

## PAKISTAN'S TOURISM POLICIES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: AN ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Pakistan has been a known tourist destination for decades. The current ranking of the country is 101<sup>st</sup> out of 119 destinations all over the world as listed by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). However, in 2023, Pakistan was declared by UNWTO as the best performing touring country all over the world as one million tourists visited Pakistan in the first nine months of 2023. Pakistan tourism industry has vast growth potential due to its picturesque natural beauty, high peaks, rivers, sea, waterfalls, and cultural and historical heritages. Despite its potential, the tourist country faces a number of challenges. The public and private partnerships (PPP) have laid down certain policies and regulatory frameworks to rectify those challenges. This will help Pakistan generate more revenue through tourism. This paper highlights the gaps in the policies and their implementation, lack of resources and interest and it contributes to presenting an overall scenario, and offering recommendations for further improvements by looking into the policies and regulations being adopted by the top ten tourist countries all over the world. The authors hope that the recommendations will help unlock Pakistan tourism industry's full potential.*

**Keywords:** *Pakistan Tourism, Tourism Policies, Regulatory Frameworks, Implementation Challenges, Potential Development*

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is regarded as an activity with a specific aim to entertain oneself. Usually, the inbound/international and domestic tourists tour various destinations during holidays. They prefer to tour hill stations, skiing resorts, beaches, valleys, lakes, etc. for the purpose of relaxation and preservation of their golden time in their memories. However, nowadays, historical, cultural, and medical tourism types have also emerged and chosen by the tourists with a goal to educate them and to undergo various affordable treatments the destinations are popular for. Pakistan is also one of popular destinations and mostly inbound tourists travel to witness the natural beauty of the high peaks, such as K2, Nanga Parbat, lakes like Saif ul Muluk, Ata Lake, Ratti Gali Lake, Hunza Lake and such others, valleys like Kaghan in KP, Neelum valley in Azad Kashmir, Hunza valley in Gilgit, Baltistan, Swat valley and Ziarat valley in Baluchistan.

The United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared heritage sites such as Moen Jo Daro (the archaeological ruins of a 5,000 year old civilization) in Sindh, Takht-i-Bahi (the Buddhist ruins of a former city), Taxila as the most favourite heritage site (the ancient ruins of Ghandara civilization), ancient graveyards of Makli in Thatta, Sindh, Sahr-i-Bahlol (the remains of a neighbouring city to Takht-i-Bahi and Rohtas fort (a 16<sup>th</sup> century fort), Lahore fort and Shalimar gardens and the Karakorum Highway, the eighth wonder of the world. Not only has this, but a number of tourists taken trips to Pakistan for enjoying the culture and cuisines of the five provinces. Recently, Medical tourism has also been taking place especially by the cancer patients who visit Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital, Lahore. This hospital has also received the Medical Tourism Award in January 2025. Another hospital i.e. the Agha Khan Hospital in Karachi has also been a choice of many visitors from abroad for various treatments.

Thus, it can be said that Pakistan's tourism is gaining momentum after the COVID-19 Pandemic so much so that in 2023, the country was declared as the best performing touring destination and its total

contribution to Gross Domestic Products (GDP) had been US\$ 3.402 billion. In 2024, Pakistan earned \$1.3 billion in foreign exchange revenue, and according to the World Bank and Statista Market Forecast, the travel and tourism sector's total contribution to Pakistan's GDP was 5.7 percent and 4.79 percent jobs were created. In 2020, it was 4.4 percent due to COVID. In 2023, 4.73 million jobs (6.7 percent) were created to let the locals benefit from the tourism industry. This is projected to reach revenue of US\$4,261.00m in 2025 with an expected annual growth rate of 6.75 percent from 2025 to 2029. However in spite of this positivity and gradual rise in the inbound travellers' arrival and Pakistan's potential and diverse attraction, Pakistan is ranked as 101<sup>st</sup> out of 119 tourist destinations all over the world as its tourism sector is confronted with a number of challenges that have caused severe damage and have been an obstruction to let the tourism market grow and generate more revenues.

