appearance of the people is also different; so here you can enjoy and return home with strong experiences and [an] unforgettable trip.

Pakistan have the K2, which is the second-highest mountain in the world. The unique thing [is] that when you drive [by] bus, you can see from your window the K2, which is over 8,000 meters [in] height. This view is not available [at] any other place. Here also we have very beautiful enhancing valleys, rivers, and small villages; also deserts, forts, and hustling, bustling cities. On the seaside, resorts and hotels are offering wonderful accommodation and sea views with sea sports facilities. However, our main attraction is the adventure tourism in the K2.

### **Security situation for tourist in Pakistan:**

We can count on my fingers, the places that tourist don't advice, but we cannot count the places that is safe and wonderful. The foreign media is so against Pakistan; they publish so negative and fake news and exaggerate about Pakistan, which is not true, and they affect our tourism industry, so it's the media which presents the wrong pictures of Pakistan. Before this campaign in the foreign media, tourists were coming in good numbers, Yes, Pakistan have areas where some problems are happening and some issues in a very few parts of the country where tourists should not go; yes, Pakistan have problems in such places like [the] Swat Area, but [the] media do not say in detail which places are not safe – they say Pakistan in general, which is not true. Southern parts are totally secure, Punjab and the K2 area are secure, and there was no report in history about unsecured things happening. [The] mountain area [is] so beautiful, so clean. Most of the country [is] safe, and you can ask the people who came here and visited Pakistan – they will report to you how much they enjoyed [it], and they can give their remarks and ideas. If you ask those who came here, they will give you the correct story and not from the media.

Pakistan is receiving thousands of tourists from China and India coming here to Pakistan, simply because they don't trust and they don't listen to the media that shows Pakistan as a burning or dangerous country. They are coming and enjoying their stay and return with [a] very positive experience. Also, adventure tourists are coming because they know that Pakistan is a safe place, and because they are trusting when people told them [they] are welcome, they come from all parts of the world.

Adventure tourism in Pakistan is like Makah for religious tourism. Although in the region we have Nepal and other parts, but here we have huge mountains like the Eastern Himalaya and others. Over 8,000 meters [in] height, [the] longest chain of mountains, we have created incentives; they took the charges and reduced the fees to visit the mountains – 50 percent, this is one incentive – not a single bad event happened. Here you can do tracking, exploration, rafting, whatever, hiking. Just you are here in the most wonderful area, and you are free to enjoy it at your most.

Pakistan is unique! Situated in the heart of the South Asian sub-continent, it is a country with its own history and cultural heritage, fascinating in its own right. Pakistan was the site for one of the world's earliest human settlements, the great prehistoric Indus Valley Civilization, the crucible of ancient empires, religions and cultures.

The land of Pakistan ranges from lofty mountains in the north, the Karakoram and the Himalayas, through dissected plateaus to the rich alluvial plains of the Punjab. Then follows desolate barrenness of Baluchistan

and the hot, dry deserts of Sindh blending into miles and miles of golden beaches of Makran coast. Come and Explore the Treasures of Pakistan with us. A visitor to Pakistan is more than a tourist – to us he is an honored guest.

### **Competitive advantage of Pakistan over other countries:**

A country has to possess a competitive advantage in terms of what it can offer better than the other countries. The other part of the competitive advantage equation is that the advantage the country possesses needs to get translated and communicated in marketing terms to the rest of the world. The advantage normally comes from the resources it has, and, more than that, the quality and quantity of these resources. The three major resources are financial, physical and human ones. These in economic terms are also known as factors of production i.e. land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship.

the tourism potential in the Northern Areas is no secret. The beautiful landscape and the unique cultural heritage give the Northern Areas a competitive advantage in attracting tourists. So our question is not how to identify the tourism potential, but rather to consider how tourism can help conserve this unique natural and cultural heritage while also contributing to desired improvements in the quality of life in the Northern Areas. These are the general goals, as I see them, of ecotourism. In order to understand how ecotourism might help to achieve this potential, we need to understand just what ecotourism is. This convention is about sustainable tourism, so we must also understand what we mean by sustainable tourism, and what are the similarities and differences between sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

Gilgit Baltistan is, perhaps, the most spectacular region of Pakistan in terms of its geography and scenic beauty. Here world's three mightiest mountain ranges: the Karakoram, the Handukuch and the Himalayas – meet. The whole of Gilgit Baltistan is like a paradise for mountaineers, trekkers and anglers. The region has a rich cultural heritage and variety of rare fauna and flora. Historically, the area has remained a flash point of political and military rivalries amongst the Russian, British and Chinese empires. Immediately after the end of British rule in the sub-continent in 1947, the people of this region decided to join Pakistan through a popular local revolt against the government of Maharaja of Kashmir.

