



# Tourism for Peace and Community Engagement: A Soft Power Approach to Conflict Resolution

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**Keywords:**

Peace through tourism, Conflict resolution, Community participation, Tourism development, Soft power.

**Abstract.**

The study analyses the soft power approach to conflict resolution using tourism and community involvement initiatives. This study investigates the impact of Peace through Tourism (PTT) and Community participation (CP) on Conflict resolution (CR) in Border destinations of Jammu and Kashmir (UT) in order to explore the possibilities of promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, as articulated by Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16). Using community involvement and tourism as a means to greatly minimise conflict of all kinds as the main objective, about 340 residents of border towns were polled with questionnaires. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM) were employed to test and validate the study's assumptions about the relationships between variables. Current research findings suggest that peace through tourism plays a key role in resolving conflict at destinations and may play a supportive role in building peace on a global and local scale. The results also showed that community participation in tourism development has a big effect on resolving conflicts and that community participation lets locals enjoy the benefits of tourism activities and gives them the power to improve their skills through small business ventures. The paper gives suggestions for how different groups can help build peace through cooperative tourism projects and community interaction based on tourism.

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**Kata Kunci:**

Perdamaian melalui pariwisata, Resolusi konflik, Partisipasi masyarakat, Pengembangan pariwisata, Kekuatan lembut.

**Abstrak.**

Studi ini menganalisis pendekatan soft power dalam penyelesaian konflik dengan menggunakan inisiatif pariwisata dan keterlibatan masyarakat. Studi ini menyelidiki dampak Perdamaian melalui Pariwisata (PTT) dan Partisipasi Masyarakat (CP) terhadap resolusi Konflik (CR) di destinasi Perbatasan Jammu dan Kashmir (UT) untuk menjajaki kemungkinan memajukan masyarakat yang adil, damai, dan inklusif, sebagaimana diartikulasikan dalam Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan 16 (SDG 16). Dengan menggunakan keterlibatan masyarakat dan pariwisata sebagai sarana untuk meminimalkan segala jenis konflik sebagai tujuan utama, sekitar 340 penduduk kota perbatasan disurvei dengan kuesioner. Analisis faktor eksplorasi (EFA), analisis faktor konfirmatori (CFA), dan pemodelan persamaan struktural (SEM) digunakan untuk menguji dan memvalidasi asumsi penelitian tentang hubungan antar variabel. Temuan penelitian saat ini menunjukkan bahwa perdamaian melalui pariwisata memainkan peran penting dalam menyelesaikan konflik di destinasi wisata dan mungkin memainkan peran pendukung dalam membangun perdamaian pada skala global dan lokal. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengembangan pariwisata mempunyai pengaruh yang besar dalam penyelesaian konflik dan partisipasi masyarakat memungkinkan masyarakat setempat menikmati manfaat dari kegiatan pariwisata dan memberikan mereka kekuatan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan mereka melalui usaha kecil. Makalah ini memberikan saran bagaimana berbagai kelompok dapat membantu membangun perdamaian melalui proyek pariwisata kooperatif dan interaksi masyarakat berdasarkan pariwisata.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest service-based sectors in the world, fostering cross-cultural contacts and serving as a significant driver for global peace (Sharma et al., 2018). According to Ooi (2015), the tourist is both a subject and an object of geopolitics, and developing mutual understanding and empathy is part of the geopolitical matrix from a soft power perspective. He asserts that tourism may advance the objectives of soft power in a variety of ways, such as by enhancing understanding of a destination and improving its reputation. As a result, tourism can actively contribute to the promotion of peace, friendship, cohesion, and socioeconomic development in the area, along with the enhancement of national and international perceptions among nations. It is currently one of the fastest growing industries in the world and is predicted to continue its upward trend in the near future. Past studies suggest that harmony and peace can be achieved through positive interactions within and between communities and individuals (Var et al., 1989; Var, Schlutter, Ankonmash, & Lee, 1989; Ap & Var, 1990).

The interactions enable intercultural encounters, motivating people to learn about each other's lives, cultures, languages, lifestyles, etc. This can possibly build understanding, respect, tolerance, and empathy and bring positive changes in negative perceptions and attitudes, resulting in the building of peace and tranquilly (Kelly, 2006; Shin, 2008; Blanchard & Desbiolles, 2013; Jimenez & Kloeze, 2014; Wohlmuther & Wintersteiner, 2014).