## **Research Objectives**

This paper aims to investigate Pakistan's tourism policies, and regulatory frameworks in view of the challenges it faces, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and specific areas for improvement and development with the help of a bilateral cooperation between the public-public and private sectors in order to overcome the upheavals.

## **Research Questions**

1. What challenges has Pakistan's tourism industry faced?
2. What policies and regulatory frameworks are being focused to overcome the challenges and to develop the tourism sector for sustainable growth?

It is mainly a descriptive-analytical research that will focus on a comprehensive review of existing literature to collect information about Pakistan's tourism challenges, policies, and regulatory

frameworks and to objectively analyse them in order to come up with impactful solutions for sustainable growth.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The research limitations are highlighted as under:

**Data limitations:** The authors have based this paper only on available online data related to the challenges Pakistan is confronting as a tourist destination and its policies and regulatory frameworks to resolve the issues. The authors could have made it a triangulation research by asking the tourists to fill in a questionnaire, field study and interviews of a few service providers.

**Methodological limitations:** The authors have focused only on making it a descriptive-qualitative analysis. By turning it into a triangulation study, the researchers could have made it a combination of qualitative-quantitative analysis to make it more objective and authentic.

**Temporal limitations:** The authors have discussed and analysed the current scenario of the challenges, policies and regulatory frameworks as the main goal of this research. The future strategies and challenges are slightly touched upon. A more in-depth analysis discussing the future prospects could have given this analysis more scope.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Ahmed and Abbas (2022) mention that in order to present Pakistan to the world as one of the best destinations, Pakistan launched programs such as "Emerging Pakistan" and "Amazing Pakistan" to improve the country's image as a tourism destination. They further report that the value of media in boosting tourism in Pakistan cannot be overstated. People who use social media in Pakistan are rapidly promoting the most alluring and engaging websites in the country. Pakistan Tourism Ministry has launched 'The Citizen Portal' in order to lodge complaints about mismanagements and social issues. This

plan has been considered very effective as the future strategies are laid down to resolve the serious issues. Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) was incorporated in 1970; it offers off and on the tour discounted packages to attract the tourists. Comparatively, Pakistan is a cheaper tourist destination, the travellers enthusiastically avail themselves of such opportunities. 'Chalo Pakistan' (Lets go to Pakistan) is also a registered licensed company that offers various types of tours to let the country's economy grow. PTDC is a state run corporation that arranges tours with travel and accommodation facilities.

Hayat and Azmatullah (2024) report that a Master Plan' in 2000 was prepared by the Government of Pakistan in coordination with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to enhance tourism in Pakistan especially to develop the historical heritage sites and their maintenance. In view of this, Pakistan has also prepared a thirty-year development plan starting from 2000 to 2030. Earlier, in 1990, former Prime Minister, also took deep interest in upgrading tourism by improving the infrastructure, roads, and tourist sites. In 2018, the then Prime Minister, initiated a one million tree plantation campaign to make the country greener and to overcome the serious issue of deforestation due to the burning of the fossil fuels.

However, a continuous unstable political scenario hampers the implementation of the plans and has, thus been considered a great challenge. It has been observed that with the change in administration and the ministers' portfolios, the ongoing plans are usually sent in the cold storage and thus, are frozen for the time being. Sadly speaking, the new administrations come up with new policies and new regulatory frameworks instead of carrying out what was initiated by the outgoing government and thus, this practice is passed on to the successors. Hayat and Azmatullah (2024) also pinpoint that another big challenge is security threat and insufficient safety measures for generally all the tourists and especially for the foreigners touring Pakistan as inbound travellers. It is because of the differences in

culture mostly the dressing, food and drink consumption incite nonstop threats by the terrorists and extremists.

