

Tourism in Pakistan: Challenges, Prospects and Potential of Gilgit-Baltistan

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Abstract

This study presents the statistics of foreign tourists travelling to Pakistan and their subsequent contribution to national wealth from the year 1999 to 2012. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that are affecting tourism in Pakistan and provide recommendations which can contribute to overcome the impediments. The potential of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, a northern mountainous region of Pakistan, is examined as a case study. It is that the region has always been a key destination of foreign tourists and climbers who come for trekking and climbing expeditions to scale various high summits. Furthermore, the article also attempts to examine the role which this region can play to boost tourism in Pakistan and generate income in general.

The methodology applied to carry out this study has been an extensive one year field work in Gilgit-Baltistan during which semi-structured, structured and informal interviews of people engaged in tourism industry of G-B, political analysts, civil society representatives and NGOs' officials were conducted. Primary data generated and analyzed during this field work was been reviewed with the help of some secondary resources.

Definition of tourism

An Austrian economist, Herman Von Schullard defined tourism in 1910 as 'the sum total of operations, mainly of economic nature, which directly relate to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region'.¹

Hunziker and Krapf in 1942 gave a conceptual definition of tourism. They defined tourism as 'being a sum of relations and phenomena resulting from travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as

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¹ D.C. Gibert, 'Conceptual Issues in the Meaning of Tourism', in Stephen Williams (ed.), *Tourism: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1: The Nature and Structure of Tourism (London: Routledge, 2004), p.49.

stay does not lead to permanent residence and is not connected with any permanent or temporary earning activity'.²

While this definition and concept of tourism was widely accepted for a long time, there are few shortcomings to this approach. The definition fails to deal with the business travels as part of tourism as witnessed in the past few decades. Also, the definition, according to Vanhove, discusses only the non-residents which are considered foreigners and hence domestic tourism and local tourists are neglected. Based upon the works of Burkart and Medlik of 1974, British Tourism Society in 1979 state that 'Tourism is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-termed movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and their activities during the stay at these destinations'.³

R.N. Batta conceptualizes tourism 'as a composite phenomenon embracing the incidence of a mobile population of travelers who are strangers to the places they visit, and where they represent a distinct element from the residents and working population'.⁴

Gilbert gives a conceptual definition that highlights the social dimension of tourism. He states: 'tourism is one part of recreation which involves travel to a less familiar destination or community, for a short-term period, in order to satisfy a consumer need for one or combination of activities'.⁵

Tourism in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country of great natural diversity and landscape. Geographical location of Pakistan also makes it unique as it is located at the crossroads of Central, West and South Asia. The country provides awe-inspiring mountainous treks to enter into Afghanistan, China and Central Asia. From the sea shores in the south to the world's highest and colossal mountain ranges in the north, Pakistan possesses great tourists' attraction sites. The alpine valleys in the north with distinctive culture of one of the oldest civilizations of the world and great biodiversity are all the potentials for local and foreign tourists.

The country has enjoyed a considerable number of foreign tourists periodically which generated revenue for the local population as well as for the federal governments. The northern side of Pakistan has always remained a

² Norbert Vanhove, *The Economics of Tourism Destinations*, first edition (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd., 2005), p.2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ R.N. Batta, *Tourism and Environment: A quest for sustainability* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 2000), p.28.

⁵ Quoted in Norbert Vanhove, *op.cit.*, p.3.

tourist hub particularly for the mountain climbers. The foreign expeditions to climb the highest peaks of the world and to trek to the world's largest non-polar glaciers have been frequently traveling to the Northern Areas of Pakistan now called Gilgit-Baltistan. The two major conflicts between Pakistan and India i.e. Siachen conflict in 1984 and Kargil war in 1999 temporarily halted this tourist activity. Operation Meghdoot launched by Indian military at Siachen glacier in April 1984, has not only restricted Siachen glacier but also the nearby valleys for foreign tourists. A major blow to tourism of the region occurred during text book riots in Gilgit in 2004 and 2005. Tourism, economic and academic activities of Gilgit region were affected during these two years when foreign tourists mostly arrived in Baltistan (which hosts four highest peaks of world including the second highest, K2). The relatively improved law and order situation in the country during 2002-2007, however, encouraged tourists to visit Pakistan.