The concept of Peace through tourism has been looked into by many scholars who believe that tourism brings peace (Kim et al., 2007; Salazar, 2006; Levy & Hawkins, 2009; Herath, 2010; Lee et al., 2012; D'amore, 2014; Miller et al., 2014). Peace through tourism is the concept that cultural knowledge leads to attitudinal transformation, which in turn leads to peace. In the research of Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2021), it is also observed that tourism is a dialogic tool that can contribute to conflict reduction and peace building; by engaging conflict in tourism spaces and by advancing the peace tourism agenda, the work emphasises the need to frame tourism in terms of peace and justice concerns. The assessment of tourism in this setting can contribute further to the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goal 16, as set by the United Nations. Moreover, tourism can promote intercultural and interfaith tolerance and understanding, laying the groundwork for a more harmonious society as it involves billions of encounters between individuals of various cultural origins, and in post-conflict societies, it can help maintain peace by enhancing and involving local communities (UNWTO, 2019). The local community is a valuable resource for tourism development and one of the most well-known stakeholders in the development of tourism (Haukeland et al., 2011; Jamal and Stronza, 2009). In the context of a tourist destination's cultural development, decisions about tourism development are based on what's best for the local community (Kim et al., 1990). Conflict resolution is a communication technique for transforming negative, passionate feelings in a dispute into enthusiastic states that allow for the negotiation of a settlement. The technique of dealing with a disagreement and creating a solution is known as "conflict resolution." It's best understood as a functional paradigm with two main components: peace-making and negotiation. India and Pakistan have several religious sites on both sides of the border that are significant for the people living on both sides of the international border. One such event that is considered to be an important thaw between the two countries is the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor (Shukla, 2019). This corridor is often referred to as the "peace corridor," which was opened after intense negotiations and is rightly called the "peace corridor" as it made the two countries sit and talk about the formalities with regard to its operations (Hasan and Khalid, 2021). This soft power strategy of strategic diplomatic contacts between the two countries is seen as an opening for an all-encompassing and long-lasting way to solve conflicts that could bring peace to the region.

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is the northernmost part of India, which is famous for tourism activities (Dar et al., 2014). J&K, now a Union Territory (UT), shares India's international borders with

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China along with state borders of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Tourism activities in the region often remains disrupted and doesn't offer a safe and stable travel experience for visitors. Borders are considered as barriers for the movement of people and trade between states and countries and also act as gateways to facilitate interchange and contact (Hageman et al., 2004). There is a need to work in coordination with countries that share borders for sustaining, protecting, and utilising the borderland for the economic and social development of the people living in these areas (Palomäki, 1994; Tenhiälä, 1994; Timothy, 1999; Wachowiak, 1994). Disputes at these locations can create a barrier in the minds of visitors and create a negative perception of the destination. Due to this reason, people avoid visiting places perceived as being unsafe for tourist activities, such as places with heavy military presence where people find it risky to move freely (Tosun & Timothy, 2001). Cordial relations between countries bordering each other make leisure activities possible in these areas on both sides of the border. Some border destinations have the potential to become prominent tourist destinations due to their rural and peripheral character, which can help generate economic activity and accelerate the development of the area. Researchers haven't paid much attention to how tourism can be used as a tool for international "soft power" relations (Hunter, 2015). Even though soft power tools like tourism still have a way to go in terms of changing audience disposition and serving as a peacemaker in hostile places, tourism initiatives can help turn hostile borders into an integrated geopolitical space, thereby fostering amicable transborder connections (Chhabra, 2018). In the past, research such as that by Belhassen et al., (2014) has also examined the evolution of a conflict zone as a site that attracts tourists and how a village developed into an international symbol of resistance.

Therefore, the present study targets the hostile border destinations located in J&K, namely, R.S. Pura, Pargwal, Pallanwala, Kanachak, and Chamliyal. In addition, the study is designed to have a three-fold impact. The first step is to assess the influence of peace through tourism on conflict resolution. Second, the influence of community participation on conflict resolution is assessed. Thirdly, the research will make suggestions to various stakeholders on tourist growth, conflict resolution, and community engagement.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *Peace through Tourism and Conflict Resolution*

Goal 16 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals concentrates on fostering inclusive, just, and peaceful societies in order to ensure sustainable development, which requires governments, civil society, and communities to collaborate together in finding long-term solutions to conflict and insecurity (United Nations, 2023). Tourism is widely recognised as contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Reddy et al., 2020; Reddy & Wilkes, 2015). Farmaki (2017) presented a continuum that was based on the discussion that the role of tourism in promoting peace needs to be put in the light of conflict to see what impact tourism has on the conflict and also to explore the moderating role of tourism on peace. According to Fry et al. (2021), this can be understood as the comparative background regarding different societies' perspectives within peace systems that not only lead to the avoidance of wars but also develop connections among communities. According to Jimenez and Kloeze (2014), peace through tourism is connected to poverty reduction, historical conservation, environmental safety, security, and sustainability.

Researchers so far have been focusing on exploring the connections between environmental protection and poverty reduction. Aghazamani and Hunt (2015) highlighted tourism as a significant tool to foster peace, diplomacy, and human security. Further, they suggest that tourism may play a vital role in promoting peace between arch enemies. Tourism is a vital prerequisite for peace (Aghazamani and Hunt, 2015). Crotts (2003) defined tourism as being perceived as a peace industry.

(Aghazamani and Hunt, 2015; Jimenez and Kloeze, 2014; Pratt and Liu, 2016; Adhikari, 2005; Bhattarai and Dahal, 2007; Grandon, 2007; Upadhayaya et al., 2011; Upreti and Upadhayaya, 2010) have all identified a link between tourism and peace. Among many desires and commitments shared for peace achieved through tourism, the United Nations (UN) has called tourism an effective element for promoting peace in the world (Kunwar, 2006). Aghazamani and Hunt (2015) said that tourism can help in promoting peace as it provides an opportunity to understand and appreciate the different ways of life, and in this process, it helps in maintaining relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds and promotes reconciliation and understanding. Besides this, Pramodh (2015) argues that tourism plays a crucial role in developing and promoting peace.