Moreover, a lack of coordination among all departments such as Archaeology, Transportation, Waste Management, Marketing, Environmental Protection, Hospitality Management, Finance, and Religious affairs are some of them that need to work in collaboration with each other to make the best of the tourism potential. The Daily Dawn (2019) in a report titled as *'Foreign tourists face several problems concede tour operators'* that many foreigners are scared of touring Pakistan as they face cultural problems as well as they are deceived by the local shopkeepers and the local drivers. They are also overcharged for the services provided to them. This issue results into Tour Phobia. For the last five years, a popular hill station, Murree, has become very infamous due to the hooliganism and harassment incidents by the hotel owners who do not even hesitate to physically mishandle the tourists. Alex, a travel blogger on Instagram, says, "Pakistan is not an easy country to travel in". The newspaper suggests that law and order situation has to be paid attention to if Pakistan has to present an image of a peaceful tourism friendly destination. It is also reported that lack of resources such as no electricity or heavy load shedding in most parts of the Northern areas, road blockages after landslides and muddy roads, lack of proper hygienic food availability and restroom facilities are some of the problems being faced by the domestic and inbound tourists.

For example, uneven or no metalled roads to reach the famous Lake Saif-ul-Muluk and Lalazar in Kaghan valley, Ratti Gali in Neelum valley in Azad Kashmir and lack of proper transportation to reach the hot favourite spots such as from Kael to Uren Kale in Neelum Valley and many spots in the Kaghan and Hunza valleys. However, it would not be out of place to mention that due to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the motorways and tunnels to reach the Swat valley and Kaghan valley have been built and have made the travel speedy and comfortable and easy access to the heart throbbing natural beauty of these places. Reaching to Babusar Top in the

Kaghan valley has been made easy and from there the tourists now can enter Gilgit, Baltistan up to the high elevated Karakorum highway also known as the Eighth wonder of the world only due to newly built highest paved road as a part of the Asian Highway AH4.

In order to leverage Pakistan's breath-taking natural beauty, the State has two organisations to regulate tourism. They are Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) both function independently in the absence of the Ministry of Tourism. PTDC has been assigned to serve as the secretariat and implementation body of the NTCB that serves as a platform to coordinate at the federal and provincial levels according to newsletters published by the PTDC in 2019 and 2022. The rectification of the serious issues, reporting of thematic working groups, chalking out institutional and regulatory reforms, technical assistance, and overseeing the increase of the visa facilities and investment opportunities in tourism sector are main tasks that have been assigned to NTCB and it has so far performed these tasks accordingly. The most outstanding frameworks are the National Tourism Strategy (NTS) for 2020-2030 that is targeting the achievement of the set goals mainly the enhancement of the Tourism sector in order to make it as one of the most thriving industries for revenue generation.

Campaign and Marketing are in action through bloggers, advertisements, and posts on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and such other social media platforms as a part of the NTS strategic policy. The developments of National Minimum Standards (NMS) have also been shared with all stakeholders that also emphasize the issuance of accreditation and certification programmes.

The promotion of Religious Tourism has also been one of the main concerns. The Kartapur Corridor was constructed to facilitate the Sikh pilgrims across the world to visit their holy sites especially of their spiritually leader i.e. Guru Nanak's, birthplace. Another effort to restore and open a 1000-years old Hindu temple in Sialkot has received international coverage. The PTDC newsletters 2019 and 2022

state that because of the initiatives taken, an increase in the tourists' arrival after the Pandemic 2019 has been noticed and globally, the image has improved. Pakistan has also become very active in participating in the international tourism exhibitions.

Moreover, the employment in this sector has also added to overcome the unemployment issue as PTDC hotels, forest rest houses, and motels have employed permanent staff to facilitate the travellers. The theme of the 2019 World Tourism Day (WTD) was 'Tourism and Jobs: A better Future for all', laid importance to help overcome unemployment problem. However, the 2022 Newsletter mentions that the PTDC has started the privatization of the state run hotels, motels and guesthouses by selling them to the private sectors due to the lack of resources at the state end. This step has been initiated in order to let the private companies supervise these properties in a better manner in order to facilitate the tourists and to create more jobs with good salaries. A constant vigilance and optimizing the use and reuse of the tourist land are also one of the top priorities to enhance tourism. PTDC also celebrates the World Tourism Day (WTD) every year on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September. To commemorate the WTD, seminars, conferences, campaigns and tourism related activities such as Walk a Cause, cycling rally and sports competitions like rock-climbing for the travellers are held. In 2019 in Islamabad, one such rock-climbing competition was organized including a race in which 300 students of Islamabad schools participated with great enthusiasm (PTDC, 2019, 2022).

