

Role of Tourism in shaping positive image of Pakistan

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Abstract

This study would analyze the role of tourism in shaping the positive image of Pakistan. Tourism has not only proved vital for the economy and a key source of income and employment but also building a positive image of their society and national identity in developing countries. It promotes cross-cultural connections, appreciation, and understanding. Promoting the cross-cultural awareness for both locals and tourists builds bridges of understanding between cultures. During the worst wave of terrorism after the year 2000 Pakistan has almost lost its identity in the world and tourism can be the best tool to raise the profile of Pakistan in the world. Tourism also promotes international connections which can be useful to increase the business opportunities and cultural exchange. There is tremendous potential for tourism across Pakistan. Tourism industry is expanding but not at the expected pace, further rise is expected in the coming years in the tourism industry. Pakistan is becoming an attractive tourist destination for international tourists. Government of Pakistan is taking initiatives to grow tourism as a priority. The data and information, I lifted in this study has been collected through secondary sources including Books, Magazines, Articles, Journals, E-Journals, Internet, Reports of World Tourism Organization, Ministry of Tourism and World Travel etc. Government, tourism industry and society need to join hands to shape the positive image of Pakistan.

Key Words

Tourism, Pakistan, Travelling, History of Pakistan

Introduction

Tourism is a diverse field, and it integrates people around the world. It is characterized as going to and staying in places outside their standard climate for not more than one essential year for relaxation, business, and different purposes. Tourism is usually connected with worldwide travel and also refers to going somewhere else within the country. It is beneficial for generating economy, providing jobs, giving methods and a motivation for interest in a framework (streets, rail organizations, and neighborhood clinical and instruction offices), to maintain the environment, create understanding between different cultures, and makes a spot famous": Tourism allows the area to show itself off and raise their profile on the planet.

Pakistan is home to a diversity of cultures, rich heritage and stunning landscapes from the precipitous peaks of the Karakoram range to the fertile Indus River plains. Above all the people of Pakistan with their resilience, love and hospitality add a lot more value to tourism potential. Pakistan's rich culture, national heritage, ancient Silk Road, and ruins of Mohenjo-Daro continue to enchant travelers from all parts of the globe. Tourism shapes the positive image of Pakistan around the globe. It is a developing industry in Pakistan because of its different societies, people groups, and cultures. The assortment of attractions ranges from the remains of old developments, for example, Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Taxila, to the Himalayan slope stations, which draw in those keen on-field and winter sports. Pakistan is home to a few mountain tops over 7000m, which draws in explorers and mountain climbers from around the globe, especially K2. The northern areas of Pakistan have numerous old posts, towers, and other designs just as the Hunza and Chitral valleys. There are also religious paces like the Badshahi Masjid, Shalimar Gardens, Tomb of Jahangir, and the Lahore Fort which attracts tourists. the Indus Valley [civilization] which is 5,000 years of age and has holy spots for four religions which attracts the adventure and nature lovers to Pakistan. PIA Arts Trope performed far and wide to excite a worldwide crowd and presented a strong and wonderful Pakistani culture. Pakistan Foods Festivals sorted out by PIA in various world capitals was another land imprint to showcase Pakistan as an astonishing tourism objective. In the mid-1970s, Pakistan was a long way in front of the locale in the field of the travel industry.

Despite all the potential and beauty Tourism could not grow as an industry in Pakistan. Soon after independence, Pakistan was the fastest developing country in the world, but political instability and domestic problems slowed down the progress. Over the decades Pakistan's image got destroyed, specially the fight against terrorism and extremism posed new challenges for the country. Pakistan was hit by the worst wave of terrorism, extremism and other internal problems for more than a decade. The perceptions about Pakistan's social structure and security situation went down the line. Tourism can play a huge role in reversing these perceptions about Pakistan and it's society. The impact of tourism has been proved to be pivotal in shaping the country's image. Recently many foreigner social media influencers started touring Pakistan and they shared their experience of traveling in Pakistan very positively. The British Backpacker Society ranked Pakistan as the "world's top adventure travel destination" and described the country as "one of the friendliest countries on earth". Pakistan is ranked 47 out of 200 countries by World Travel and Travel Council's analysis. The real question is; how to use this huge potential to change perceptions of the world about Pakistan?