While Edgell (1990) stated that positive peace is more conducive to tourism growth than negative peace. When there is a war, tourism suffers, but when there is peace, it thrives (Upadhayaya et al., 2011). Conflict, according to Rahim et al., (2001), is an interaction process characterised by inappropriateness, disagreement, or difference inside or between social units (i.e., individuals, groups, or organizations). In other words, conflict is defined as a condition of disagreement and distrust that slows the tourist industry's long-term growth (Rukuni et al., 2017). Minor disputes that were controllable, according to academics like Upadhaya et al. (2014), were frequently favourable to peace. In this environment, tourism fosters international collaboration, which decreases the danger of tensions and conflicts. Tourism may be considered to have a unique catalytic character that promotes peace and reduces conflict since it affirms healthy ties between and within nations. Academics have indicated that tourism's potential to break down barriers between individuals and inspire international collaboration is enhanced by the personal interactions that occur during travel (Causevic, 2010; Sarkar & George, 2010). Open communication is a key part of soft power diplomacy and a very significant aspect of conflict resolution.

Engagements through tourism in regional conflicts are evidenced by the study of Kim et al. (2007), which investigated the possibility of achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through tourism, and they discovered a sort of "track two" diplomacy as a result of the visits of inhabitants of South Korea to certain locations in North Korea. Organizations such as the World Tourism Organization have recognised the importance of tourism in international relations and world peace, and the positive effects of tourism in decreasing prejudice and tension have been shown in many nations (George et al., 2009). Mediation and arbitration have both been identified as key components in dispute resolution. In contrast to arbitration, the parties to a dispute are responsible for resolving their disagreements through mediation. Reconciliation is essential for the establishment of long-term peace. According to the literature, it is a process of conversation between opposing parties that leads to mutual acknowledgment and respect for differences, interests, and values. The study focuses on a number of key skills that someone in charge of conflict resolution should possess. It is believed that some sort of training should be completed prior to being assigned to a lean position. Therefore, peace through tourism is an integral part of conflict resolution and the development of any community. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been framed:

*H1: Peace through tourism significantly impacts Conflict resolution*

## *2.2. Community Participation and Conflict Resolution*

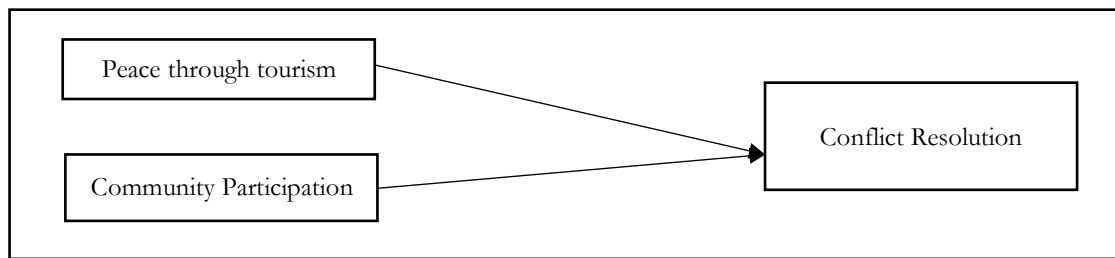
There is a broad assumption that fierce conflict is related to a lack of development (Masud et al., 2017; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000). This can be further associated with the virtuous cycle of peace tourism, particularly in TPBAs (Transboundary Protected Areas), which are associated with neoliberal systems that suggest that the growth in the economy is related to the Gross domestic product (GDP) of the countries, which helps in the development of the local communities through a trickle-down effect.

Community participation in tourism development helps locals benefit from activities related to tourism and helps them grow economically by opening small ventures (May-Ling et al., 2014) in order to reduce conflict and create a peaceful building process. Therefore, the participation of locals in tourism is a catalyst that triggers positivity in attitudes towards change and development (Claiborne, 2010). In this context, community participation builds up a peaceful environment and overcomes the violence. Community participation is the process of engaging the stakeholders, which include government officials, members of civil society, and planners, in such a way that all take part in the decision-making process (Okazaki, 2008). Thongma et al., (2011) suggested that community participation is vital for establishing peace, which positively impacts tourism development. Community participation provides the local community with an opportunity to utilise their capabilities, empowers them to make decisions, and gives them the confidence to have control over things that are going to impact their lives and promote a peaceful society. In societies that are conflict-ridden, involving communities can be beneficial for promoting peace (Del Sarto, 2013). Furthermore, intercultural dialogue and understanding among communities are beneficial not only from an ethical standpoint but also as a potential vehicle for socioeconomic development, global security, and stability (Carbone, 2017). Community-based processes and their associations can be used for creating social capital, especially in societies that are divided, by providing them with platforms to discuss and communicate their joint decisions. Adopting such a method can help mitigate mistrust and lead to a peaceful resolution of local conflicts and disputes. This way can lead to peace in the larger context. Human wellbeing, peace, prosperity, and dignity are common objectives and policies in communities all around the world. In order to promote peace and prosperity, society's influencers must think and sit together to create a shared platform. When it comes to conflict avoidance, communities have a significant edge since they are adaptable, linked, and have a strong sense of community. Furthermore, they foster trust among various demographic groups and raise the alarm when the first indications of violence arise. Salomon (2005) argues that community plays a critical role in determining a successful process that is free of conflict and seeks a mutually beneficial and win-win outcome for all stakeholders. Furthermore, they foster trust among various demographic groups and raise the alarm when the first indications of violence arise. According to Avruch (1998), "Communities are facilitators who play a significant role in decision-making regarding conflict resolution, producing various options and achieving consistency at smoothening measures by proposing course of action for a creative interaction," while "at times they play an important role as moderator and actually advise traditional values, unusual dispute resolution." For example, in the dispute settlement process, communities serve as advisors. Communities are self-determining or semi-independent observers who use observation and communication abilities to confer and give intention-based metaphors in conflict situations.

