

## RE-IMAGINING THE CULTURAL TOURISM IN PAKISTAN: OBSTACLES AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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### ABSTRACT

*This study is an attempt to explore, investigate and analysis that Tourism is one of largest growing industries of the world which not only promotes but also enhances the competitiveness and attractiveness of the terminal as well as destinations. It also encapsulates that Pakistan with its diverse cultural heritage, fascinating landscapes, exclusive arts and craft, idiosyncratic combination of glorious rocks, eye catching places, abundance of matchless natural, historical and archaeological beauty holds a great potential for tourism. By carrying out research, this paper reconnoiters the challenges, obstacles and impediments faced by tourism in Pakistan i.e insufficient basic facilities and services to the tourist, worsening law and order situation, ramshackle tourism infrastructure, non-serious attitude of government towards Tourism, unexplored religious tourist places, ineffectualness of tourism institutions. The research paper suggests the strategies to ameliorate the plight of tourism in Pakistan. This paper further examines the questions as: what are the potential of cultural tourism in Pakistan? What are challenges being faced by cultural tourism in Pakistan? How to cope with these challenges by making Pakistan a better tourism destination?*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cultural Tourism, Potential, Pakistan, Development, Challenges, Strategies*

### INTRODUCTION

Culture is heart and soul of tourism as well as tourism is a gateway towards culture. Tourism is identified as one of largest growing industries of the world which not only promotes but also enhances the competitiveness and attractiveness of the terminal as well as destinations.<sup>1</sup> Though, cultural tourism is a prominent part of tourism industry.<sup>2</sup> Cultural tourism can be an inadvertent component of the tourism, where the cultural obsession is an inexorable portion of an individual's holiday. Therefore, tourism is the quintessence amphitheater to sneak and snoop into the cultural production.<sup>3</sup> Tourism is also considered as one of the main source for ameliorating and strengthening the economic growth. It may be regarded as an apparatus to generate the revenue as well as provision of employment potentials.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pakistan Observer*, News Desk January 25, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Abbasi Dorcheh, S & Mohamed, "Local Perception of Tourism Development: A Conceptual Framework for the Sustainable Cultural Tourism" *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Rabia Hayat, "Impacts of Cultural Tourism in Pakistan" *Journals of Archeology of Egyp/Egyptology*, PJAE 18, 7 (2021): 2798-2800.

<sup>4</sup> Samina Khalil et.al, "Role of Tourism in Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from Pakistan Economy" *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2007): 985-995.

The tourists travel to visit various sites in order to observe diverse climates, people, natural areas, customs, cultures, foods, languages, festivals, arts, monuments, historical buildings as well as archaeological places etc. Pakistan had great tourism potential, diverse cultural heritage, fascinating landscapes, exclusive arts and craft, climate peculiarity, gorgeous lakes, rugged mountains and a plethora of attractions and sites which gratify the requirements of local and international tourists.<sup>5</sup> Pakistan enriched with abundance of prehistoric to modern civilizations as well as cultures and also had great potential in tourism that could fulfill demands and needs of visitors.<sup>6</sup>

## DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The word “culture” is indistinct to define. The term of culture usually utilized in order to identify cuisine, religion, music, art, language, tribe, festivals etc.<sup>7</sup>

Culture is an ubiquitous portion of human life, practically, no human behaviors and thoughts are free from the impact and influence of culture. Culture can be defined as an art, a set of ideas, music, myths, dances, life style, believes, material, behaviors, non-material, set of linguistics, different people, architecture, spiritual, literature and a system of life.<sup>8</sup>

The World Bank defined the Culture “As the entire multifaceted of idiosyncratic spiritual, intellectual as well as emotional structures which portray a social group or society. It also includes modes of life, arts as well as letters, traditions, value system and beliefs.”<sup>9</sup>

## DEFINITION OF TOURISM

The definition of Tourism is to travel for leisure and business purposes outside from home or outer the normal environment. Moreover, tourism includes the services or activities which bring the experience of travelling. Tourists visit various places and experience diverse traditions and cultures including local art, food and languages. The Major factors which involve to motivate the people towards travel are: business, leisure, medical, sports and religious purposes.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, “Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>6</sup> Somia Tasneem, “Cultural Tourism in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges” *Journal of Pak Vision*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (2022): 1-12.