Arrival of tourists in Pakistan (1999-2012)

Tourism in Pakistan has periodically benefited its economy. Tourism as an industry has never been given due importance. Despite having great natural and cultural diversity, heritage and some of the world's unique features, successive governments in Pakistan never paid attention to develop this sector. As a result statistics of tourists coming to Pakistan are not appreciable as compared to other countries. The year 2004 witnessed a spike in the number of tourist arrival to Pakistan as compared to previous years. It reached to a new high in 2007. Since then number of tourists has started to decline, but in 2009, the number increased a little. The income Pakistan earned from tourism reached its peak in 2007, since then it started to decline except for the year 2009 which received few more tourists as compared to the previous year. Table 1 below presents the number of tourist arrival in Pakistan and the income earned from tourism from the years 1999 to 2009.

Table 1

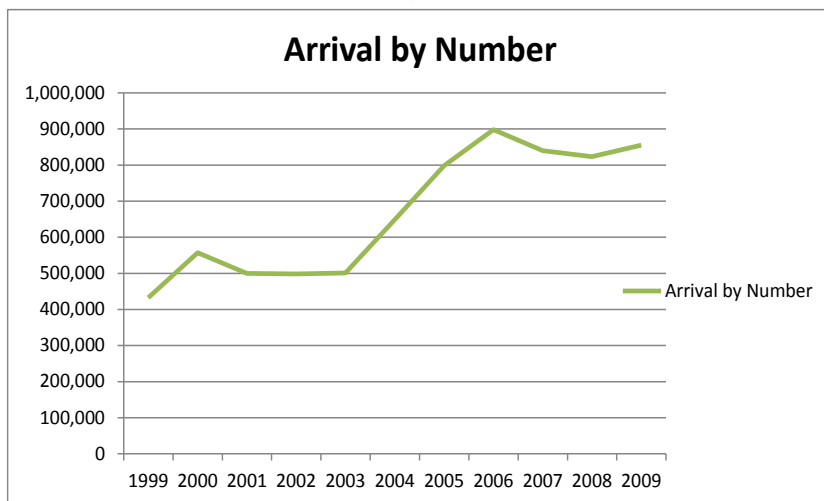
Year	Arrival by Number	Receipt (Million US \$)
1999	432,200	76.4
2000	556,800	84.4
2001	499,700	92.2
2002	498,100	105.4
2003	500,900	135.6
2004	648,000	185.6
2005	798,260	185.3
2006	897,589	260.1
2007	839,500	276.1
2008	822,828	243.5

2009	854,905	240.6
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Source: Tourism division, Govt. of Pakistan⁶

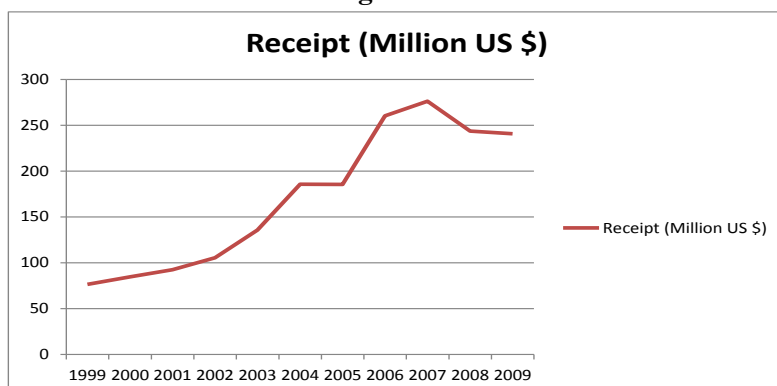
Figure 1 & 2 illustrate the arrival by number and the receipt of income respectively

Figure 1



Source: Data collected from Tourism division, Pakistan

Figure 2



Source: Data collected from Tourism division, Pakistan

⁶ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/102538001/Pakistan-Tourism-Statistics-1995-2010>