Furthermore, because they have the ability to control and authorise the situation, specifying behaviour or imposing sanctions that may favour the interests of none, one, or all of the parties in the conflict resolution processes, communities operate on an independent basis and have the power to impose conditions on conflicting parties. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is a process in which the causes of disputes are addressed and hostile relationships are converted into more peaceful ones. Furthermore, in a community-based mentality, conflict resolution is critical. Conflict resolution lays the groundwork for communities to achieve their full potential for prosperity while also enhancing the fabric of society. Effective and efficient conflict resolution attempts to improve service delivery by allowing stakeholders to participate in grass-roots dispute settlement and removing obstacles to long-term conflict resolution. As a result, the idea presented below has been offered.

*H2: Community participation has significant impact on conflict resolution*

A theoretical framework is proposed based on literature review. Fig. 1 shows the theoretical model used in this study.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model of the Study

### 3. Methodology

The Jammu and Kashmir Tourism's most recent prediction indicates that 70% of visitors to the state come for religious pilgrimage. These border places have a significant potential to draw a sizable number of tourists; however, travellers are still unaware of these border destinations. Therefore, it is clear that although the border region has great potential, the state's unrest prevents it from drawing in large numbers of tourists. The study's selection of these locations was motivated by the information provided above, which shows they have great potential if adequately preserved and effectively marketed. For this study, 340 questionnaires were distributed among the locals at the border area of Jammu; only 267 were returned and found to be eligible to include for further processing. The non-probability convenience sampling technique (Amick and Walberg, 1975) was used to identify the respondents for this study. The questionnaire is divided into four sections, with questions related to the demographic profile in Section A of the questionnaire, which includes gender, age, education, occupation, engagement in tourist activities, and a desire to be a part of the tourism process. Section B comprises 15 items of Peace through tourism and the scale has been taken from the study of Dada (2015). These items of Peace through tourism are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Section C comprises 8 items representing Community participation and the scale has been adopted from the study of Likaota (2014). These variables were also measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Section D comprises of 4 items of Conflict resolution which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale adopted from the study of Michael (2009).

### 4. Results

Results show that 57.5% of the respondents were male. The majority of the respondents fall under the age group of "31–40" (42.5%), which represents a mature range of the respondents' ages. In terms of the respondents' education level, the majority of them held only high school certificates (40.8%), followed by bachelor's degrees (31.7%), and postgraduate degrees (15.8%). The reliability test for the structured questionnaire was conducted using SPSS version 16.

#### 4.1. Purification of the Scale

Exploratory factor analysis has been used to identify the various factors and for scale purification. For the purpose of this study, factor analysis has been applied to 15 items of Peace through tourism that converged into three factors after four iterations in which ten items were retained, and the factors were named as Quality of Life, Cross Border Benefits, Cross Border Tourism. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value arrived at 0.764, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) assessed chi-square = 673.811 Degree of Freedom (DF) = 21 at a 0.000 significance level, which supports the suitability of the data for pursuing factor analysis. Furthermore, 9-items of Conflict resolution were also purified, which converged into three factors named as Mutual Understanding; Resolving Disputes; Community involvement.

In addition, an 8-item scale of Community participation was purified, which converged into one factor with 4 items and all items had factor loadings greater than 0.5. The value of KMO is above the threshold criteria, i.e., 0.7, and the Eigen value is also greater than one for all the constructs (Hair et al., 2010). The scale purification results are shown in Table 1.

#### 4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA has been used to provide a confirmatory test to the measurement theory established based on prior information about factor loadings representing the actual data (Hair et al., 2010). The measurement models for the various constructs (Peace through Tourism, Conflict Resolution, and Community Participation) have been tested, dropping several items with low standard regression weights (less than 0.5). Further, modification indices have also been used to improve model fitness. The fitness of the measurement model is also requisite before interpreting the casual paths of the structural model. The model fit compares the theory to the data results using a covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2010). Further, because the estimated covariance matrix and the actual observed covariance matrix are the same, the proposed theory is considered to be perfect.

##### *Peace through tourism*

The construct consisted of 3 three factors, viz. Quality of life, Cross Border Benefits, Cross border Tourism Comprised of 11 items. The results revealed that goodness of model fit indices and SRW were within the prescribed criteria.