This paper does not focus on the climate change challenges like land sliding, melting of the glaciers, torrential rains, cloud bursting, and hot and humid summer and intense cold winter as they are not specific to Pakistan, however; the climate change issues are being faced by the entire world including the World top- ten destinations and all are working seriously to resolve them. Another serious challenge that Pakistan meets is the language barrier as the tourists come from different parts of the world and speak different languages. English language thus, serves the purpose of a lingua franca.

However, the majority of the service providers involved in this industry is incompetent to converse in English, which is the sole language as a means of communication by the inbound tourists particularly. The locals who can speak English to some extent cannot be fully understood due to the poor accent, and thus, cannot communicate properly as they lack the sharing of a common language. In Pakistan, Urdu is a lingua franca and the other regional languages are not spoken or comprehended by the foreigners and thus, this language barrier causes frustration especially when the travellers have lost their tracks and cannot reach to their hotels/guest houses. Moreover, the failure to understand Urdu and other local languages is the root cause to fully understand and appreciate the Pakistani culture and cuisine.

This literature review shows that the prior research has dealt with the challenges Pakistan tourism sector faces. However, not all challenges are discussed in details. Moreover, no research is available comparing Pakistan with other top ten destinations like France, Greece, Turkiye and the USA or any South, Southeast Asian and Fareast countries like India, Thailand and Japan. The presenter aims to touch upon in the following section, some of the major challenges being faced by Pakistan and the top-ten destinations and how these countries and Pakistan meet them.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Pakistan's Tourism Sector and Challenges**

Pakistan is a land with diverse tourism attraction. The country is more or less comparatively as magnificent and exquisite as the other top ranking destinations are, yet the irony of fact is that it is not toured by as many travellers as it should have been. It is most probably due to the challenges the tourism sector is confronted with. Some of the worth mentioning challenges in view of the literature review and the Tourism Generis website's position paper written after consultation with Pakistan Tourism Forum (PTF) and Sustainable Tourism Foundation Pakistan (STFP) in March, 2017 are summarized below

that need immediate attention to be looked into:

***Depleted Infrastructure:*** A well-maintained infrastructure in the destination is always appreciated and it attracts the domestic and inbound tourists. Yet, uneven roads, buildings and hotels without basic facilities, absence of road signage, absence of money exchangers and banking/ATM facilities, inadequate number of restrooms and eating facilities by the motorways especially are some of the graving issues that need immediate attention to let this industry thrive.

***Sense of insecurity due to the cultural differences and terrorism:*** The inbound tourists hesitate to tour Pakistan, as majority of them feel insecure. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism such as bomb blasts, suicidal attacks, kidnappings, physical attacks, etc., are the real threats to the foreigners particularly. Furthermore, the women foreigners' dressing and the foreigners' drinking habits are usually disapproved and sometimes, they are attacked. Thus, the foreign visitors think twice before they choose Pakistan as their destination.

***Political issues:*** Pakistan is in a tight grip of political turmoil. Political issues like unstable governments and change of policies, protests, blocking of roads, etc., mark a dent on the tourists' influx, and thus, the sector suffers from financial loses.

***Climate changes:*** Accidental calamities such as floods, torrential rains, humid climate, melting of glaciers, cloudbursts also cause the low revenue generation.

***Language and communication barriers:*** Most of the locals' inability to communicate in English with the international tourists poses many problems such as the inbound tourists' inability to follow the directions to a location or to express their needs and the service providers' inability to get the messages across. The fact is that English language is used as a lingua franca globally and Urdu language is a spoken as a national language and it has the status of being used as a lingua franca in Pakistan. There are more than thirty regional languages spoken in Pakistan and Urdu besides other regional

languages is spoken as a language of communication. Hence, this challenge hinders the tourists' choice for Pakistan as a destination.

***Air, water and waste pollution:*** Overuse of the plastic cutlery and crockery, burning of the wood, less number of garbage bins and improper disposal of the garbage into the rivers, lakes and the sea are some of the issues that cause water pollution and the greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions that are badly affecting health, polluting air and water quality causing environmental degradation and also are harmful for the humans, wild and marine lives.