<sup>7</sup> Rabia Hayat, “Impacts of Cultural Tourism in Pakistan” *Journals of Archeology of Egyp/Egyptology*, PJAEE 18, 7 (2021): 2798-2800.

<sup>8</sup> E. Inskip, “Tourism Planning an Emerging Specialization”, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 54 (3) (1988), 360-72.

<sup>9</sup> World Tourism Organization, *City Tourism & Culture: The European Experience*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Moiz Imran, *Introduction to Tourism* (Islamabad: National Vocational & Technical Training Commission H-9, Islamabad, 2022, 3.

According to the World Organization of Tourism “Tourism contains the activities of individuals to travel as well as to stay at the sites outside traditional environment not beyond one year for business, leisure, and other commitments not associated to the isometrics of activities which remunerated within the site or place visited”.<sup>11</sup>

The Association of International Scientific Tourism Expertise encapsulates the term Tourism as “Specific activities or services which selected by optimum outside the home-based environment”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> World Tourism Organization (WTO), *The International Conference on Travel and Tourism Statistics in Ottawa (Canada) adopts a resolution defining the statistical needs of the tourism industry*, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> This definition of tourism defined by International Association of Scientific Expertise Tourism in 1981.

## CULTURE AND TOURISM

Culture and tourism are interlinked to the overall expansion of cultural places. It has reciprocally beneficial association that may strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of regions, sites and countries. Furthermore, culture is an increasingly imperative component of tourism product because it generates uniqueness in a worldwide marketplace. Moreover, culture as well as tourism is interconnected as of its palpable interactions as well as growing potential. It is important to mention here that the cultural tourism is recognized one of biggest as well as fastest rising international tourism marketplaces. Moreover, cultural as well as creative industry are utilizing for the amelioration of destinations.<sup>13</sup>

The terminology of culture and tourism may be encapsulated as it is not only the source of dissemination of various places, cultures, lifestyle, traditions, customs, climates and natural beauties but also creates transformation and awareness among the local community about their inborn legacy.

## CULTURAL TOURISM IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan has a gigantic potential of tourism because the country has very rich historical, religious & cultural heritage and bestowed with abundance of matchless natural beauty, idiosyncratic combination of glorious rocks, eye catching places and sports, deserts, succulent farms, rivers, lakes, mosques, valleys and archaeological sites enriched with welcoming and convivial people. All these captivations make the country a cogent tourist destination.<sup>14</sup>

Sindh is well-known for craftsmanship i.e. Rugs, Ajraks as well as musical instruments etc. whereas the Punjab is famous for its worth-seeing hilly areas, historical sites and rivers. Ziarat is known as it is considered the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest Juniper forest of the world. Moreover, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) had a diverse landscape as well as solid agricultural farms.<sup>15</sup>

Further, the Pakistan is considered as a home of adventure paramours as there are three world's largest ranges, Karakoram, the Hindukush, and Great Himalaya in Pakistan that are world's heaviest attentiveness of high peaks, are famous as the most stunning parts of country. Moreover, this exceptional beauty attracts the trekking and mountaineering. Furthermore, Pakistan's area of Swat and Kalam is famous as Switzerland of Asia. Moreover, Pakistan is also

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<sup>13</sup> Rabia Hayat, "Impacts of Cultural Tourism in Pakistan" *Journals of Archeology of Egyp/Egyptology*, PJAEE 18, 7 (2021): 2798-2800.

<sup>14</sup> Qamar Farooq, "Cultural Tourism in Punjab, Pakistan" *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research(IJAMSR)*, Vol. 1, Issue 5, July, 2018. Jawad Khan et. al, "Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, But Still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022): 1-11.