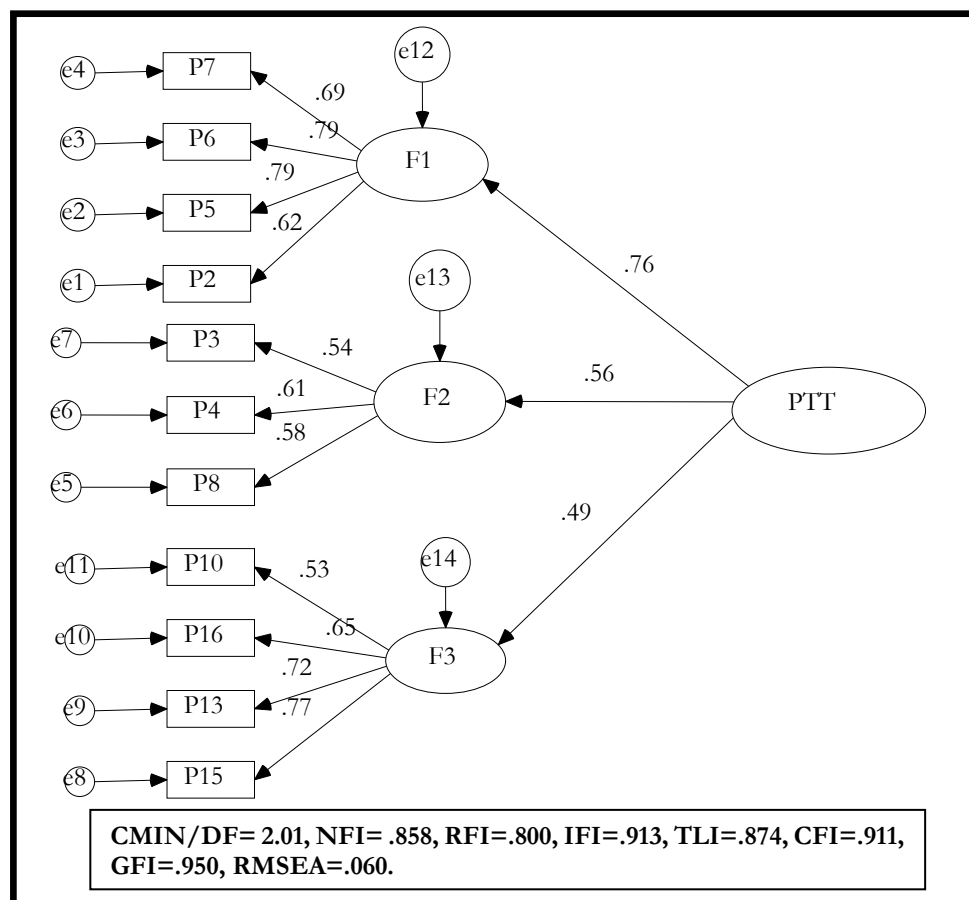


Figure 2. CFA model for Peace Through Tourism

**Table 1.** Summary of Results from Exploratory Factor Analysis

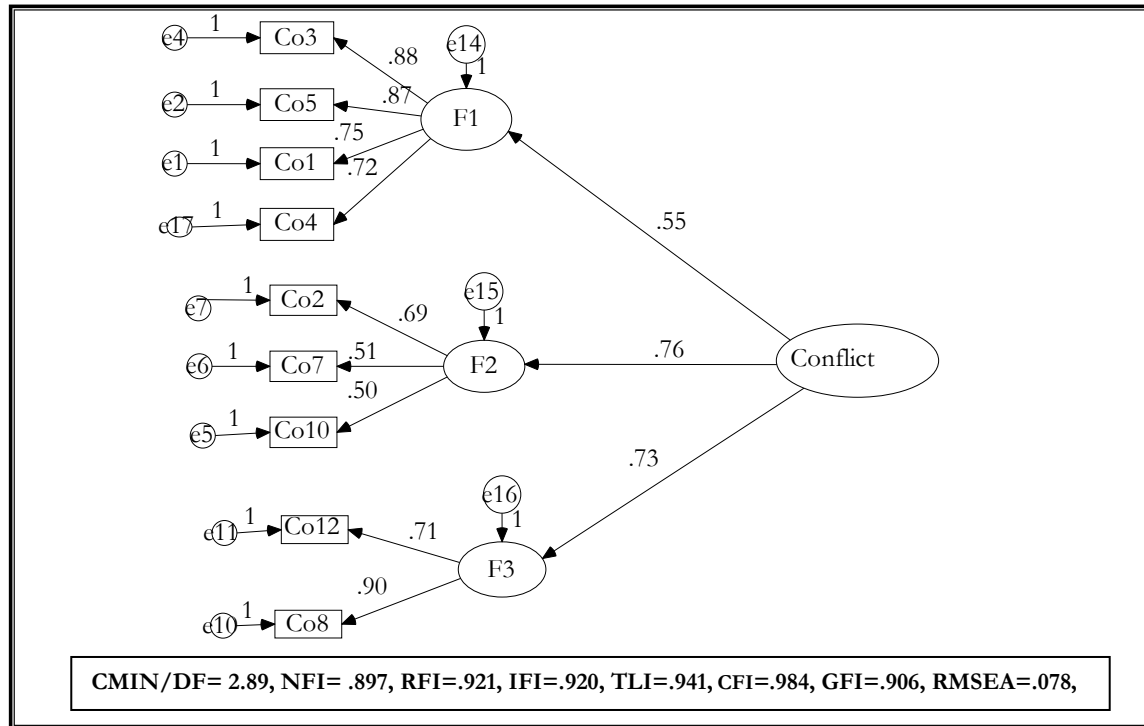
Peace Through Tourism	Items		Mean	FL	KMO	CV	ALPHA		
Quality of life	Tourism facilitates the educational opportunities for locals and outsiders also		3.7769	.900	.764	.812	.804		
	Tourism positively contributes to our cultural texture		3.7598	.778		.804			
	Linguistic skills of stakeholders at a particular destination in cross-border areas help in sustaining peace		3.6945	.695		.675			
	Tourism across border helps to raise the quality of life		4.0995	.841		.721			
Cross Border Benefits	Tourism promotes trade relations among nations		4.1839	.715		.672			
	Good personal relations (contacts) of stakeholders and cross border individuals act as a major element in creating peace		3.9698	.628		.732			
	Tourism helps to build mutual understanding among people		4.1839	.852		.657			
Cross Border Tourism	Promotion of border tourism broadens the perspective of political relations		3.8291	.662		.567			
	Tourism encourages cultural events for the local cultural residents		4.0959	.582		.866			
	Tourism has negative impact on our socio-cultural and family structure		3.4353	.875		.545			
	Tourists has adopted to our way of life		3.7719	.614		.614			
Total variance Explained TVE= 60.454%									
Factors Conflict Resolution									
Mutual understanding	Compromise is a means to solve social problems and just move on.	3.7729	.787	.741	.671	.766			
	I try to work with others to find a solution to a problem which satisfies our expectation	3.8341	.731		.626				
	I try to exchange my ideas with others to cope up with a decision jointly	3.4356	.627		.547				