Objectives:

- To analyze the potential impact of tourism on the image on Pakistan in the World.
- To explore the opportunities the tourism, offer in shaping the positive image of the Pakistan.
- To identify the key areas to work on to promote cultural exchanges.
- To identify the challenges in promoting the tourism industry.
- To analyze the readiness of the government to invest in tourism infrastructure development.
- To identify factors which lead to a change in social behavior of locals

towards the tourism and tourists.

- Highlighting role of media in promoting Pakistan as a tourist attraction.
- Other important initiatives taken by stakeholders to improve tourism.

Research Questions:

- How significant is the tourism industry to shape a positive image of Pakistan?
- How can the tourism industry be reformed to best utilize the economic and cultural potential?
- Why Pakistan was not a better option for international tourists in recent years?
- What are initiatives taken by the successive governments to improve tourism in Pakistan?
- How can tourism help in improving perceptions about the culture/heritage of Pakistan internationally?
- What are failing factors for the governments to structure tourism as an industry?

Statement of the problem

Security situation in Pakistan has been a main factor of bad image for the country. Pakistan's focus has been on winning war against terrorism and extremism inside its border. Pakistan is defined by its problem instead of its diverse cultural heritage.

Hypothesis

"Promoting tourism can shape the positive image of Pakistan nationally and internationally"

Research Methodology

In this research, we will analyze role of tourism in shaping positive image of Pakistan by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This study is conducted through multiple sources of government tourism data and independent analysis of the potential tourism industry has, in terms of economic benefits and in terms of shaping Pakistan's image. Most of the data obtained for this research will come from secondary sources including books, internet, tourism magazines and international studies/rankings to validate my results from primary data. And time period focused here is 2010 onwards. Dependent variable is Pakistan and independent variable is role of tourism in shaping positive image.

Theoretical Framework

This study would analyze theoretically by using the lens of 'Social Constructivism', which is a sociological theory of knowledge. Alexander Wendt is the main advocate of social constructivism in the field of international relations,

who developed these ideas in his book “Social theory of International Politics(1999)”. Social Constructivism asserts that people work together to construct artifacts. Moreover, these artifacts are created through social interactions of a group , which means it is focusing on learning that takes place because of his or her interactions in a group. Pakistan is also constructing an idea (image) internationally by improving its interactions with the help of tourism. The world had wrong perception about Pakistan that it is not safe for tourism. Pakistan has proved that it has potential for it by promoting tourism in recent years and by opening projects like Kartarpura for its rival country India which is a great message for international community.

Tourism Potential in Pakistan

Pakistan accounts for 2.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product in manufacturing, while Sri Lanka accounts for 5.3 percent in the same sector. This shows that Pakistan's untapped potential is promising. The security situation has improved dramatically and now is the best time to face the fact that the travel industry is the most promising sector in the country. The Pakistani government is taking extraordinary measures to help Pakistan's tourism sector.

The country is home to ancient Hindu holy places, several heavenly Sikhs and Buddhists. Various Buddhist relics are displayed in exhibition halls in Lahore, Taxila and Peshawar. With the famous Nankana Sahib temple being less than a two-hour drive away via Indian Railways, there are huge opportunities to develop a strong Sikh tourism industry.

Signs of growth and development of Pakistan's travel industry in its current form are praised worldwide. While Pakistan is ranked as the “Best Escape Destination of 2020” due to its importance, it is also heralded as the third best travel destination in the world in 2020. As the country's security increases, so does Pakistan's tourism industry. to increase. In just a few years, Pakistan's travel industry has grown by more than 300%.

Tourists Visited Pakistan 2010-2018

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
907,000	1,161,000		966,000	565,212	530,000	563,400	965,498	1,750,000
	1,900,035							

International blogger's visits to Pakistan have served a great deal in changing perceptions about Pakistan. In 2018, the English Explorers Affiliation positioned Pakistan as the world's main hiker objective, depicting the nation as "quite possibly of the most amicable country on the planet, with additional mountains than you can envision". Forbes positioned Pakistan as the best objective to visit in 2019. The World Travel and The travel industry Challenge Report positioned Pakistan in the main 25% of the world's top vacationer locations among what's more, Mangroves on the Indus. delta, in locales of the Indus Human advancement including Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.