***Lack of coordination:*** Tourism related departments and public-private sectors lack coordination and collaboration with each other. Non serious attitude of the personnel towards tourism and less coordination between the public and private sectors is another challenging issue.

***Insufficient resources and funds:*** There is no federal fund allocated even in the federal budget presented in June 2025, as no federal tourism Ministry exists. A meagre amount to develop this industry is allocated by the provincial ministries of tourism. Also, undeveloped marketing strategies such as the non or less use of e-marketing and technology cannot let this industry compete with the other destinations ahead of it or with the top-ten United Nations World tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2025) tourists destinations including France, Spain, the USA, Italy, and Turkiye ranked as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

***Lack of entertaining facilities/activities:*** One of the priorities all popular top-ten destinations have is to work with other organizations to offer entertainment activities that the tourists enjoy a lot such as chair and cable car rides, setting up of museums and amusement parks, hiking and jogging treks, zip lining, rafting, canoeing, hot air balloon rides, guided tours, etc., This is all arranged to facilitate the domestic and inbound tourists. Pakistan has these entertaining facilities at a few resorts such as Malam Jabba in the northern areas has zip lining, skiing and jogging treks, Nathiagali also has hiking and

jogging treks, Gilgit Baltistan has also some of the facilities, lake Saif ul Muluk in the Kaghan valley has boating in the lake and some unofficial local guides to tell Prince Saif's and the fairies' legend. Thus, this issue is also to be resolved so as to turn Pakistan to a thriving tourists' industry.

In short, it can be said some other destinations like France as a top-ten European Union destination and, India, Nepal, and Malaysia as South and Southeast Asian destinations respectively also face the air and water pollution and depleted infrastructure challenges mostly due to over tourism, but they have chalked out plans to take immediate actions for their rectification under their federal ministries of tourism quite contrary to this Pakistan's tourism sector that is a bit slow in responding to these challenges and currently has no federal ministry of tourism.

Therefore, it is high time Pakistan with a high rated potential to attract the foreigners and domestic travellers, needed to pay heed to the above stated challenges and took necessary actions to have them resolved without any further delay. It is a time of tough competition in all areas including tourism and to adopt strict regulatory policies and frameworks in order to let Pakistan's tourism sector grow by leaps and bounds and to uplift its current contribution of 5.7 percent towards the country's GDP as shown in UNWTO statistics report 2024. The next section presents the details of the policies and regulatory frameworks Pakistan's Tourism sector has so far focused:

### **Pakistan's Tourism Policies and Regulatory Frameworks**

Pakistan as a tourist destination aims now to earn additional revenues and receive foreign currency by promoting tourism. For instance, the Gilgit Baltistan Ministry of tourism has informed that in 2024, a new airport at Skardu has been built for the travellers to travel directly from Islamabad to Skardu. In 2024, a twenty-six member steering committee was formed to manage tourism according to the report in 'Daily Dawn', September 29, 2024. An effort to market tourism through the Social Media is also in progress. The most famous

destinations such as Skardu, Swat, Neelum, Kaghan and Hunza valleys and Gorakh Hills in Sindh are being exposed and advertised on the Facebook and Instagram with lucrative packages especially for the summer tourism. In December 19, 2024, Hot Air Balloon ride service has been initiated at Balakot in the district of Mansehra under Khyber Pakhtoon Khuwa (KPK) Ministry of Tourism to let the tourists enjoy the scenic beauty of River Khunhar and Kaghan valley. On January 5, 2025, it was announced by the Punjab Ministry of Tourism that the Murree glass train would soon start functioning to attract the tourist.

In order to educate people, Iqra University, COMSAT University, University of Haripur, and University of Karachi have introduced the undergraduate programmes to let well aware and well educated employees join this thriving sector. The seminars and conferences have recently been organized by the Area Study Centre (ASC) Far East and Southeast Asia at Jamshoro, University of Sindh in coordination with the Sindh department of Tourism and University of Karachi to further promote tourism and to catch the attention of the authorities concerned to promote tourism. It is reported in Daily Dawn on July 26, 2024, PTDC has waived visa fee for 126 countries to attract the inbound tourists and to install e-gates to make the entry of the tourists less hassle free.