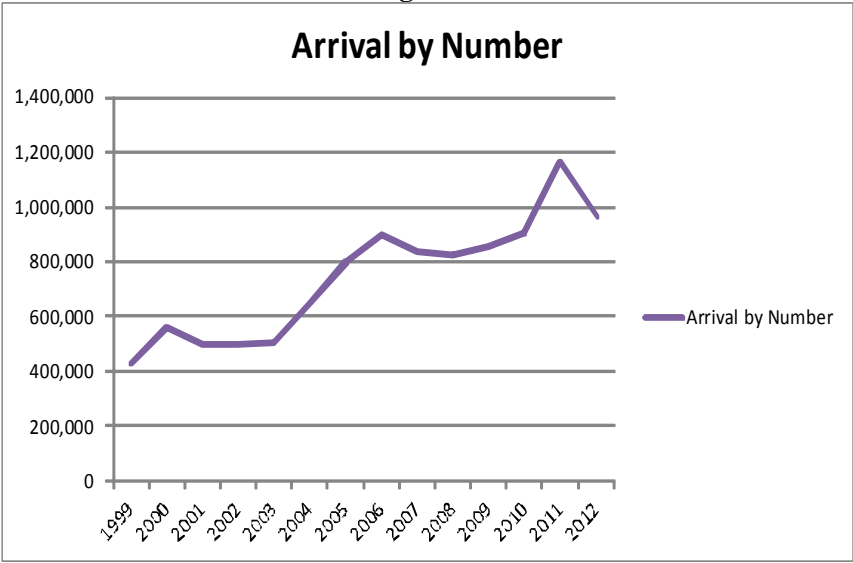
According to the statistics of the World Bank, the number of foreign tourists who traveled to Pakistan in the year 2011 was 1,161,000. This was a remarkable increase and an all time high as compared to the previous years mentioned in Table 1. Table 2 shows the arrival of foreign tourists by number from the year of 2010 to 2012.

Table 2

Year	Arrival by Number
2010	907,00
2011	1,161,000
2012	966,000

Source: World Bank⁷

Figure 3



Source: Data collected from World Bank

These statistics show a fluctuating graph of arrival of foreign tourists in Pakistan. The only constant rise was observed from the year 2003 to 2007 after which it declined and reached at a new high in the following year of 2011. However a decline in tourist activities took place in the following year. There are certain factors and challenges that hamper the flow of tourists to Pakistan. The impediments in managing tourism and

⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL>

creating it as a viable industry for income generation are discussed in the next section.

Factors affecting tourism in Pakistan

Tourism in Pakistan can be a lucrative industry both for the government and for the people engaged in this sector. The historical, natural and cultural diversity in Pakistan can be exploited to generate income through tourism. Despite the presence of historical, archeological and natural landscapes following factors create hindrance in achieving the goal:

Political instability and terrorism: Political situation of Pakistan has remained a major hurdle in promoting tourism. Other than the oscillation of governments from military to civilian, the violence on political, ethnic and religious grounds have barred foreigners to travel to Pakistan. In the violent episodes of gory violence not only common men become victims but key political figures like Benazir Bhutto, Chairman of Pakistan People's Party, Salman Taseer, Governor of Punjab, Minorities Minister, Shahbaz Bhatti, senior Provincial Minister, Bashir Ahmed Bilour, to name few, fell prey to the terrorists' targets. In the last ten years, periodic suicide attacks and massive bombing campaigns by terrorists targeting military installations, hotels, mosques, minority Shia population, bazaars and religious events in the major cities placed Pakistan as a dangerous country to travel. The volatile security situation across the country put a serious question mark on governments' ability to maintain law and order and arrest the culprits. The persistent precarious security situation shakes the confidence of foreign travelers who avoid their journey to Pakistan.

Lack of Infrastructure: Pakistan lacks infrastructure required for tourism. Unfortunately, the concept of tourism infrastructure in Pakistan is associated with constructing roads, opening shops and making few hotels. Though construction of roads, shops and hotels are required for tourism but they are generally not built according to the weather conditions and environment of the areas where they are built. In most cases they destroy the natural beauty. As these constructions are generally against the environmental laws hence in most of the instances they lack electricity, sanitation and proper system of garbage disposal. This results into artificial ways to generate electricity through inefficient generators and the environmental degradation of the area. Non-availability of garbage disposal in tourist areas pollutes the environment and lakes. The poor available infrastructure also fails to provide basic necessities to the tourists like warm water, electricity, sanitation etc. In

many areas where there is no available road or the areas where foreign tourists prefer hiking and camping, the shortage of camping equipment, trained porters and developed camping sites discourage tourists for adventure tourism. Moreover, inefficiency of airlines in terms of frequent delays and non-availability of flights of Pakistan International Airline (PIA) is also an impediment which needs to be tackled in the development and management of tourism.