Pakistan expanded the quantity of vacationer visas in 2019 to increment the travel industry. The new program offers visas on appearance to explorers from 50 nations, including the US. Residents of 175 different nations can apply for a visa on the web. Already, visas must be gotten from Pakistani government offices abroad.

Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is a kind of the tourism with two principle subtypes: Pilgrimage,

which means travel for religious, profound or spiritual purposes, and the review of strict landmarks or monuments and relics, a part of touring.

Pakistan is the center of religious tourist's sites. Hindu and Sikh religious places attract pilgrims towards Pakistan. There is a range of attractions for religious tourists in the form of Sufi shrines, Hindu Temples, Gurdwaras and Buddhist stupas in Pakistan which attracts a large number of local and foreigner tourists. Religious tourism creates a spiritual connection between the tourists and local community. Government of Pakistan has taken good initiatives to improve religious tourism in Pakistan. Kartarpur corridor is the best example. .

Pakistan and India has engaged in conflicts since decades, through religious tourism spots of Hindus and Sikh, this conflict can be reduced.

In August 2018, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan, announced that he was expecting to build a road for Sikh scholars that would connect people from Dera Baba Nanak in India to Kartarpur Sahib and many people saw it as a good project to build. Harmony in Pakistan. . Throughout the period a group of Sikhs strengthened Pakistan's claim over the House of Kartarpur and thus represented the positive image of Pakistan. The United Nations General Assembly also called for the launch of the Kartarpur Step Process in Pakistan and India, as the 193-member body, supported by Pakistan and the Philippines, set out to strengthen the culture of interfaith dialogue and thereby promote a culture of interfaith dialogue. rapport.

Buddhist travel industry with a market of 500 million Buddhists worldwide Pakistan's Gandhara region, including Mardan, Taxila and Swat, has a special place for Buddhist holidays. In particular, the origins of Korean Buddhists can be traced back to the Pakistani region, where the Korean priest Hyecho made a long journey.

A 48-meter-high Buddha was also discovered in Haripur, inside the painting that is the most complex Buddha statue in the world. The Takht-i-Bahi in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the people of Northern Punjab alone can clearly represent the 50 million Mahayana Buddhists in Korea, China and Japan.

A 2016 Gallup survey of Buddhist communities in a select group of countries revealed 58 million "engaged visitors"; of these, 5% (2.9 million) visited Pakistan.

Adventure Tourism

Cultural tourism is a kind of tourism in which the tourist's basic inspiration is to learn, find, insight and burn-through the substantial and elusive cultural attractions and products. There are numerous antiquated locales, pinnacles and structures in the northern districts of Pakistan. The Chitral Valley is home to a little gathering of pre-Islamic Kalash animists who guarantee to be relatives of Alexander the Incomparable. Alexander's fight on the Jhelum Stream occurred in Punjab.

Lahore is the social capital of Pakistan with numerous Mughal destinations, for example, Badshahi Masjid, Shalimar Nurseries, Jahangir's Burial chamber and Lahore Post. This social legacy is utilized to assemble harmony and great picture of Pakistan around the world. A genuine illustration of social the travel industry that shows the best picture of Pakistan to the world is VIRSA. Public Organization of Conventional and Social Legacy (Lok Virsa) was laid out in 1974 with the command of the conservation also, advancement of the unmistakable and immaterial legacy of Pakistan. The conventional celebration Lok Mela

has intrigued huge groups of different social statuses. The 10-day celebration is held at the National Organization of Folk and Traditional Heritage, even more ordinarily known as Lok Virsa. The celebration expects to grandstand the work and imagination of roughly 700 specialists speaking to the conventions and legacy

of Pakistan. About 20,000 tourists have visited to LOK VIRSA every year to enjoy this festival. This festival attracts tourists across the globe to visit Pakistan and by this step peace is being promoted between Pakistan and other countries of the world, so Cultural Tourism in Pakistan plays a vital role in shaping its positive image across the globe and reduce tensions between countries.