Five out of the fourteen mountain peaks with height of over 8000 meters including the K-2 (world's second heights peak) and some of the largest glaciers outside polar regions are located in Gilgit Baltistan. Acknowledging the vast potential of tourism and its effects on downstream industries, the Government of Pakistan as well as the Gilgit Baltistan Administration are focusing on tourism for creation of employment opportunities, achieving higher economic growth and to introduce to the outside world, "the hidden treasures" of Gilgit Baltistan.

Beautiful landscape, unique cultural heritage and rich biological diversity given the Gilgit Baltistan a competitive advantage in attracting tourists from all over the world.

The number of tourists visiting Gilgit Baltistan has steadily increased over the years, notwithstanding the dip-in figures immediately following 9/11. However, the challenge ahead is not merely to increase the number of tourists visiting Gilgit Baltistan but also to consider how tourism can be better promoted without affecting the natural and cultural heritage of the area, while also improving the quality of life of people to the desired levels.

Mohenjo-Daro was a city located in the south of Modern Pakistan in the Sind Province, on the right bank of the Indus River. It was built between four and five thousand years ago, and lasted until 3,700 BP. It was part of the Harrapan Civilization, and the city had at least 35,000 residents. Mohenjo-Daro means "mound of the dead". The city was approximately one square mile in size. In 1922-1927 large scale excavations at Mohenjo-Daro Pakistan re carried out by R. D. Banarjee and continued by M. S. Vats and K. N. Dikshit under the direction of Sir John Marshall. E. J. H. MacKay carried out further excavations from 1927 to 1931. Sir Mortimer Wheeler made small excavations in 1950.

As a result of this extensive work almost one-third of the area of the old city was exposed, revealing for the first time the remains of one of the most ancient civilizations in the Indus Valley. Typical of most large

and planned cities, Mohenjo-Daro had planned city streets and buildings. The settlement was thought to house roughly 5,000 people, and had houses, a granary, baths, assembly halls and to Pakistan. The city was divided into two parts, the Citadel included an elaborate tank or bath created with fine quality brickwork and drains; this was surrounded by a verandah. Also located here was a giant granary, a large residential structure, and at least two aisled assembly halls. To the east of the citadel was the Pakistan city, laid out in a grid pattern. The streets Pakistan re straight, and Pakistan drained to keep the area sanitary. The people of the city used very little stone in their construction. They used two types of bricks- mud bricks, and wood bricks, which Pakistan created by burning wood. They used timber to create the flat roofs of their buildings; there are brick stairways leading to the roofs of many houses. Some houses Pakistan small, and others Pakistan larger with interior courtyards. Most had small bathrooms. Potter's kilns, dyer's vats, as Pakistan as metalworking, bead making, and shell-working shops have all been discovered. The people Pakistan good at irrigation and flood control. Pakistan, when the Indus River changed its course around 3700 years ago, the civilization died.

In Balochistan there are many caves for cavers and tourists to visit especially the Juniper Shaft Cave, the Murghagull Gharra cave, Mughall saa cave, and Pakistan's naturally decorated cave, the Mangocher Cave. Pakistan is a member country of the Union International de Speleology (UIS).

The northern parts of Pakistan are home to several historical fortresses, to Pakistan and other architecture including the Hunza and Chitral valleys, the latter being home to the Kalash, a small pre-Islamic Animist community. [Punjab is also the site of Alexander's battle on the Jhelum River. The historic city of Lahore is considered Pakistan's cultural centre and has many examples of Mughal architecture such as the Badshahi Masjid, Shalimar Gardens, Tomb of Jahangir and the Lahore Fort. The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) also helps promote tourism in the country. Pakistan, tourism is still limited because of the lack of proper infrastructure and the worsening security situation in the country. The recent militancy in Pakistan's scenic sites, including Swat in Khybar Pakhtoon Kawa province, have dealt a massive blow to the tourism industry. Many of the troubles in these tourist destinations are also blamed on the frail travel network, tourism regulatory framework, low prioritization of the tourism industry by the government, low effectiveness of marketing and a constricted tourism perception. After these areas Pakistan being cleared off the militant groups in late 2009, the government, with financial support from the USAID, started a campaign to reintroduce tourism in Swat valley. Pakistan receives 500,000 tourists annually, with almost half of them heading to northern Pakistan

### **Strategies to improve tourism in Pakistan:**

2. Safety
3. Emergency evacuations
4. Easy bookings of hotels and resorts, train and air services, cabs etc.

Tourism is, in the current period, one of the areas that can provide regional and country, a profitable and economic development. Natural and anthropogenic potential which Romania has is necessary to be properly exploited, providing promotion and development of investment programs, able to attract a large number of tourists. The project is presenting a series of specific mountain tourism development through investment programs focused on strategic quality tourism services and protect the natural environment.