Capacity of institutions and education of staff: Government staff associated with tourism needs capacity building. Most of the staff is less educated and not trained in tourism related activities. This gives a negative impression to the foreign travelers who are mainly from developed countries and have experience of traveling elsewhere. The related departments due to their limited exposure of tourism fail to make effective policies which can pave the way for improvement of tourism and enhance the flow of tourists coming to Pakistan.

Investment on local travel agencies and tour operators is also very low as compared to neighbouring China and India. Both countries officially invite foreign traveling agencies, media personnel and tour operators and sponsor their trips to various places of their countries. They introduce and brief them about different countryside and plan events for them in order to gain future cooperation and improve tourism in their countries. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, no such practice at a broad level is adopted. Lack of coordination of local tour operators with foreign agencies and training of staff in tourism related operations is a shortcoming in achieving the goal of promoting tourism.

Global promotion: The correspondence and liaison of local institutions with international travel agencies to convince and motivate them is not up to the mark. At state level, there is a need for effective marketing of the tourist sites of the country. To realize the potential of tourism in the country and competition across the globe between states, there is the need to promote the potential of available tourist destinations in the country. Development and promotion of world heritage sites, monuments of early 3300 BC present in Pakistan, and other historical structures are not highlighted at global level in the way they deserve.

Environmental problems: Environmental problems in Pakistan also create obstruction to the tourist activities. While the massive floods and their destruction in urban and rural areas of provinces have become annual affair, flash floods in mountainous areas also hamper tourist activities. Other than the natural calamities caused by environmental

degradation, changing weather patterns particularly the severity of weather in Pakistan is also a problem.

Lack of interest: Preservation and renovation of the old heritage sites in Pakistan are marred by mismanagement and corruption. This not only restricts the foreign agencies, willing to provide grants in conservation, but sometimes these agencies stop providing aid and roll-back the conservation work due to lack of interest of the government institutions. A recent example is of the US embassy which was involved in conservation of historical Sheikhpura Fort in Punjab, built during the era of Emperor Jehangir. Due to the failure of National Heritage Ministry to show satisfactory progress in the past three years, the US State Department closed this project. The US embassy had, a year earlier, warned to stop funding because the ministry had failed to appoint a qualified project director for conservation. The project which was initiated in 2010, with the support of \$1.22 million, was dropped because the responsible authorities any to make failed progress.⁸

After the 18th Amendment in the constitution tourism and conservation has also become a provincial chapter. The provincial governments in Pakistan appear unwilling to take initiatives. There are several crumbling heritage sites, centuries old forts, monuments, archeological places and ruins which need urgent government attention for conservation. These sites of historical importance have the potential to attract several thousand tourists.

Gilgit-Baltistan: a potential region for tourism promotion

Gilgit-Baltistan is located in the north of Pakistan. Bordering Afghanistan, China and India, G-B is a disputed mountainous area between Pakistan and India. Pakistan still officially associates the region with Kashmir, of which G-B was once a part. Ironically, the people of G-B fought a liberation war against the princely state of Kashmir and gained independence in 1947-48. After its affiliation with Pakistan, G-B, in anticipation of the United Nations' plebiscite in Kashmir, was linked with its former master.

The region's political status is highly ambiguous. It does not have representation in Pakistan's national parliament.⁹ Famous for its

⁸ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1159535>

⁹ Sajjad Ahmad, 'Core-Periphery Relationship: The Post-1973 State of Pakistan and Nationalism in Gilgit-Baltistan', *Pakistan Perspectives*, 20:2 (July 2015).

scenic beauty, vibrant culture and hospitality, G-B is a magnet for foreign tourists and climbers, who consider it a haven for mountaineering. The region covers a territory of 72,971 square kilometers, mostly mountains and has an estimated population size of 1.249 million.¹⁰ The unique feature of this region is that it possesses world's highest mountain ranges, Karakorum, Himalaya and Hindukash, five out of fourteen highest peaks of the world including K2, the second highest, and world's largest non-polar glaciers. Gilgit-Baltistan has natural diversity, scenic beauty and distinguished cultural communities living in beautiful alpine valleys. The rivers, lakes, fresh water streams and glaciers add significance to the region's landscape. Every year, many renowned mountaineers land in Gilgit-Baltistan to climb the summits. Moreover, due to the presence of largest non-polar glaciers, trekking routes and numerous other peaks, many foreign groups visit the region for trekking and hiking purpose. These expeditions and groups are great source of income for the government as well as for the local communities and markets. The locals provide their services in terms of hotels, accommodation, traveling and porters. The government charges mountain royalty fee in US dollars from these expeditions which is also a source of valuable foreign exchange. The mountain royalty fee charged by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of Pakistan, is mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3: Mountain Royalty Fee