<sup>15</sup> Abdul Moiz Imran, *Introduction to Tourism* (Islamabad: National Vocational & Technical Training Commission H-9, Islamabad, 2022), 5.

gifted with various tourist attractions such as Kalam, Swat, Malam Jaba, Balakot, Shangla, Ayubia, Murree and Chitral etc.<sup>16</sup>

In Pakistan, there are a lot of ancient and antique archaeological sites of diverse old civilizations like the Gandhara civilization, the Buddhists i.e. Pushkalavati and Takht Bhai, Taxila, Indus Valley , Mohenjo Daro, Harapa as well as Mughal empire and because of these heritage and historical sites, Pakistan has become ethically, geographically and historically diverse and a cogent destination for tourists.<sup>17</sup>

In case of Adventure tourism, there are worth-seeing areas in all over country like northern areas, glaciers, powerful peaks, rivers as well as southern areas such as Gwadar Beach, Cholistan Desert, most famous tombs in Punjab as well as Sindh.<sup>18</sup>

Pakistan is also a cogent tourist destination for cultural and heritage lovers because of the sites of historical and archaeological significance in the earliest civilizations in Pakistan. The country is also historically as well as geographically diverse and has a number of heritage and historical sites. Moreover, the multi-culture state provides various customs, festivals, and cultures for gratification, recreation and excursion of the visitors.<sup>19</sup>

## FACTORS LEADING TO AFFECT TOURISM

### Insufficient Basic Facilities and Services to the Tourists

The repute and image of a country can be gauged from its ability to extend the basic facilities to the visitors/tourists especially the foreign tourists. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan had a prodigious potential in tourism having historical, archaeological and natural beauty. The factors which contributed to bring the tourist industry despondent are the insufficient basic facility i.e. ATM machines, internet services, VISA as well as credit card acceptance, non-availability of world class restaurant chains etc. The Govt. of Pakistan should take necessary steps to ameliorate the plight of tourism in Pakistan.<sup>20</sup>

### Worsening Law and Order Situation

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<sup>16</sup> Samina Khalil et.al, “Role of Tourism in Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from Pakistan Economy” *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2007): 985-995. Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, “Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132. *The Express Tribune*, July 18, 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, “Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132. *The Express Tribune*, July 18, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> M. Kamran, S. Ilyas, “Challenges and Opportunities for Hospitality and Tourism Sector of Pakistan” (2013), 82.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, “Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132. M. Kamran, S. Ilyas, “Challenges and Opportunities for Hospitality and Tourism Sector of Pakistan” (2013), 82. *The Express Tribune*, July 18, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Jawad Khan et. al, “Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, but still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022), 1-11.

The foreign tourists are not given preference to visit those countries where the law and order situation is not secure and stable. The safety as well as security of the tourist is an essential and integral part of tourism development. Law and order situation is one of the major obstacles in the growth and development of tourism industry in Pakistan because the safety and scarce amity condition has become prime issues to promote tourism in country.<sup>21</sup>

### **Ramshackle Tourism Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is indispensable for extending excellence in tourism industry to attract the visitors/tourists. The tourist offerings of any country are imperfect without infrastructure. It is important to mention here that the airports, road transport, flights, railway tracks, road access, restaurants, services, accommodations facilities i.e. motels, hostels, youth hostels, tour operators, shops, places and sites of tourist attraction are the essential and integral components of infrastructure.<sup>22</sup>

The condition of road as well as connected infrastructure of Pakistan has become dilapidated because of scarcity of funds as well as corruption. Moreover, the Govt. of Pakistan is not giving preference to the far flung areas of Pakistan due to which a lot of tourist potential became inaccessible.<sup>23</sup>

### **Difficulties in Acquiring Visas**

Due to security threats as well as unstable geopolitical situation, tourists might not get the visas easily for Pakistan. Furthermore, this issue becomes so precarious especially when the tourists/visitors come from India to Pakistan.<sup>24</sup>

### **Non Serious Attitude of Government towards Tourism**

Most of the presentable locations have become un-presentable and deplorable because of the non-serious attitude of Pakistan's government towards development of tourism industry. Due to insufficient facilities, the tourists are compelled to establish camp in open air and cook themselves. For example the area of Tolipeer is well-known tourist spot in Kashmir, Pakistan

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<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, "Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>22</sup> Qadir Bakhsh Baloch, "Managing Tourism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Chitral Valley" *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, Vol. 2 (2007): 169–190. Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, "Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>23</sup> Jawad Khan et. al, "Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, but still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022), 1-11. Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, "Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, "Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.



whereas due to lack of interest of Govt. this area is often beleaguered. The condition of road structure is dilapidated and there is no hotel or any accommodation for the visitors or tourists.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Murad Ahmed et. al., "Tourism in Pakistan, Challenges and Opportunities" *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, Vol. 2 No. 3(2022), 130-137.