History and Archeological Tourism:

Pakistan is home to many archeological site, forts, shrines, monuments, tombs and stupas. These are not only archeological site but also the historic urban cores. Pakistan has also six UNESCO world heritage sites.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

1. [Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro](#) (1980)
2. [Buddhist Ruins of Takht-i-Bahi and Neighbouring City Remains at Sahr-i-Bahlol](#) (1980)
3. [Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore](#) (1981)
4. [Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta](#) (1981)
5. [Rohtas Fort](#) (1997)
6. [Taxila](#) (1980)

Moenjodaro is an age-old site on the banks of the Indus River in the Larkana district of Sindh. The history of the 5,000-year-old city dates back to B.C. It dates back to the 3rd millennium BC and was one of the largest and oldest urban centers in South Asia. The ruins were first discovered in 1922 and intensive exploration was completed in the 1930s, but further excavations were prevented after 1965 by impatience and fragmentation. To date, only 33% of the site has been discovered, and the insurance process for the site has been ongoing since then.

Taxila is an archaeological site located in the Rawalpindi district, 30 km northwest of Islamabad. The history of the city dates back as far as possible to the Gandhara period and contains the ruins of the Gandhāran city of Takṣaśīlā, which was populated heavily by Hindus and Buddhists and is now remembered in these traditions as a place of extreme and infallible heaven.

Main elevated, Takht-I-Bahi is a private Buddhist temple of the 1st century BC, built to a height of more than 152 meters. The ruins are located approximately 16 km from Merdan and 80 km from Peshawar. Sahr-i-Bahlol is a small town supported by Takht-I-Bahi from a relatively early period. The Uncertainty Center is a special area containing four main social features: the Court of Stupas, the Quirky Wonder, Safe House, and the Special Center.

Makli is a necropolis situated in the old city of Thatta, tracing all the way back to the fourteenth hundred years. The landmarks and sanctuaries in Makli are made of fine stones, blocks and painted blocks, mirroring the Sindh culture of the period. The burial chambers of renowned holy people and rulers, including Jam Nizamuddin II, are as yet protected and are a demonstration of Mughal and Islamic engineering.

The Post and Shalamar Nurseries in Lahore are two separate imperial castles from the Mughal time frame. Situated in the northwest of the walled city of Lahore, the stronghold has been annihilated and remade commonly from the beginning of time. Shalamar Nursery is an illustration of a Mughal garden made by Ruler Shah Jahan in 1642. The nursery is propelled by Persian and Islamic practices and

covers an area of 16 hectares.

Rohtas Post is a tactical stronghold worked by Sher Shah Suri, found 16 kilometers from Jhelum in Punjab, Pakistan. The palace is a special illustration of Islamic military design that joins the imaginative practices of Türkiye and the Indian subcontinent. It was implicit an assigned region on a little slope on the banks of the Kahan Stream to monitor the Ghakkars. The name is gotten from Rohtasgarh, the spot of Sher Shah Suri.

There are 26 significant legacy and vacationer destinations in the rundown of tents that Pakistan means to enroll as a World Legacy Site and thusly become a World Legacy Site. The tent rundown might be refreshed out of the blue, yet posting is a necessity to meet all requirements for enrollment for a time of five to a decade.

List of Sites

Sites on the Tentative List

1. [Badshahi Mosque, Lahore \(1993\)](#)
2. [Wazir Khan's Mosque, Lahore \(1993\)](#)
3. [Tombs of Jahangir, Asif Khan and Akbari Sarai, Lahore \(1993\)](#)
4. [Hiran Minar and Tank, Sheikhpura \(1993\)](#)
5. [Tomb of Hazrat Rukn-e-Alam, Multan \(1993\)](#)
6. [Rani Kot Fort, Dadu \(1993\)](#)
7. [Shah Jahan Mosque, Thatta \(1993\)](#)
8. [Chaukhandi Tombs, Karachi \(1993\)](#)
9. [Archaeological Site of Mehrgarh \(2004\)](#)
10. [Archaeological Site of Rehman Dheri \(2004\)](#)
11. [Archaeological Site of Harappa \(2004\)](#)
12. [Archaeological Site of Ranigat \(2004\)](#)
13. [Shahbazgarhi Rock Edicts \(2004\)](#)
14. [Mansehra Rock Edicts \(2004\)](#)
15. [Baltit Fort \(2004\)](#)
16. [Tomb of Bibi Jawindi, Baha'al-Halim and Ustead and the Tomb and Mosque of Jalaluddin Bukhari \(2004\)](#)
17. [Tomb of Shah Rukn-e-Alam \(2004\)](#)
18. [Port of Banbhore \(2004\)](#)
19. [Derawar and the Desert Forts of Cholistan \(2016\)](#)
20. [Hingol Cultural Landscape \(2016\)](#)
21. [Karez System Cultural Landscape \(2016\)](#)
22. [Nagarparkar Cultural Landscape \(2016\)](#)
23. [Central Karakorum National Park \(2016\)](#)
24. [Deosai National Park \(2016\)](#)
25. [Ziarat Juniper Forest \(2016\)](#)
26. [The Salt Range and Khewra Salt Mine \(2016\)](#)

