RESIDENT SENTIMENTS AND LIVED EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO PLACE ATTACHMENT WITH BATTEL SECTOR

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ABSTRACT
Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan has plagued people for decades. The two regions controlled by India and Pakistan were split into a contested line, the Line of Control (LOC). The Kashmiri people face various threats on both sides, and their lives are threatened. However, residents are attached to their place and are reluctant to settle in other peaceful areas. The current study aimed to explore the perceptions regarding the place attachment of the residents living near LoC by asking the following question: what are Sentiments of individuals and their lived experiences with reference to their affinity to the Battel sector? The ethnographic research methodology was used to carry out the current research which includes participant observation and in-depth interviews. The sample of the study was selected from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. A purposive sampling technique was employed and a total of fifteen participants were selected. The findings of the research suggest that there are multiple factors involved which binds residents with their place involving, place identity, social connections, the economic dimension, love for the place, and ancestral affiliations.

Keywords: Azad Kashmir, conflict, hostile terrain, place attachment, sentiments

INTRODUCTION
The world around us is made up of many different cultures, each with its own set of rules and customs. Culture influences people in several ways, including where they live and how they behave. During this time, People get emotionally linked to the areas where they grow and reside. Sense of place or attachment to it is the bond that develops between people and places; it is also the degree with which a location can satisfy your needs becoming a part of identity. Due to the influence of place attachment, homeland is considered as the central part in human life. It is described as a set of symbolic collections of meanings, the attachment, and also happiness which is associated with a person's or group's geographical surroundings. Thus, Altman and Low (1992) explain, that the place attachment is influenced by cultural features of individuals, such as perceptions of people about a location and also the depth of connection with a place (Giuliani, 2003). This also applies to the people of Kashmir. As Kashmir is unstable terrain and the people who live there are at the forefront of ongoing strife between the world's most populous state, India, and its neighbors, Pakistan. There are three intense wars that occurred between these protagonists throughout the years and that only adds to the anxiety and fear among the people (The Carter Center, 2003). The Line of Control was formed among two regions administered by both India and Pakistan. This Line of control splits the land into territories. Consistent confrontations can be seen among the security forces of the two countries. And the major reason for such confrontations is believed to be Indian control over Jammu and Kashmir in various political divides, as well as on the Azad Kashmir. A line of control, separates numerous families and citizens on
both parts of the borderline, creating pain in all aspects of life (Bali & Akhtar, 2017). Despite living in a battle zone between two nuclear powers for over seven decades, they have not lost their identity or dedication to their region. They haven't moved or altered their belongings.

Since the subcontinent has been divided, the Kashmir problem has been one of the most significant and unsolved conflicts. There is a diverse range of literature available, most of it is produced in border areas of the Jamnu and Kashmir under the Indian government administration. Conversely, there seems to be a paucity of literature on the residents of Azad Kashmir in Pakistan. As a result, this study fills a gap by trying to ascertain the place attachment of persons residing in Azad Kashmir's Battel area. Given the abovementioned, the study examined people's sentiments and real-life experiences with regard to their affinity to the Battel sector. This encompasses the elements that lead to individuals becoming attached to a certain location, feeling passionate about it, and attempting to defend it when it is endangered (Turton, 2017). However, different people have different ideas about what it means to be attached to a place.