S. No.	Height of Mountain Meters	Full team of seven members (US\$)	Each Additional Member
1	K2 (8611 –M)	7200	1200
2	8001 – 8500 – M	5400	900
3	7501 – 8000 – M	2400	300
4	7001 – 7500 – M	1500	180
5	6501 – 7000 – M	900	120

Source: Alpine Club of Pakistan¹¹

With an exponential increase in foreign expeditions, the mountain royalty fee charged by Government of Pakistan can become a key source of growth in income and foreign exchange. According to the statistics

¹⁰ Geography and Demography of Gilgit-Baltistan, accessed on 17 January 2017. <http://www.gilgitbaltistanscouts.gov.pk/geodemo.htm>

¹¹ http://www.alpineclub.org.pk/peak_royalties.shtml

available for the year of 2010, 2012 and 2013, the number of expeditions that visited Gilgit-Baltistan is mentioned below:

Table 4: Number of Expeditions

Year	Number of Expeditions	Number of Mountaineers
2010	35	259
2011	Not available	Not available
2012	56	386
2013	40	263

Source: Alpine Club of Pakistan¹²

Other than the mountain royalty fee paid by the expeditions, the government also charges US\$ 75 per person for one month if the tourists trek in the government restricted zones of G-B. These restricted zones include trekking to the base camp of K2 and other peaks which are major attraction of foreigners. The local economy flourishes with the arrival of foreigners as locals provide different services to them like cooks, guides, porters, drivers etc. Since, there is no direct flight to Gilgit-Baltistan and tourists rely on traveling from Islamabad to Gilgit or Skardu through airline or by-road, PIA can take advantage of their influx as it is the only airline which operates from Islamabad to Gilgit and Skardu as majority of the tourists prefer to travel by air to save their time.

However, this opportunity is not yet availed truly by the official airline. Frequent cancellation of flights due to weather and unavailability of aircrafts undermine the tourist activities. While the weather is mostly blamed by the officials in this scenario, no serious efforts have yet been made to install instrumental landing system at the two of Gilgit and Skardu airports like that in Nepal. Setting up such system can drastically reduce the frequent disruption of flights and improve the transportation of tourists from Islamabad to Gilgit and Skardu. There is also need to improve the land route from Islamabad to Gilgit and Skardu i.e. Karakorum Highway (KKH). Many foreigners prefer to travel to G-B by road through this spectacular highway but the deteriorated condition of KKH causes much hassle, time and energy.

A major initiative which can dramatically improve the flow of foreign tourists to Gilgit-Baltistan is the opening of Kargil-Laddakh road. This has been a long demand of people of Gilgit-Baltistan and periodically people have registered their protest against government to

¹² <http://www.alpineclub.org.pk/index.shtml>

open this vital link. Locals argue that if Government of Pakistan can open Line of Control (LoC) in Azad Jammu Kashmir for trade then this side of the border can also be opened for tourism. Currently, Laddakh which borders with Skardu and is located in India hosts thousands of foreign tourists annually. These tourists, if allowed, can cross the border via Kargil and enter into Gilgit-Baltistan as there is already an established road which connects both valleys. Not only the tourists but also the separated families since partition on each side can meet their family members. Opening of this breathtaking route can greatly benefit Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan and give a major boost to tourism industry.

Comparing the policies adopted by Pakistan and India in Gilgit-Baltistan and Laddakh respectively, India does not put as many restrictions on movement of foreign tourists as Pakistan does. In Laddakh foreign tourists are allowed to reach even close to the border between India and Pakistan. However, on Pakistan's side foreigners are restricted from 40 to 80 kms in different areas of G-B before the border. This deprives Gilgit-Baltistan to showcase its magnificent and awe-inspiring valleys and impressive local culture to the foreigners. Moreover, there are few unique rock-climbing sites, small peaks and high altitude lakes and treks which can be of great attraction for foreign expeditions but due to the restrictions placed by the government, foreigners are not allowed to explore these valleys.