	Conflict is a negative experience	3.7829	.817		.738				
Resolving Disputes	Conflict resolution improves social relationships	3.6687	.739		.704				
	I try to solve all our concerned issues openly so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	3.9784	.674		.580				
	I always try to control the disputes.	3.5147	.597		.679				
Community Involvement	In difficult situations I would consider a third party as a facilitator.	3.8341	.568		.629				
	I collaborate with others to come up with decisions acceptable to the community.	3.8768	.675		.563				
Total variance Explained TVE= 66.454%									
Factor Community Participation									
Tourism development	Local community behave with the tourist with great respect	3.1133	.5632		.741		.675	.766	
	Local community should attend tourism related seminars, workshops and Conferences	3.8645	.6786				.548		
	Local community should have a voice in decision-making process of local tourism development	3.3267	.5792	.611					
	Local community Should respond actively to tourism survey	3.7893	6.678	7.43					

Note: Here, FL= Factor Loadings, KMO=Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, TVE= Total Variance Explained.



*Conflict Resolution*

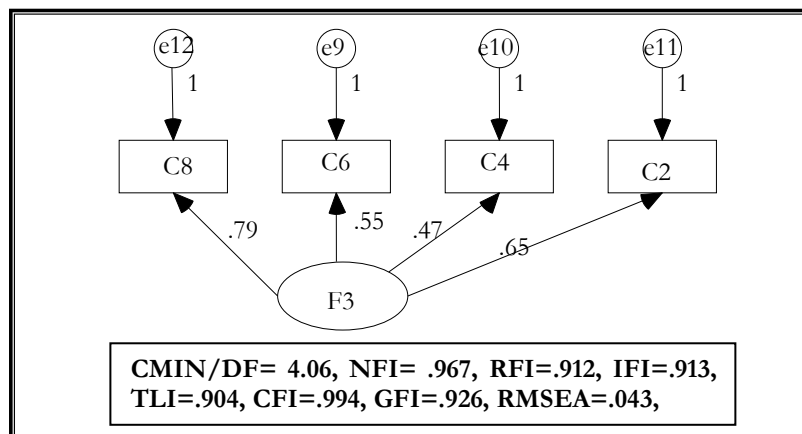
Conflict resolution comprised three factors i.e., **Mutual understanding**, **Resolving Disputes**, and **Community Involvement**. The results revealed that goodness of model fit indices and SRW were within the prescribed criteria.



**Figure 3.** CFA model of Conflict Resolution

*Community Participation*

Measurement model was designed for community participation. It consists of four items i.e., C8, C6, C4, C2. The model fitness indices (CMIN/DF= 4.06, NFI= .967, RFI=.912, IFI=.913, TLI=.904, CFI=.994, GFI=.926, RMSEA=.043).