Kashmir has a complicated history that dates back to the subcontinent’s split. The Line of Control, in this region, is recognized as the most hazardous area in the world today. Ceasefire breaches have a significant influence on the lives of individuals living in border areas. Violation of the ceasefire seems to have a psychological and emotional impact on those living in AJK's surrounding districts. Despite the threats, Battel residents are not migrating to safer locations. They are still struggling and living for their independence there. The purpose of this article is to learn about Kashmiris' sentiments to Kashmir and the attachment they have for their homeland. Furthermore, the findings can help future policymakers working on Pakistan-India state negotiations by providing real views of people living in border areas and emphasizing the present issues they face.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Numerous peace negotiations have been attempted between India and Pakistan during the 1990s, but none have been effective. While the Kashmir problem has remained unsolved, residents across both ends of the LoC have been suffering for years. Indian military forces have violated Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Kashmir. And the inhabitants of Azad Kashmir who live in bordering areas of Pakistan side Kashmir also face problems because both ends include Kashmiris (John, 2016). Therefore, the People living in neighboring areas suffer greatly as a result of ceasefire violations. According to research, there was a little settlement near the Line of control, this settlement is known as Bokut. Bokut is practically bare and silent. Many individuals fled their houses and relocated due to ceasefire breaches that put their lives at threat. According to Iftikhar Mir, Kashmiris are being slaughtered in both nations (Ahmed, 2019). According to another research, ceasefire breaches have had a physical as well as emotional impact on individuals residing in border territories of AJ&K, and also destroying the education system and limiting people from financial opportunities (Ali, 2018). Most people cannot afford to establish a new life away from the control line, and therefore they face the brunt of India-Pakistan conflicts.

A place appeals not only indicates a person’s emotional connection to a place, but it is also the result of various factors that form people's attachment to that place. Where one of the elements is identity (Marzano, 2015). The symbolic significance of a place is referred to as place identity. Memories and sentiments connected with a certain area all contribute to a deeper sense of self or identity (Anton and Lawrence 2016). Scannell & Gifford describe Place attachment is defined as a multidimensional phrase describing the relationship that occurs between individuals and their key locations (Amarendra, 2016). People feel more relaxed and secure in the terrain in which they grew up, and they experience less stress when they recreate in places where they feel most at ease, as opposed to unfamiliar regions where it takes time to acclimate and feel more at ease (Adevi & Grahn, 2011). As indigenous people who have lived in north-eastern Colombia for decades, Occidental Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell have leveraged years of fossil fuel exploitation against the surrounding community. They believe that this is their progenitor territory, and they are opposed to any experiment. They regard their land as something very precious in their lives. And therefore, not allow anyone to sell or exploit their land (Voskoboynik, 2016). This kind of attachment to any territory may have its origins in the time when people associated their place where they live with their ancestors. And maintained a relationship with their ancestors through property ownership.

Individuals are likewise bound to their environment via the Baradari system. Chaudhry and Ahmed (2014) describe the Baradari as an individual's identity connection, emotional connection, and
shared history as a member of a given group descended from the same ancestor. Social organizations in AJK are organized on baradari (clans), and a hamlet might have up to five Baradari (Chaudhry & Ahmed, 2014). Almost half of the villages which have been explored were dominated by between one or two baradaris, well with remaining communities being homogeneous and consisting of roughly the same number of people. A study of community mood, place, and identity, according to Hummon (1992), is significant in offering helpful logical tools (De Dominicis, Fornara, Ganucci Cancellieri, Twigger-Ross, & Bonaiuto, 2015).

Another work on the sense of place is present (Raymond, Kyttä, & Stedman, 2017), with the study focusing on the relative roles of social interactions and physical surroundings on attachment and meaning formation. The place has been described in psychology as a socio-physical concept including physical, cultural, and individual components. According to (Altman & Low, 2012) Human with the place links includes three dimensions in general. This includes that the people know the surrounding factors and utilize them to direct their path as a result of the cognitive aspects of the encounter. Activities and functional relationships between individuals and their surroundings are discussed in terms of the behavioral characteristics of the interaction. Connection of sentiments with the place demonstrates pleasure and attachment to the location. This connection might be so powerful that it creates a bond between the individual and the places. People's experiences are the primary instruments for perceiving in this regard. (Lewicka, 2011) revealed in the literature review that physical characteristic are better indicators of place connectedness. However, social ties are much more meaningful among lower-income respondents than among relatively higher-income respondents.

