

Promoting Tourism in Pakistan:

Opportunities And Challenges

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Pakistan is home to 108 peaks above 7,000 meters and over 7,000 glaciers, more ^{than} ~~than~~ anywhere outside the polar regions, as per Pakistan Tourism Department (PTD). Pakistan is one of ^{country that} ~~country~~ those ^{doors} ~~doors~~ for tourism are opened throughout the year. Tourists can travel anywhere around the country easily. Pakistan is a country which has countless ~~pl~~ tourist places ranging from archaeological to modern infrastructure. Unfortunately, ^{successive} ~~governments~~ have paid no attention in promoting tourism in Pakistan. Moreover, ~~the~~ deficiencies in tourism department has further worsen the tourist places. According to official estimates, there is 75 per cent decline in foreign and domestic tourist from 2007 to 2022. Just like Switzerland, if government and common people take timely steps in promoting tourism, then Pakistan can do wonders in tourism industry. Therefore, this essay will explore about the significance of tourism in Pakistan. Later on, it will highlight opportunities of promoting tourism in Pakistan. Moving toward, challenges, ~~for~~ Pakistan is facing in promoting tourism. Afterwards, the solutions to dwindle those challenges. Lastly, it ~~will~~ ~~essay~~ will ~~understand~~ ~~the~~ discuss the Nepal's success in promoting tourism.

To begin with, promoting Archaeological sites is one of the major opportunities of promoting tourism in Pakistan. Majority of people are still

interested in studying Archaeology and history. Archaeologist ^{do} ~~perform~~ their research work after visiting historical places. With that, other people also keep interest in learning about the primitive people and each city, village and place of Pakistan is full of history and archaeological sites. Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harappa are also one of those ancient sites. ~~which~~ ^{even} If Pakistan promotes ^{such} ~~these~~ places, many tourists will show their interest in visiting such places. Clearly, archaeological sites ~~pro~~ is the opportunity to promote tourism in Pakistan.

Secondly, extravagance lifestyle of The Great Mughal Empire can be promoted. Mughals, who had spent might ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ their ^{to} ~~to~~ formidable life is also preserved in the Pakistan as a souvenir in the museum like Lahore Museum. Infrastructure developed on the ~~order~~ instructions of kings ~~was~~ is also present in the Lahore city. Lahore fort, Badshahi Mosque and Shalimar ^{garden} are few of those that can be promoted on the international arena. Interested tourists will be inspired to visit those museum and sites. Apart from this, various dynasties' mansions are also preserved which can be used to as an opportunity to promote tourism in Pakistan.

Thirdly, Pakistan is a land of diverse culture. Each culture holds immense significance and uniqueness. These multitude cultures are

characterised by unique languages, art works, social customs and historical influences. Gilgit-Baltistan's culture is a mix of Tibetan, Mongolian and central Asia influences. Sindhi cultures hinges on Indus valley civilisation. Balochi culture displays vibrant embroidery work. While, Pashtun are culture is based on tribal customs and Islamic traditions. Combining all these multiple ~~costs~~ cultural norms and values, Pakistan can utilise these opportunities to promote tourism.

Fourthly, Pakistan's northern region is full of distinctive mountain ranges like Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayas. With that being said, Pakistan has innumerable mountains peaks such as K-2 and Nanga Parbat. These peaks can be promoted in the international platform with that more mountaineers will come for summit. According to Pakistan Tourism Department approximately 1600 ~~was~~ foreign mountaineers came from 55 different countries for mountain summit in just 2023. ^{However, it is} ~~which~~ is expected that this number will increase to 2500 by the end of 2025. If Pakistan promotes its mountaineers camp and summits, then tourism in Pakistan can be promoted easily.

Fifthly, Pakistan has opportunity to promote its astonishing, beautiful and greener northern regions and areas. Hunza, Skardu, Naran and

Shugran, each of these areas carries different attractive landscapes. Various valleys, waterfalls and ~~trekking~~ ^{treks} ~~trails~~ are there that can mesmerise tourist ~~visitors~~. These spots have opportunities to attract more foreign and domestic tourist. If these opportunities are explored then tourism in Pakistan can surely be promoted by the tourist.

Sixthly, beaches and port cities can also be promoted. ~~and~~ Gadani beach and Cwadar port have potential to promote tourism in Pakistan. In Gadani beach, the opportunity is to establish scuba diving, boating and fishing in the beaches. These beaches are ~~stunning~~ untouched. Moreover, the unique industrial tourism in Gadani is the shipbreaking yard that is world's largest shipbreaking yard. Tourist ~~are~~ ^{who} visits Maldives and Dubai for beach ^{enjoyment} can be diverted to ~~the~~ Pakistan's coastal beach belt. According to World Bank Pakistan Report 2024, if Cwadar and Gadani are developed properly, the tourism industry could contribute 8% approximately to Pakistan's GDP by 2030 with coastal tourism. Ergo, ~~exploiting~~ ^{developing} coastal area ~~with~~ is one of the biggest opportunity for Pakistan to promote tourism.