However, the tourism sector needs to adopt more as the promotion strategies following the top-ten tourism destinations like France, Spain, the USA, Italy, Turkiye, Mexico, the UK, Germany, Greece and Austria as the World's top-ten most visiting countries respectively. The article in Daily Dawn, June 28, 2019, mentions that the writer, Maha Qasim, wanted to take a picture of Khunjerab Pass in Gilgit, Baltistan, but could not capture a single picture without trash lying here and there. This independent consultant acknowledges the fact that rules and regulations do exist but no tourists seem to abide by them. Qasim (2019) observed that the food was served in the plastic containers and as no garbage bins were available, they were thrown everywhere and also in the crystal clear water of the lakes and rivers

The writer also could not find any alert or warning sign for penalty of throwing garbage anywhere. The writer suggested that it is the time to bring about a change and to take strict measures such as warnings and fines for violating the regulations which exist in the Acts (See below in Tables 1 and 2), but practically are not followed.

After the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Constitution in 2010, the Federal Ministry of Tourism had been abolished and thus, the provinces were handed over the tourism responsibility under PTDC and authorities, boards and tourism related agencies. Due to this change, all five provinces now have their own ministries or departments of tourism and have their own acts for tourism functioning. Baluchistan's department follows the Tourism Act XV of 2014, Gilgit-Baltistan follows the Act enforced in 2019, Punjab Tourism, Culture and Heritage Act was passed in 2019, Sindh's Act was passed in 2011, and KPK's Act was passed in 2019 and the policies are approved by the chief ministers as chairpersons and the members. Some prominent decisions and policies are discussed here. Daily Jang reports on March 03, 2025, page 26 that the present Chief Minister of the Punjab has approved a plan to revive 170 tourist locations in the Punjab, and with the help of the recently developed 'Complete Magnificent Tourism App', the details and virtual tours of these 170 revived locations are made accessible (Daily Jung, 2025).

Moreover, the CM has also passed orders to set up first Tourism and Heritage Authority to steer working for the tourism related policies and regulatory frameworks in the Punjab. Daily Times, September 29, 2024 reported the formation of a 26 member steering committee headed by Senator Pervaiz Rashid and the committee was set to elevate the tourism potential in the Punjab. It has been done to let Pakistan be a significant player in the global tourism market and make the country a premier destination for both domestic and international visitors (Daily Times, 2024). In continuation of this, the Express Tribune E-paper, February 19, 2025 reported that the tourism authorities have green-lighted three major projects – Rs.500 million cost renovation and expansion of Judicial complex, Jhika Gali Bazar-

chowk remodeling with estimated cost of Rs. 108.86 million, as well as the expansion and remodelling of Murree Kacheri Chowk with an estimated cost of Rs. 1683.8 million are under consideration. However, these three projects are under heavy criticism as a century old school and years old houses are to be demolished before the implementation of this mega plan (Express Tribune, 2025).

Express News reports on June 3, 2025 that KPK government has recently set up Camping Pods to make secure that the tourists' experience of visiting the picaresque landscapes in KPK is secure and comfortable especially during the Eid holidays. These camping pods are installed at Shugran and Naran in Kaghan valley, Thandiyani in Abbotabad, Kalash valley, Chitral, and Shangla in Swat valley (Express News 2025). Below is the picture of these camping pods:

The KPK government established a Tourism authority through an Act no. XXVIII on October 8, 2019, and that is working under Provincial Tourism Strategy Board (PTSB). This act came into force to provide for a legal framework to promote culture and tourism, marketing of tourism in the province of KPK. The tourism funds were sanctioned under section 28 of this act. The tourism strategies are recommended under the PTSB after every five years. These strategies provide for measures to facilitate and enhance domestic, regional and international tourism by suggesting innovative schemes, incentives and ethics to be applied for the development and marketing of sustainable tourism in KPK. It also looks into the management of sustainable tourism, cultural heritage including public-private partnerships. Moreover, the collection of tourism data and information and its maintenance is also the PTSB's responsibility. The KPK Act book consisting of 37 pages also specifies certain offences and penalties including bailable and non-bailable arrests in case of violation as shown in the table no. 1 & 2:

**Table 1:** Tabular Statement of Offences and Fines in Rupees

Sr. No	Offence	Fine through ticketing (in Rs.)	Through
1.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Tourism Products (a)(i),(a)(iii)t (b)(i), (c) (i) and (c) (v) of Schedule-I of this Act.	500,000	Authorized Officer
2.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'A' tourism products excluding (a)(i),(a)(iii)of Schedule-I of this Act,	50,000	Authorized Officer
3.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'B1' tourism products excluding (b)(i) of Schedule-I of this Act,	10,000	Authorized Officer
4.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'C1' tourism products excluding (c) (i) and (c) (v) of Schedule-I of this Act.	10,000	Authorized Officer
5.	Violation of tourism levy regulations	Two times of amount of levy	Authorized Officer
6.	Violation of regulations relating to littering.	10,000	Authorized Officer
7.	Violation of 'building code' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones.	50,000	Authorized Officer
8.	Violation of Mand use' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones.	500,000	Authorized Officer
9.	Violation of 'forestry code' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones	50,000	Authorized Officer
10.	Violation of Wildlife and bio-diversity regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones	50,000	Authorized Officer
11.	Violation of municipal obligations regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones	10,000	Authorized Officer
12.	Violation of pollution regulations in Integrated Tourism Zones	50,000	Authorized Officer
13.	Violation of General Prohibitions	10,000	Authorized Officer
14.	General Penalty	10,000	Authorized Officer

**Source:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Act, 2019.

**Table 2:** Statement of Offences and Penalties i.e. Bailable and non-bailable Convicted Arrest and Fines

Sr. No.	Offence	Whether Bailable or not	Imprisonment on conviction by the Court	Fine on conviction by the Court upto (in Rs.)	By what Court Triable
1.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Tourism Products (a)(i),(a) (iii), (b)(i), (c) (i) and (c) (v) of Schedule-I of this Act	Non-Bailable	Upto 3 months	5 million	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
2.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'A' tourism products excluding Schedule-I of this Act.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	01 million	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
3.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'B' tourism products excluding (b)(i)of Schedule-I of this Act.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	100,000/-	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
4.	Violation of licensing regulations governing Class 'C' tourism products excluding (c) (i) and (c) (v) of Schedule-I of this Act.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	50,000/-	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
5.	Violation of tourism levy regulations.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	Five times	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
6.	Violation of regulations relating to littering.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	500,000/-	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
7.	Violation of 'building code' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones.	Bailable	Upto 3 months	500,000/-	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
8.	Violation of 'land use' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones.	Non-Bailable	Upto 6 months	5 million	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
9.	Violation of forestry code' regulations in the Integrated Tourism Zones.	Non-Bailable	Upto 3 months	As per Assessment	Magistrate 1 <sup>st</sup> Class

**Source:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Act, 2019

The Sindh Province has established regulatory frameworks for the tourism industry, including the Sindh Travel Agencies Act, 2011 and

the Sindh Tourist Guides Act, 2011. The main objective of these acts is to develop, regulate, and control the tourism sector in the Sindh Province. Further, the National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) plays an active part in coordinating with national and international organizations dealing with the tourism sector and in facilitating the development of the policies and strategies for sustainable tourism.

## **KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In spite of Pakistan's tourism potential, the analysis reveals gaps in policy implementation, depleted infrastructure, lack of interest, insufficient resources, and absence of coordination among the sectors related to tourism. Further inconsistent regulatory frameworks especially in the absence of a national ministry as there are always matters that need to be discussed at the national level, but there is no federal entity as such at present. Moreover, the analysis shows that a continuous change scenario of the administration, political instability, pollution, terrorism, lack of interest to keep a watch on the maintenance of the tourist lands, not pacing with the age of technology and mishandling of the tourists by hotel staff and the locals are the main challenges Pakistan as 101<sup>st</sup> tourism destination faces with. France, Spain, Greece and the United States of America (USA) (UNWTO, 2025) face environmental issues and are dealing with them very tactfully by cleanliness awareness campaigns for the tourists, recycling of the plastic items used by the tourism food industry, discouraging the burning of the fossil fuels and the wood, encouraging the tourist to walk or cycle more to avoid the excessive use of transportation to let the air remain clean of smoke and pollution.