Physical qualities, according to (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) were more essential sources of attachment to a location, while social factors were much more important reasons for attachment to a property or land. A range of ecological aspects (Stedman, 2003) can also influence place meanings, whereas others refer to pivotal events or other significant life experiences that occurred in a place. Residents who have an emotional attachment to a location may be less likely to flee, even these people are aware of the earthquake hazards (Jansen, 2019). For centuries, some villages along the LoC were abandoned. People were forced to evacuate their houses and relocate to Muzaffarabad, where they were sheltered in camps. Others moved to Rawalpindi, Pakistan, but there is no employment there for them. These folks are either begging or working hard. They have not yet been registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or any other non-governmental organization Gilani's (2019)

MATERIALS AND METHODS
In this study, the ethnographic approach has been applied. Ethnographic research is an appropriate technique that helps researchers get insights into the understanding of respondent viewpoints, behavior, local community sentiments, and data obtained over time (Caulfield, 2020). To get a thorough grasp of the situation presented in the research questions, several research methods and strategies were used. Participant observation, field observations, and in-depth interviews were among the methods employed in this study. Respondents in an in-depth interview have been motivated and supported to discuss the issue of the study in depth. The researcher, being adaptive and consistent, asks the interviewee questions verbally and records the replies (Showkat, 2017). Purposive sampling was utilized to acquire a sample, which is the study's population of inhabitants residing in border areas. The representative sample consisted of fifteen participants who were divided into three sets based on their age and experience. The people ages were between 25-65 years old. These three age groups were subjected to participant observation and interviews. In addition to it, there were five persons were picked from each group who lived in Battel. The inhabitants' attachment to the Battel sector was determined through participant observation and in-depth interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Ancestral Connection and Sense Of place
The Battel sector's inhabitants have lived there for generations and have the same culture, values, and social conventions. Their affinity with the area is also relatively solid; nonetheless, each individual's perception of place is very distinctive and is closely tied to his/her life experiences. Residents in the Battel area are in the same circumstances as each other, yet their experiences are rather diverse. The majority of participants have emotional attachments to a certain location. Some of the people are
entrenched there because they have history and memories there, as well as their family, and the greater community, which links them to the location. In this regard one of the respondents stated:

"We were born here, grew up here, our family and parents have always lived here, as have our house, business, and crops. The most essential aspect is that our forefathers are buried here. As a result, this location is extremely important to us. This is the land of our forefathers. Regardless of the circumstances, I choose to remain here."

Understanding the notion of the place, on the other hand, gives important insights into the way in which individuals have created their associations with locations or places. When links between people and places develop, the result is always a strong attachment to the location. According to Low (1992), Place attachment is a symbolic relationship developed by humans that offers socially shared emotional meanings to a specific area, providing a person or group of people with a bond to the region’s environment and society. This is also relevant to the residents of the Battel area, who are emotionally and culturally attached to their homeland for several socioeconomic reasons.

**History and Lived Experiences**

One of the most essential reasons that bind inhabitants to their land is an emotional connection, which involves several components such as their history and personal experiences (Eder & Amberger, 2012). Furthermore, historical attachment is a key aspect in this respect, since responders have a strong ancestor's association with their current location. Because responders have a strong ancestral connection to their current place, they feared that if they left their homeland, they would be cut off from their ancestors permanently. During the investigation, the majority of respondents said that their view of their life experience differed from individual to individual, even within the same place. Many respondents indicated that they had lived here for decades and had grown accustomed to the shelling noises. According to them, it now appears odd and maybe even boring when there is no shelling on every day. Based on their personal experiences, the residents feel comfortable going about their daily routines, despite the heightened noise from bombing and cross-border explosions. As one of the study respondents stated:

"My ears have become accustomed to these voices"

Shankar's latest study (McCunn, 2014) discovered that depending on the social setting, continuous, and dazzling noise may have a major impact on the human body and nature. However, while some Battel sector participants are terrified of living in a combat zone, they are compelled to do so due to their belongings (ancestors, neighbors, and family). They saw their homes as reservoirs for their ancestors' memories and all the experiences they did share with them.