Seventhly, if Pakistan government pays attention towards deserts, they can become major attractions for eco-tourism and adventure tourism. Thar Desert is rich in wildlife like peacocks and ~~deer~~ ^{deers} while Cholistan desert is famous for jeep rallies and

camel races. International adventure tourists and local thrill-seekers can be attracted towards Cholistan Jeep Rally and Thal Maggi Race in Balochistan. Every year foreigners arrive in Pakistan for jeep race. PTD needs to invest in deserts because these are not barren wastelands, they are landscapes full of thrill and adventure. Hence, promoting deserts is another opportunity to promote tourism in Pakistan.

Finally, the last opportunity to promote tourism in Pakistan is untapping the real potential of National Parks like Dasai National Park and Khunjerab National Park. These parks provide focuses on Eco-tourism like wildlife watching, nature hikes and glamping to the tourist. If local guides and rescue teams are allocated and promotion is done through social media, documentaries and global travel expos. Then, this opportunity can contribute more in Pakistan's GDP. Thus, promoting national park is the golden opportunity for Pakistan.

Previous paragraphs highlighted the opportunities of promoting tourism in Pakistan. Coming paragraph would shed some light on challenges associated with promoting tourism in Pakistan.

At the outset, Pakistan has been experiencing multilayered challenges in promoting tourism but the most cogent and convincing is instable economy. Promoting tourism in any country, the first pre-requisite is economic stability. Pakistan economic sector witnessed ups and downs, some of those contributors were external forces and some of those factors were internal threats. Change of Prime Minister within 3-years led to inconsistency in economic policy. Each successive government introduce new policies sidelining to the presented economic policy. Because, no prime minister has yet served their full ^{institute} five-year term since 2013 is the major ~~causes~~ of unstable economy and creating bottlenecks in promoting tourism in Pakistan.

Secondly, Political unrest and havoc is another instigator acting as a challenge in promoting tourism in Pakistan. After every 3 to 6 months, ~~the~~ mass protest is ~~also~~ carried out by the political parties. Sometimes those protest leads to massive destruction, damage to infrastructure and loss of lives. 9th May incident, organised by one of the most infamous political party led to excessive destruction throughout the country. Creating chaos and mayhem ~~in the~~ within peripheries of Pakistan. For which local tourist prefers to be at home and foreign ~~to~~ tourist avoid to visit in Pakistan thinking they might not be able to return their country safely. Clearly, political unrest is putting stumbling block in promoting tourism in Pakistan.

Rise in insurgencies and persistent militant attacks is the third challenge Pakistan is experiencing in promoting tourism. Pakistan was at war with USA and NATO forces in Afghanistan to end the ~~terrorist~~ terrorist activities and groups after 9/11 incident. After 20 years of war, terrorist did not come to an end. ~~With the help of~~ ~~intelligence~~ ~~and~~ currently, these insurgencies and militants are seeking help from terrorist groups ~~inhabitant~~ in Afghanistan soil. Attacks by these militants have created clouds of uncertainty ~~in the~~ in the Pakistan. Various operations are conducted but ~~still~~ still government is unable to tackle this issue. Just like, there is chaos in Malakand and districts of KPK and Pashtun Belts of Balochistan. Just in one week, around 19 soldiers ~~had been~~ ~~more~~ sacrificed their precious life in the Pashtun belts. So ~~the~~ Sadly, presence of militants, ~~and~~ their activities and rise in insurgencies are ~~reasons~~ ^{which have} ~~to~~ ~~been~~ created ~~in~~ ~~its~~ in promoting tourism in Pakistan.

Fourthly, tourist spots, places and hotels are completely unsafe for any tourist. ~~And,~~ Unfortunately, there is no ~~to~~ just last year, a foreign woman, wearing a shirt with Arabic calligraphy ~~was~~ was exploding in the market with her husband. ~~At~~ Meanwhile, some people in the crowd mistakenly believed that shirt had Quranic verses. Which later on led to mob surrounding her and called her blasphemous. That verses were, however, not

religious ~~result~~ ^{and} the situation escalated due to mis-
 -understanding and lack of awareness. Foreign
 tourist women were badly targeted and could
 have resulted in worse situation if ASP
 Shehriano Naqvi was not arrived ~~handy~~ on time.
 Such are the incidents in the tourist places and
 markets which put barriers for promoting tourism
 in Pakistan

~~have you~~

Have you ever visited to any tourist places
 and saw any ~~any~~ tourism facilitation centers? or
 even ~~come across~~ have you ever come across any
 tourist guide in the airport? The answer is no.
 Hence, tourism department is one of the ineffective
 and corrupt due to which Pakistan is facing series
 of issues in promoting tourism in Pakistan. Pakistan
 Tourism Department has consistently failed to meet its
 objectives due to lack of strategic planning and
 inadequate infrastructure. There is no coherent policy
 to attract and ~~protect~~ protect tourists. These blowbacks
 contribute to Pakistan's instability as to ~~attract~~ ^{attract}
 tourist despite having untapped potential. Hence.
 Thus, inefficient tourism department have also
 contributed to challenges of promoting tourism.