**Figure 4.** CFA model of Community Participation

**Table 2.** Reliability and Validity of the Scale

Dimension/Construct	AVE	CR
Peace through Tourism	0.61	0.83
Community participation	0.63	0.85
Conflict resolution	0.68	0.89

**Table 3.** Discriminate Validity and Correlation Analysis of Latent Constructs

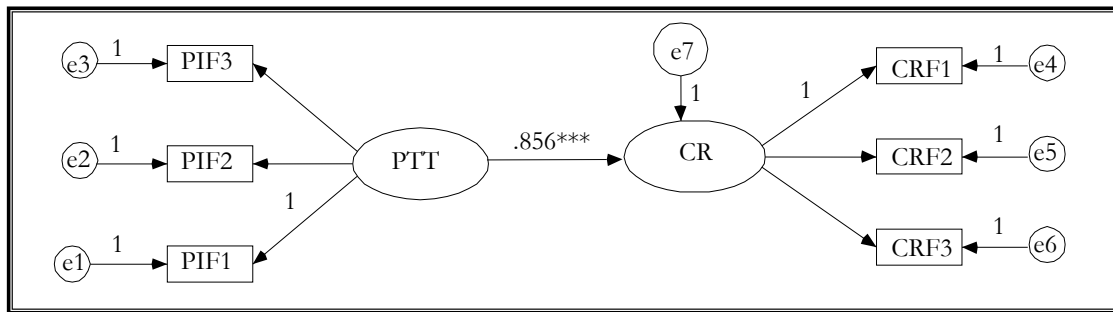
Construct (AVE)	PT	TD	CP	PI	CR
<b>PTT</b>	<b>0.61</b>				
<b>CP</b>	.033**	.352	<b>0.63</b>		
	.183	.594**			
<b>CR</b>	.027*	.665	.237	.044	<b>0.67</b>
	.166	.816**	.523**	.212*	

Note: Values on the diagonal axis represents Average variance extracted, squared correlation is given below the diagonal axis and all the values within parentheses represent correlation. \*=  $p > 0.05$

## 5. Hypothese Testing and Discussion

The study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as a quantitative approach to test and validate the assumptions regarding relationships. SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that allows researchers to analyse complex relationships among variables simultaneously (Kline, 2023). Result revealed that peace through tourism significantly and positively affects conflict Resolution (SRW=.856;  $p < .001$ ). Therefore *Hypothesis 1 is accepted*. A technique of ensuring that a country or community generates circumstances for long-term peace that help to minimise conflict is known as "peace via tourism." Peace initiative methods have become increasingly important in resolving the nation's conflict. Peace through tourism, on the other hand, is a continual process that includes a variety of factors such as socio-economic growth, democratisation, and environmental protection. Furthermore, a peace initiative is an important tool for resolving conflicts and stabilising society. Its goal is to promote societal harmony, cohesiveness, and equitable involvement in the creation of peace, all of which aid in the reduction of conflict. It is also necessary when the societies involved in a conflict share beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions that support adherence to conflictive goals, delegitimize the opponent, and thus negate the possibility of peaceful conflict resolution and prevent the development of peaceful relations.

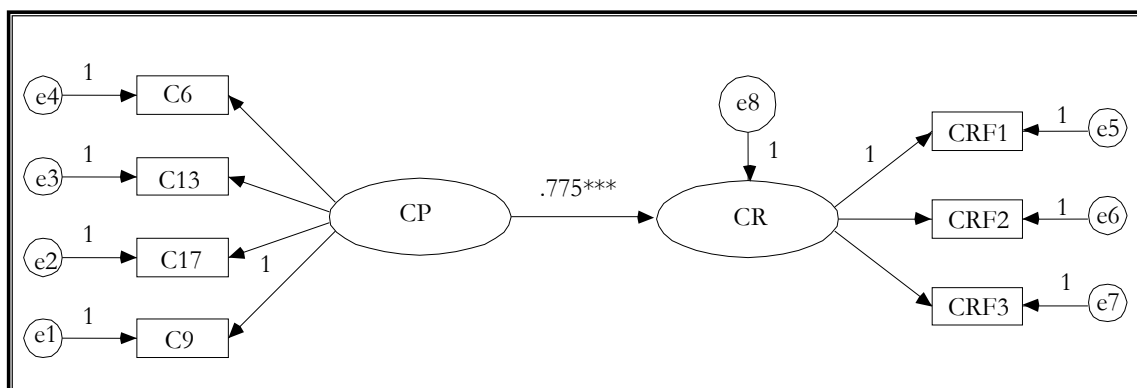
It is also necessary when the societies involved in a conflict share beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions that support adherence to conflictive goals, delegitimize the opponent, and thus negate the possibility of peaceful conflict resolution and prevent the development of peaceful relations. On the other side, the opposite of peace is disputes and violence; hence, peace may be simply defined as the absence of violent actions. Williams et al., (2014) opined that peace as a condition of agreement and unity that is beyond conflict and can be clearly identified, implying that opposing interests and ideological disputes may be resolved. Though it is widely scarce and expensive, peace is the most difficult and necessary condition for the dynamic growth of any area of the economy or the tourist business. Furthermore, peace expansion is a difficult endeavour since it is intertwined with so many other factors. As a result of the current conflicts, creating a calm environment has become a challenge.