India, Thailand and Japan focus on cleanliness drives and measures to tackle climate changes especially cyclones, heavy rains and the earthquakes. Singapore as standing at the 29<sup>th</sup> ranking in tourism, follows a highly strict policy of charging penalties on the tourists if found throwing the garbage on the land instead of using the labelled garbage bins. Almost all top ten destinations have now started solely

depending on digitization and are using the latest tools to make visa, travelling and booking facilities online and on the spot in order to make tourism a hassle free entertainment.

Furthermore, these tourist destinations have built paved roads everywhere and the restaurants and eateries are built by the motorways to facilitate the travellers. The signage and directions are all bilingual to help the tourists, the translators are also available i.e. one national language and the other English language.

### **Scope and Implications of the Analysis**

This descriptive-qualitative analysis opens vistas for the other researchers to further carryout this analysis by comparing Pakistan with another Southeast Asian country like Singapore or Malaysia. This research also has a vast scope of conducting an in-depth research on any one of the discussed challenges, e.g. the lack of entertaining facilities or activities and comparing it with the top-ten tourists' destinations. Moreover, this study can also be applied to analysing Pakistan as a low literacy rate country, the challenges it faces and policies and regulatory frameworks for improving the rate of literacy.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the challenges, existing policies and regulatory frameworks, it is to conclude that the Pakistan's tourism sector must revamp its policies and frameworks for a grassroots change to contribute more towards its GDP for a sustainable economic growth. To conclude, the authors recommend the following suggestions:

There is a dire need to have a national organization working in liaison with all five provinces in the absence of a federal ministry although many minstrel functions have been transferred to PTDC, yet some tourism related national matters are not being properly handled.

The government of Pakistan should coordinate with the top ten tourist destinations in order to upgrade tourism in Pakistan as this country has a diverse attraction and has potential to increase the

international tourists' inflow. Pakistan needs to fully digitize this industry and to focus on e-marketing as well as on issuing e-visas and/or on the spot visa services.

Pakistan needs to let this industry grow by making it a fully independent body to keep functioning without any political interference or change in the administration. We suggest a slogan to let this sector grow non-stop, 'Whatever Happens let Tourism Sector Move'. The Ministry needs to work day in and day out to deal with terrorism and to set up check posts at all entry points and to keep an eye on the terrorism activities. It is also required to keep taking the tourists' feedback to get rid of mishandling of them by the hotel staff or locals for improvements. Edgell (2018) claims that if there is no security at a destination, its destination's business and other activities will also be affected. Pakistan's provincial ministries of tourism should also issue advisories from time to time and install signboards not to let the tourists' leave their footprints particularly on various hotspots.

Pakistan needs to develop its resources and strongly manage its marketing in order to generate more revenues through this industry for sustainability. Pakistan needs to adopt strict rules and regulations to control waste, air and water pollution by imposing penalties for the violation of the regulations generally in all and particularly in specific hotspots for increasing the volume of the tourists' arrival in order to earn more revenues. Furthermore, the sector can make it mandatory to pay toll taxes at the locations where the entry is still free. This generated revenue could be used to employ only locals as cleaners to keep the locations clean. This socio-economic step could be very beneficial for the unemployed local residents.

Pakistan needs to start training programs to train the locals to learn at least the Basic English and to depute officially bilingual translators and to set up more language centres to let the service providers improve their English language skills. The country needs to pay heed to maintaining cleanliness and facilitating the tourist with more

national and international hygienic cuisines, rest areas and seating places by the side of the jogging tracks.

PTDC as a main authority needs to work in liaison with the Ministry of Finance to send advisory to national and foreign banks to install ATMs and to set up money exchange centres for facilitating the international and domestic travellers. Additionally, Pakistan should extend the strategic policies by involving the private sector for their monetary and work force assistance.

The authors apprehend that with the long-term efforts to enhance the tourism sector, Pakistan would economically grow further and would turn out to be one of the top ten destinations eventually with its manifold capacity to attract the domestic and inbound tourists.

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