Despite early warnings by climate
 experts and meteorological departments, The tourism
 authorities failed to suspend tourism in vulnerable
 regions. As a result, tourist in Swat, Chitral,

Naran and other northern areas were left stranded, with damaged roads and bridges and washed-away hotels further ~~are~~ aggravating the chaos. There was no centralised communication system, no emergency helpline and no on-ground tourism officers that could have guided foreign and domestic tourists during the catastrophe. This incident ^{not} ~~only~~ only taken lives of humans but also damaged Pakistan's tourism credibility internationally. Clearly, unfavourable weather conditions have impeded Pakistan from promoting tourism.

Previous paragraphs singled out the challenges in promoting Tourism in Pakistan and coming paragraphs would suggest some pragmatic way forward to mitigate challenges and promote Tourism in Pakistan.

Starting with national security, Pakistan's states need to ensure and take strict actions against terrorism, extremism, separatism and insurgents. State can execute multiple operations against these groups like Zarb-e-Azb. It is also ~~re~~ high need of time to trace down the international and foreign mafia and agencies that are providing continuous ~~sup~~ of aids and supports through illicit means. Just like, Kulbhushan Jadhav, a Indian nation, who was kidnapped from Baluchistan, he was exporting data to India, and assist to the terrorism in order to create uproar and chaos within Pakistan. If

State carry out crack down against ~~the~~ such persons, proxies and agencies. Therefore, Pakistan's national security can be achieved and a peaceful and serene ~~enjoyed~~ country can be created. Clearly, promoting tourism in Pakistan.

Secondly, government to need increase development-to-GDP ratio because Pakistan has several areas which are undeveloped and deprived of road networks. Strategic planning needs to ^{be} created which can ensure a proper infrastructure and development projects. Doing works in patches and for short term ~~is~~ do not make any sense now. Tourist needs to ~~to~~ ~~to~~ spend continue their journey peacefully not with ~~unpleasant~~ ~~unpleasant~~ and complications. When proper investment on infrastructure and development occurred, journey and travel becomes easier. Hence, tourism can be easily promoted.

What if tourists are spending their luxurious time with their family ~~get~~ at beautiful and bird-boggling tourist ~~spots~~ spots and there, those tourist ~~get~~ disrespected by locals then what? the Pakistan as a state is portraying at global tourism platform? Just the Lahore Ichhra Market incident in 2021 is one of ~~the~~ those incident where a woman was considered as blasphemous. Therefore, it is essential for Government of Pakistan to edify

the local residents to respect and honor foreign and domestic tourists. ~~After~~ If local citizens are coached then Pakistan's ~~can~~ image can be improved and more tourists ~~can~~ would be interested to visit Pakistan, and those tourists bring dollars ~~inflow~~ and thus economy will be ameliorated. ~~Also~~ ^{also} enlightening citizens to ~~also~~ plays pivotal role in promoting tourism in Pakistan.

~~Therefore~~ ^{pro} Provinces need to revive their archaeological sites, and other tourist ~~pro~~ places is the last way out to promote ~~the~~ tourism in Pakistan. Each provinces should take their responsibility to promote their rich culture and heritage ~~places~~ through social media ~~platforms~~ ^{platform} and global tourism outlets. If province provide better packages to foreign tourists with full security at the subsidised visa and packages then overall tourism will be promoted in Pakistan and it would be most ~~favoured~~ ^{favoured} favourite and preferred destination for tourists to visit.

Pakistan needs to learn lesson from Nepal's successful tourism industry. Nepal's economy ~~is~~ ^{is} hinges on the tourism. As tourism contributes around 8% of Nepal's GDP under normal conditions and seasons. Nepal introduced "Visit Nepal Year 2020"

with a target of 2 million foreign tourist just in one year 2020. Just like Nepal has Himalayan trekking, cultural sites and ~~with~~ wildlife parks, Pakistan also has such places. That can be ~~used~~ promoted correctly in the international platform to attract tourists. And tourism industry can be proved fruitful for Pakistan if aforementioned measures and strategies are followed effectively and timely.

To cap it all, countries, for instance, Nepal, Maldives, and Switzerland are the quintessential countries whose GDP is ~~solely~~ solely hinges on tourism industry. Recent Covid-19, however, in Nepal has completely disturb the tourism industry as many businesses - hotels, restaurants and tour operators and guides - have reported unlimited booking cancellations. But after some time, when situation is controlled, they ~~industry~~ tourism industry will ~~so~~ definitely get boost. Ergo, Pakistan needs to maintain law and order situation, ~~in the tourism~~ ^{and} invest in infrastructure and development, ~~with~~ that will help Pakistan to promote tourism in Pakistan. Hence, this essay undermined the significance, opportunities, challenges and way forward, in the realm of promoting tourism industry in the Pakistan.