## Unexplored Religious Tourist Places

Pakistan is bequeathed with a lot of religious places, particularly Sikhism, Buddhism as well as Christianity. Moreover, Pakistan had the initial Buddhist places within 300 BC as well as 200 AD. Furthermore, Pakistan had also the most famous Buddhist landmarks 200 to 600 BC i.e. Jaulian Monastery and Jindal, Sirkap Temple. Moreover, the tomb of Baba Guru Nank is also one of the renowned and esteemed religious place in Pakistan. Baba Guru Nank was the founding father of Sikh religion”. Further, there are also three prominent Gurdwaras in Pakistan i.e. Gurdawara Rorri Sahib in Aimanabad, Gurdawara Panjaa Sahib in Hassan Abdaal, and Gurdawara Darbar Sahab at Kartarpur, Sialkot. Moreover, despite its appeal and diversity, Pakistan never entirely explored industry on sustainable basis.<sup>26</sup>

## Ineffectualness of tourism institutions

The management and development in tourism is a sole responsibility of Provincial as well as Federal Government. Moreover, Federal and Provincial Government had its own departments of Tourism. The Federal Tourism Ministry was abolished through 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment due to which there are innumerable challenges related to tourism development. The newly established institution has not the potential to promote research, archaeology, innovative growth and cultural tradition.<sup>27</sup>

## Pessimistic Portrayals of Pakistani Media

The image of Pakistan has been tarnished globally by the media’s focus only to highlight the violence, tragic accidents, and other social issues of Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan has never been produced as valuable product in connection with tourism attractions, despite bestowing with rich historical, archaeological, natural as well as cultural possessions. Moreover, these possessions may significantly and substantially produce an emblem for the tourism industry of Pakistan.<sup>28</sup>

## HOW TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN PAKISTAN

### To develop Positive Image for Tourism Industry of Pakistan

First of all, the Government of Pakistan should formulate strategy to create positive image of country as a stunning tourist destination. The concerned tourism organization must

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<sup>26</sup> Jawad Khan et. al, “Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, but still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022), 1-11. Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, “Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>27</sup> Somia Tasneem, “Cultural Tourism in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges” *Journal of Pak Vision*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (2022): 1-12.

<sup>28</sup> Jawad Khan et. al, “Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, but still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022), 1-11.



play a pivotal role to create maximum confidence of local and foreign tourists towards tourism contribution by ameliorating the image and repute of tourism industry.<sup>29</sup>

### **Accessibility to the Basic facilities**

There are insufficient basic facilities i.e. Banking facilities such as ATM as well as visa card in the northern areas of Pakistan due to which the tourists especially the foreigners are facing great inconvenience. Therefore, the Government should take necessary measures to provide the basic facilities i.e. ATM machines, internet services, VISA as well as credit card acceptance and world class restaurant chains etc.<sup>30</sup>

### **Safety and Security Issues**

Law and order situation is one of the gigantic challenges, which the Pakistan tourism is facing, not only for the people of Pakistan but also for the tourists who are visiting country. Pakistan was the innocuous country till 2005. Therefore, the Govt. of Pakistan must be taken strict security measures in order to maintain the law and order situation especially at the tourist places. These measures will increase the confidence of tourists and would pervade new vistas in the tourism industry.<sup>31</sup>

### **Development in Road Infrastructure**

Development in road infrastructure is essential to attract the tourists. The condition of the road of Swat, Kaghan and Naran, Lake Saif ul Malook especially the road leading to lake Saif ul Malook is deplorable and needs to be developed. Due to the pathetic condition of roads, the tourists are compelled to use Jeep and the Jeep Mafia is over charging the rent of jeeps. Therefore, the Government of KPK should take necessary steps to improve the aforesaid road infrastructure so that the tourist may not be left on the mercy of Jeep Mafia.<sup>32</sup>

### **Formulating Short and Long Term Policies to ameliorate the plight of Tourism Department**

It is a plain fact that during summer vacations the rush of tourists is unprecedented that led to acute shortage of hotel accommodation as well as over charge of hotel management. The

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<sup>29</sup> Muhammad Nasim Mustafa, Role and Impact of Human Resources in Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Pakistan (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Jawad Khan et. al, "Pakistan's Tourism Industry: Full of Potential, but still Lagging Behind, *Research Square*, Vol. 1 (2022), 1-11.