Sports Tourism

Sports industry is any sort of the travel industry whose primary object is to watch and partake in games. Sports the travel industry contributes \$600 billion yearly to the worldwide economy. Sports the travel industry for the most part makes positive financial impacts; for instance, social inclination, a feeling of satisfaction, local area entertainment, and the potential chance to encounter the impacts of local area cooperative wellbeing and prosperity. Sports the travel industry works on the picture of host nations or urban areas and draws in new games related organizations and organizations that give work to nearby occupants.

Presently in Pakistan, sports are a significant piece of Pakistani culture. Cricket is the most well known sport in Pakistan; cricket, polo and squash are additionally famous. Customary games like Kabaddi and other well known games are additionally played. Sports the travel industry in Pakistan was impacted by psychological warfare with the assault on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore on 3 March 2009. Since then, there were very limited international sports activities in Pakistan. International Cricket returned to Pakistan in 2017 again. Overall security situation is good in past 5 years. In 2021 Pakistan will host the 14th South Asian Games for the first time since 2004. Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Sialkot, and Gujranwala are the cities in Punjab where events will take place, although other cities have expressed interest in hosting some events too. Seven nations will take place in the games.

Opportunities to Tourism in Pakistan

- A) Recreational
 - Beauty of Northern areas
 - Swat, murre
 - Deosai
 - Saif-ul-mulook
 - Swaik lake
- B) Cultural
 - Kalash culture
 - Badshahi masjid
 - Lahore fort
 - Ancient civilization
 - Local culture
- C) Historical
 - Home of historical places
 - Gandhawa civilization 1500 bc to 1200bc
 - Ancient historical and archeological places
 - Takht bai
 - Taxila
 - Mohenjo-daro
 - Harappa
 - Qila bala hisar, drawar fort
 - Ghandhara civilization
- D) Religious

- Sacred places-shrines, buildings
- Pakistan-follower of 3 religions in history, hinduism, buddism, and islam
- Sikhism-baba guru nanak
- Kalash religion
- Hindu workshop places-katasraj mander
- Muslim shrines sufis

Challenges

- **Poor Connectivity Infrastructure**

However, there are also many challenges in the field of tourism in Pakistan like terrorism creates security challenges since 2000, poor management, lack of infrastructure /facilities for tourists, advertisement, promotion, and proper tourism marketing, high prices at the tourist spots, and lack of awareness are some of the main challenges in the field of tourism in Pakistan. Connectivity of road network is not good in Pakistan. No government had paid proper attention in improving these road networks. Connectivity of Northern Areas of Pakistan to rest of the country is not in a good condition. Especially in winter season these roads get blocked due to heavy snow falling and land sliding. The main reason for government failure is corruption and insufficient budgets.

- **Negligence in Promotion**

Development in the tourism industry in Pakistan can boost the economy, promote harmony and peace, enhance political relations with other countries, reduce misconceptions, tensions, cultural exchange, and shapes the positive image of Pakistan in front of the world. Despite the huge potential of tourism in Pakistan there has not been much progress in using this potential to shape the image of the country. Lack of poor marketing and promotion can also degrade tourism towards Pakistan.