With a changing trend in global tourism, cultural and historical tourism is an additional chapter which is mostly preferred by the senior citizens. Due to age factor, those tourists who are unable to trek into the mountains prefer to explore historical and cultural heritage. In the past five years, with the efforts of local tourist agencies in G-B, few groups of senior citizens from different countries visited the region. This is a potential avenue which can be exploited. The people living in this region are considered as one of the oldest civilization and many places in G-B are of great historical significance including the centuries old infrastructure, Buddhists rock carvings, forts, mosques and historic silk route. To make it more effective, there is a need to train local guides and impart knowledge about history, civilization and heritage sites of the region.

Due to lack of economic and employment opportunities, harsh weather, small landholding size and least development in G-B, a number of people are associated with tourism. However, due to less education, training and exposure as compared to other countries, their performance – considering competition in the world – is not up to the mark. At state level, these local tour operators do not get any government sponsored

exposure trips in tourism related events held in other countries, unlike China and India.

The embassies overseas in many instances downplay the potential of G-B. The foreigners coming to this region in some cases informed the local tour operators that they were discouraged by the Pakistan's embassy staff in their host country to travel to G-B due to volatile security situation. They were instead asked to visit urban cities of Lahore and Islamabad and nearby places. Due to the frequent traveling of renowned mountaineers and many trekking groups, mainly from Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, Britain and USA, the foreign agencies continue to send their groups to G-B. The five out of the fourteen highest summits – above eight thousand metres – and many trekking routes in Karakorum and Himalaya mountain ranges, are real charm for tourists from different countries who prefer to travel G-B and scale these summits.

Despite this opportunity and interests of international expeditions in conquering the highest peaks, Pakistan is still unable to exploit the potential of G-B in an efficient way. The neighbouring countries in the region particularly India, China and Iran are way ahead than Pakistan in utilizing and facilitating tourist activities.

Tourist arrival in Pakistan vis-à-vis neighbouring countries

Pakistan despite being considered as heaven for tourists has so far become failed to grab the deserved attention of foreign travelers. The factors mentioned above are contributing in hampering the tourist inflow and depriving the country from a sustainable yearly income. Comparison of tourist arrival with neighbouring countries proves that tourism in Pakistan has lagged behind. Though China and India has vast lands with gigantic populations, the smaller country like Iran, despite its domestic problems and global image, successfully manages the tourist flow. Table 5 below shows the number of tourists visiting the neighbouring regional countries of Pakistan from the year 1999 to 2012.

Table 5: Number of tourists visiting neighbouring countries

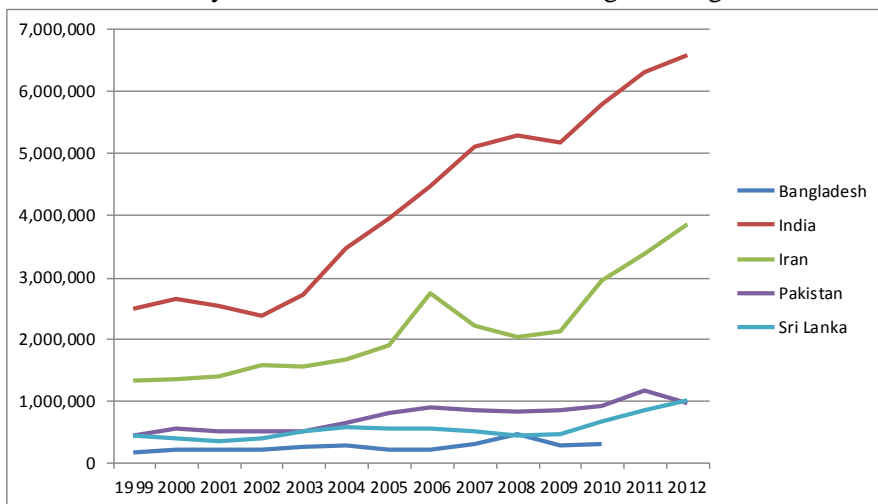
Year	Arrival by Number				
	Bangladesh	India	Iran	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
1999	173,000	2,482,000	1,321,000	432,000	436,000
2000	199,000	2,649,000	1,342,000	557,000	400,000
2001	207,000	2,537,000	1,402,000	500,000	337,000
2002	207,000	2,384,000	1,585,000	498,000	393,000