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad Nasim Mustafa, Role and Impact of Human Resources in Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Pakistan (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> Rabia Hayat, "Impacts of Cultural Tourism in Pakistan" *Journals of Archeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, PJAEE 18, 7 (2021): 2798-2800. *The Express Tribune*, July 18, 2021.

tourists especially the foreign tourists are facing great inconvenience which may create negative image of the country. In order to curb this issue, the Government should formulate short term and long term policies.<sup>33</sup>

### **Pursuance of a Professional Approach to Attract Foreign Tourists.**

There is a need to inculcate professional training of the staff of tourism departments operated under the patronage of Provincial and Federal territory for provision of maximum facilities and services to the tourists especially foreign tourists on reasonable prices because the nonexistence of training and tourism culture in the country is leading to corruption, inefficiency and irresponsibility on the part of concerned staff of department of tourism. Unlike China, UAE, India and Sri Lanka, where the culture of tourism is existed, one can gauge the non-existence of appropriate work ethics as well as enactment of profession approach for attracting the foreign tourists.<sup>34</sup>

### **Amelioration in Health and Hygiene Issues:**

Most of the population of Pakistan is facing great inconvenience to get safe drinking water. Therefore, there is a need for provision of hygienic foodstuff and safe drinking water especially at the tourist places. The Government of the Pakistan should pay special attention to upgrade the arrangements of foodstuff, drinking water, garbage system, sanitation and hospital condition especially at the tourist sites to attract the tourists.<sup>35</sup>

### **Provision of Adequate Facilities to the Tourists**

In order to promote tourist industry as well as homegrown tourism, the Govt. and other relevant stakeholders must be extended the adequate facilities and services such as better hygienic, safety, security, cogent infrastructure and accommodation for the attraction of tourists. These steps be taken on priority basis.<sup>36</sup>

### **Dissemination of Natural Resources through Media**

Pakistan bestowed with abundance of natural resources and heritage places whereas regrettably the outside world is not well aware about the Pakistan's oldest civilization, therefore,

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<sup>33</sup> *The Express Tribune*, July 18, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Irshad Arshad et. al, "Pakistan Tourism Industry and Challenges: A Review", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), 121–132.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Nasim Mustafa, *Role and Impact of Human Resources in Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Pakistan* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan, 2018).

the concerned quarters must be taken immediate steps to promote and maintain the heritage places to attract the tourists through media.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The culture and tourism is not only the well-organized system of learning about various countries but also a source of dissemination of various places, cultures, lifestyle, art, traditions, customs, foods, languages, festival, climates and natural beauties as well as bring the individuals of various cultures together through acquaintance, association, mutual understanding and adoration. Pakistan had gigantic tourism potential, diverse cultural heritage, fascinating landscapes, exclusive arts and craft, climate peculiarity, gorgeous lakes, rugged mountains, pre-historic to modern civilizations and a plethora of attractions and sites which gratify the requirements of local and international tourists. These attractions and captivations made the country a cogent destination for tourist but the insufficient basic facilities and services to the tourist, worsening law and order situation, ramshackle tourism infrastructure, non-serious attitude of government towards Tourism, unexploration of religious tourist places, ineffectualness of tourism institutions are the major challenges which affect the tourism industry in Pakistan due to which the international tourists are not giving preference to the country for visit. In order to attract the local and foreign tourists and to ameliorate the plight of tourism in Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan and other stakeholders must take concrete steps by ensuring safety and security of the visitors especially foreign tourists, providing the basic facilities to the tourists, formulating short and long term policies to ameliorate the plight of tourism department, upgrading the infrastructure of transport i.e. airports, railways and roads, disseminating of natural resources through media, conserving well-coordinated assimilation of all available resources as well as adopting the tools and techniques followed by the other countries to attract the tourists.

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<sup>37</sup> Rabia Hayat, "Impacts of Cultural Tourism in Pakistan" *Journals of Archeology of Egyp/Egyptology*, PJAE 18, 7 (2021): 2798-2800.