- **Terrorism**

Scenario of 9/11 was the main challenge to the tourism industry which gave rise to terrorism, local insurgent groups and create warlike situation. Challenge of extremism and religious segregation is also a problem to tourism industry of Pakistan. Absence of tourist body at national level is also a challenge to tourism.

- **Difficulties in acquiring Visas is another challenge to this field in Pakistan.**

- **Poor coordination between departments, poor interconnected services like transportation, guidance etc. also challenge tourism in Pakistan.**

- **Security situation has been the biggest challenge in the promotion of tourism. Over 50 % research say that due to poor security and safety situations potential tourists are not visiting the country. Tourism policy and management is one area where much of the efforts have not been put. Successive governments have not given any priority to tourism. There is no emphasis on advertisements and marketing.**

- **Lack of the skilled workforce in the tourism industry is also a challenge.**

- **There is no policy to bring tourism together as a proper industry.**

- **Conservation of tourists' sites is another area where Pakistan has not**

taken any special interest.

- Social Challenges
- No doubt Pakistani people are noble and hospitable. But there are also self-centered local people at tourist places when it comes to economic interest. And when foreign tourist visits such places without a guide, these people try their best to charge them heavily. And such act leaves a bad of Pakistan.
- Negative Role of Media
- Before terrorism, there was time when media showed beautiful places of Pakistan when it was under state control but in recent years when media was liberalized .it started promoting black side of Pakistan, with ignoring its impacts on Pakistan's image.
- Lack of Human Resource Development

In Pakistan, tourism industry is facing a major problem of lack of human resources. There is lack of facilities and low-quality services for tourists, which force them to return, and they cannot stay there for long time.

Recommendations

- Pakistan has made some good progress in road networks, but more improvement is needed in Infrastructure facilities. Hotels, restaurants and Holiday spots are not yet at the international standards.
- Initiatives by the concerned government towards the betterment of tourism industry are not enough or less effective, reforms are needed in the Travel and Tourism Policies accordingly.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

There is a huge influence of social media in inspiring the public and international tourists. When these travelers and bloggers visits such beautiful sites, they share videos and photos on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp etc. They also share their experiences in those contents. Pakistan is full of such beautiful sites and government should give opportunities to such media persons and bloggers inspire other people to come and see the real side of Pakistan.

- Customer to customer interaction through social media is now playing a pivotal role, according to research held by Customer Research North America (2015).

Government should hire such tourist companies which can interact online with international tourists, which will be an influential tool to reach the potential of tourism.

- Inadequate knowledge and training of personnel in tourism sector is a great challenge, Government must start a nationwide training program as Priority.
- Pakistani media has failed to show and project the positive image of the country. Effective media campaigns should be started.
- Better allocation of annual tourism budget can be the key factor to boost tourism. Developed local tourism industry would leave the better and positive impression on the mind of foreign tourists.
- Improvement of laws and order situation is needed.
- Tourism education should be enhanced, need more courses, degrees and specialization.
- Northern areas of Pakistan are the huge attraction for tourists worldwide while the vast deserts of Sindh and Baluchistan are completely ignored. Beautiful beaches of Arabian Sea coast are also not brought into attention. Government must

take notice of these weaknesses and must create activities to attract the world toward Deserts and beaches of Pakistan.

- Effective campaigns for Local festivals could be a great source of tourist attraction and helpful to project the positive image of Pakistan.
- Tourism infrastructure should be developed like roads, railway and airport access and hotel industry need to be upgrade.

Conclusion

Pakistan is home to a diversity of cultures, history and stunning landscapes. Pakistan offers everything a tourist could wish for, sceneries of nature, adventures from the highest mountains to the vast deserts, history, archeology, spirituality and much more. Pakistan is known as the best kept secret of Asian Tourism. Now it is the time to show this pleasant secret to the world. Tourism is the key factor to show and project the positive image of Pakistan. Programs and initiatives from the Government would not be enough to shape the positive image of Pakistan. Government, Tourism Industry, Society and Local Media would have to join hands together to present the Pakistan as a welcoming safe country for everyone in the world. It is also necessary for formulation and implementation of effective policies. Pakistan needs to form such policies to improve the budgets and to develop a proper institution for protection of rights of the tourists. So, they can show the real image of Pakistan to the world.

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