2003	245,000	2,726,000	1,546,000	501,000	501,000
2004	271,000	3,457,000	1,659,000	648,000	566,000
2005	208,000	3,919,000	1,889,000	798,000	549,000
2006	200,000	4,447,000	2,735,000	898,000	560,000
2007	289,000	5,082,000	2,219,000	840,000	494,000
2008	467,000	5,283,000	2,034,000	823,000	438,000
2009	267,000	5,168,000	2,116,000	855,000	448,000
2010	303,000	5,776,000	2,938,000	907,000	654,000
2011	Not available	6,309,000	3,354,000	1,161,000	856,000
2012	Not available	6,578,000	3,834,000	966,000	1,006,000

Source: World Bank¹³

Figure 4

Arrival of tourists by number in Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka from the year 1999 to 2012 is shown through this figure



Source: Data collected from World Bank

¹³ http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?order=wbapi_data_value_1999%20wbapi_data_value%20wbapi_data_value-last&sort=asc

The table and figure above show that while India and Iran are way above than Pakistan, a country as small as Sri Lanka, in the past few years, has raised its graph of tourism and is now competing with Pakistan.

Conclusion and recommendations

Natural diversity and historical remnants of different civilizations are treasures that are present in Pakistan. While tourism has become a significant component of economies of different countries, it is still underdeveloped in Pakistan and failed to produce outstanding results. Different factors mentioned in this paper are major bottlenecks in developing tourism as a viable industry and sustainable source of income in our national economy. There is a need of realization at state level about the benefits of this industry in income and employment generation. Pakistan needs to improve law and order situation to gain the trust of foreign travelers. Few violent incidents in the years of 2012 and 2013 at Karakorum Highway and at the base camp of mountain Nanga Parbat sent shockwaves across the world. Many expeditions canceled their planned trips which gave a major blow to the tourism activities. There is an urgent need to tackle this menace and improve security situation in the country as a whole and particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan which is a key destination of foreign tourists.

Opening of Kargil-Laddakh road can greatly benefit Pakistan as several foreign tourists who annually visit India will get a chance to cross the border and enter into Pakistan through this magnificent road link. This can give a sheer rise to the influx of foreign tourists and contribute in national income.

One neglected area regarding tourism in Pakistan is religious tourism. Due to the presence of several holy sites of different religions in the country there is a lot of potential for religious tourism. Holy places of Sikhs in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and historical monuments of Buddhists are located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Though Sikhs from neighbouring India and Buddhists from different countries mainly from China, Japan and Korea visit Pakistan but their number is quite small. This opportunity of promoting religious tourism should be realized by improving infrastructure and historical sites and providing facilities to the visitors. There are many countries in the world that generate a considerable amount of wealth from religious tourism. With an improved policy, Pakistan can also host religious communities of neighbouring India and China and of other countries.

At the political front, it is imperative for the government to formulate viable and sustainable tourism policy. After the 18th Amendment in the constitution and transfer of powers to provinces,

provincial governments should be assisted and trained by the centre to develop provincial tourism policies. Education and training of staff in the tourism department is necessary. The exposure visits and trainings of staff should be organized for their capacity building and to enhance their skills.

Pakistani embassies in potential tourist countries such as Italy, Germany, France, Poland, Switzerland, Britain, USA and China should hire a person, trained in tourism related activities, to encourage foreigners to travel to Pakistan. Embassies should also organize events such as photo exhibitions, documentary screenings, lectures and other cultural events in these countries and keep booklets, flyers and other distribution material related to Pakistan's landscape, its history and cultural heritage to strengthen tourism industry.

The Government of Pakistan should take keen interest in conservation of historical buildings and ruins which are in a crumbling state. These sites can attract many tourists due to their historical importance. Adventure tourism like skiing, rock climbing, ice climbing and other adventure sports should be promoted and events related to these adventure sports should be organized. Pakistan can also invite researchers to carryout scientific research about glaciers, wildlife, climate and other environmental related issues which can be a remarkable contribution in the field of research.

Tourism across the globe has emerged as a profitable industry. It has become a major source of earning for many countries. There are many examples in the world on how countries could invest and gain profits from this industry. Due to its great biodiversity and heritage, Pakistan could also attract tourist from across the world. Gilgit-Baltistan is a region which has remarkable potential to serve as a frontline in strengthening tourism. By utilizing this potential Pakistan can improve its fragile national economy, increase foreign exchange and generate employment. Though, the neighbouring countries particularly India and Iran enjoy the great influx of foreigners, situation in Pakistan is not satisfactory. With the interest of policy makers, this industry can also thrive and provide benefits to the national income and local population.