Airports are the gateway to the country. Facilities and handling provided at the international airports from a lasting impression on the foreign tourist. Our airports suffer from a number of drawbacks despite the vast improvements undertaken in recent years.

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the periodic training and education of personnel involved in handling immigration, security and health checks. Personnel at the airports would be encouraged to learn at least one foreign language. Suitable financial incentive will be provided for this purpose. Facilitation counters located in the immigration area will be manned by the personal of PTDC. Accredited

representatives of recognized travel agencies would be given identity cards valid up to airline and immigration counters.

Baggage handling and clearance system should be improved.

The tour operators will arrange insurance cover for the tourist groups handled by them.

The existing requirement of police registration and restriction of movement of foreigners would be removed except where specifically required under security considerations.

Most tourists visiting Pakistan require visas, which are issued by Pakistani Embassies or High Commissions in other countries. While implementation is satisfactory, visas are an irritant to tourism and add to the cost of a holiday. Visas for nationals from some

neighbouring states include considerable restrictions, which puts significant limitations on the development of regional tourism. However, as a part of its policy to facilitate tourism, the government has recently eased restrictions on visas.

The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation maintains 21 Tourist Information Centers at various sites across the country; in addition, there are information offices operated by provincial tourism authorities. However, the standard of service offered is variable and a rationalization of all centers is required, with staff training in foreign languages and customer relations. High-tech Tourist Information Centers of the kind available at Karachi International Airport, with e-mail, fax, and website facilities need to be established at the other major airports and city centers.

A website of 1500 pages showing Pakistanis scenic tourist sites and cultural heritage has recently been launched which will greatly enhance awareness both nationally and internationally.

There are approximately 41 tour operators in Pakistan that provide destination management services for domestic and foreign tourists. As their services are critical to the development of international tourism, they need to be treated as a primary sub-sector and supported accordingly.

Several areas of regulation impact negatively on tourism, such as the forbidden photography of bridges and airports, and restricted zones where trekkers require special permission to enter. These restricted areas could be limited and perhaps renamed permit zones. Tribal leaders may be involved in the development of  $\frac{1}{2}$  tourism activities in their areas.

Although Pakistan possesses world-class tourist attractions, the international tourist potential of areas such as the Swat Valley has been considerably reduced because of the lack of planning regulations, over-development and environmental degradation. Due to lack of co-ordination between the tourism industry and authorities in charge of natural, historical or religious sites, the tourism potential of such sites is not fully realized.

### **Conclusion:**

It's the only industry, which needed more and more exploration' (Zamir Sheikh)

Pakistan is a major tourist attraction because it is blessed with natural beauty and Historical places that can yield huge foreign exchange if properly and methodically Exploited. Tourism could become foreign exchange earning industry for the country.

Though Pakistan, has lately taken initiative but still there is dire need of tireless efforts to exploit this sector and to add more dimensions to attract the tourists.

No proper attention was paid to harness the God gifted opportunity to earn more and

More foreign tourists and foreign exchange which would open up new vistas of

Employment in the tourism sector. Moreover the tourists may find and explore the market of their interest in Pakistan.

Involvement of private sector was important to give boost to tourism. Private sector

Should be given not only tax exemption but they also should be provided with vast

Opportunities to invest and they must be facilitated also in terms of money; a network of five stars hotels and motels should be constructed at all tourists' spots and tourist

Operators may be provided necessary facilities, which on the one hand helped reduce unemployment while on the other harness foreign exchange.

Private sector should take initiative to develop and exploit all tourist attraction and Historical location in the province, which unfortunately, has suffered due to negative

### **Concept about its law and order.**

Good hotel industry acceptable to the international standards would give boost to the Tourist industry, which has suffered because of a number of reasons and one of them, was lack of proper accommodation for local as well as foreign tourists. At present there are about 4000 to 4500 rooms available in five star hotels throughout Pakistan, which were insufficient to the demand.

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