**Figure 5.** Peace through Tourism Impacts on Conflict Resolution

*H2: Community participation significantly affects conflict resolution.*

Results revealed that community participation positively leads to conflict resolution (SRW=.775;  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted. In order to resolve a problem, community engagement becomes critical. Both the international and local communities advocate for the government's including local people in decision-making processes that directly influence their lives. In such a circumstance, a community engagement strategy helps to decrease conflict by reducing the negative impact of changes brought on by tourist development in certain areas. Furthermore, community engagement allows for the exchange of information and ideas and the settlement of conflicts. Participation in peace initiative procedures by the community may help to preserve and promote local culture, customs, knowledge, and skill, as well as foster pride in the community's history (Lacy et al., 2002). The goal of community involvement is to re-establish contact amongst stakeholders in order to aid improved decision-making and a peace-building process that is headed towards reconciliation (Nampila, 2005). Furthermore, active community engagement is viewed as a tool for joint venture collaboration, decision-making, and representation in community structures (Chapman and Kirk, 2001). This study, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of local community involvement in conflict resolution.



**Figure 6.** Impact of Community Participation on Conflict Resolution

**Table 4.** Structural Equation Modelling and Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis	Relationships	( $\beta$ )	P-value	Status
H1	Peace through Tourism $\rightarrow$ Conflict Resolution	.856	< 0.05	Accepted
H2	Community Participation $\rightarrow$ Conflict Resolution	.775	< 0.05	Accepted

## 6. Conclusion

Tourism is viewed as a contributor to world peace (Pernecky, 2010). Tourism as a peacemaker discourse rests on the notion that contact produced by travel can favourably impact international politics and promote world peace by narrowing cultural and psychological divides between people (Nyaupane et al., 2008). Ooi (2015) asserts that tourism may advance soft power aims in a number of ways, including through fostering a deeper familiarity with and more positive perception of a destination. The study defines a constructive approach to various constructs (Peace through tourism, Community Participation and Conflict Resolution) required for developing a healthy perception towards conflict resolution. This study empirically highlights the importance of peace in promoting national harmony and tranquilly through the active participation of local communities in decision-making. This was also highlighted in the past by the literature, which showed that stakeholder-centered planning is crucial for developing a destination strategically (Inskeep, 1991) and for marketing a destination (Heath & Wall, 1992). There is a need to involve different stakeholders in the planning process to enhance the competitiveness of a destination (Getz & Jamal, 1994; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). This study broadens the scope of tourism by validating the importance of peace through tourism and the participation of the local community in the resolution of conflicts. Peace through tourism construct emerged with three factors namely, quality of life ( $M = 2.68$ ), Cross Border benefits ( $M = 4.10$ ) and Cross Border Tourism ( $M = 3.78$ ). The other construct of this study highlighted the factors like Mutual Understanding ( $M = 3.25$ ), Resolving Dispute ( $M = 3.79$ ) and Community Involvement ( $M = 4.78$ ). Moreover, for community participation the mean value came out to be 3.45.

These results show that peace through tourism helps enhance the economic opportunities of the people living near border areas. It also contributes to the literature on conflict resolution by focusing on the tourism development at these destinations as a peace initiative that can help resolve conflicts within as well as among nations. India and Pakistan are geographically and culturally close but have been at odds with one another, and tensions between these two countries have often worsened living conditions for inhabitants along the Line of Control and the international border in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

As peace through tourism and community participation can help develop peace relations between the two countries, it is important to take action in this regard. Jammu and Kashmir, which is in turmoil, has been lacking on many fronts and requires interventions to provide residents with a sense of security in terms of their economy, infrastructure development, and other health and education facilities. For the development efforts, a government-led framework with a community-centred tourist approach is required. These study areas are the five border villages of the Jammu region, which include Arnia sector, Kanachak, Pargwal, Suchetgarh, and Pallanwala. These areas fall near the Line of Control, and due to this, people living in these areas have suffered various problems and desperately want to live in peace. Uncertainty in these areas has severely affected the quality of life. Aside from these drawbacks, our research has identified the scope of tourism in these areas. It was discovered that there is an uneven development of tourism infrastructure, as some areas benefit from tourism growth while others remain underdeveloped and undiscovered. The importance of community involvement in peacebuilding in these destinations has been highlighted in this study, which will enhance the chances of tourism development in the border areas. Efforts in this approach include the Weekly Beating Retreat Ceremony, which was inaugurated in October, 2021 in Suchetgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, India along the International Border. Along with this cultural and diplomatic exchanges can be facilitated by launching parallel initiatives on either side of a border crossing, such as the establishment of museums or opening of more religious corridors on the lines of Kartarpur. Since SDG 16 is concerned with fostering peaceful and inclusive societies for long-term prosperity, border areas can benefit greatly from tourism since it helps to create jobs and

promotes local culture and products, which benefits and engages local residents. Another finding of the research shows that locals believe that tourism helps in availing positive benefits in terms of employment and income generation and cross-cultural exchange, but that an increase in tourism has also impacted their way of life in terms of a hike in prices, an increase in crime and pollution, and the commercialization of their culture. As a result, tourism must be planned and developed in a balanced manner, maximising positive benefits while limiting negative ones.

While this study offers a variety of useful information, a few restrictions persist. For illustration, it has utilised cross-sectional information, so future researchers can utilise a longitudinal study plan. The size of the sample, the constraints of time and cost, and the particular nature of the study led the investigator to limit the scope of the study. The present study was carried out in Jammu and Kashmir (UT), but other cities in India ought to be considered in future inquiries so as to sum up the findings of the study. Future research in this regard can be done by including opinions and information from both sides of the border. Finally, the current study has not included any moderating variables, so the influence of moderators can be measured in the near future.

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