According to the people of battle region, many Muslims have been injured, their houses have been damaged, and their communities have been relocated as a result of the Hindus’ heinous actions. Furthermore, they have stated that they would not keep silent and always keep fighting for the rights of people of Jammu Kashmir, even if it means risking their lives. Furthermore, some people live in this location because they have family who lives in a village. They believe that the village idea is also quite unique since all members of a certain village are like brothers and support one other in all matters. Even though there are various castes in each place, these castes include Sudan (Malik), Jut, Gujar (Chaudry), Mirza, and Syed.

History is very significant in a human's life. To learn about someone, it is necessary to be aware of their past. This allows us to comprehend a person's presence in historical events, as well as his values, and standards. In this respect, it really should be traced back to their history, which has a significant impact on their life, to comprehend the Battel area's conceptions of their region. Because some individuals consider their past to be their identity, it has a tremendous impact on them. Furthermore, this identity is important in their lives since it explains the members of the Battalion's perspectives on the position, they are in. Residents of the Battel area come from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds. Residents have great ties to this location since their ancestors emigrated from India after the split, and those memories have bonded them to their homes. Some individuals traveled to Battel from other places.
in pursuit of a certain resource. During the conversation with the Battel residents, they express their love for their location for several historical reasons, extending back to the time when their ancestors or family were slain or taken by Indians during partition.

**Place Identity and Social Connections**

People of the Battel sector see their property as an expression of their identity, and they refuse to leave because of the sentiments they have associated with this location, as well as the physical surroundings in which their family plays an essential part. They believe that if their family can live here, then what is the sense of leaving their place. Individuals are attracted to environments that promote social interactions and identity. One research interaction (Amarendra, 2016) attachment in an area of London was measured by the ability to speak regularly with family members. And communities there are of two types, where one is more linked with lifestyle and cultural interest and one the other hand communities which are more likely to attach with their location. Interest groups are not usually geographically restricted. However, the place culture is the most important because it impacts the social links that are embedded in it, like neighborhoods, small tea shops, or other places that encourage social contact (Amarendra, 2016). A sense of place is a unique relationship between humans and the environment around them (Adams, 2016); this link comprises both human impact on the natural universe and the impacts of human actions on the ecological system. According to one respondent, the location or the area where they live reflect their identity since it has ancestors' memories, history, and they have a particular event about their past; all of this binds them to this spot, and this place also defines their identity. In addition, he stated:

"پہچان ہماری مرتےدم تک رہے گے"  
"This identity will be with us till the day we die"

Residents of the Battel believe that their history, family, businesses, farms, work, and lands in this region symbolize their identity and that finding their identity elsewhere would be impossible.

**Social Identity**

People's self-esteem is linked to the social status of their in-groups as a result of the emotional commitments they make in their group identity (Vinney, 2018). People residing in the Battel sector accept as true that they would be nothing without their belongingness, social circle, including their relatives and friends. People believe that their identity is derived from where they live and have shared interests. They fear that if they quit their culture, no one will recognize them as part of it. Cultural identification benefits in motivating individuals, societies, and organizations who participate in a culture which promotes identity, self-esteem, unity, connection, and social responsibility (Ratanakosol, Pathumcharoenwattana, & Kimpee, 2016). The people of Battel believe that if they band together, they will be able to fight for their place.

**Place Attachment’s Economic Dimension**

Sense of place is a relationship of human emotion generated not only by the physical setting of a place but also by the persons and lifestyles of those who live there, which is reinforced by the physical surroundings (Lestari & Sumabrata, 2018). According to a study conducted by (Akhtar, 2017), border settlements in Poonch as well as the villages of Kotli were severely harmed by heavy firing and shelling along the LoC between 1990 and 2003. People's physical wellness and socioeconomic well-being in these areas are suffering as violence and hatred between Indian and Pakistani soldiers across the LoC escalates. Residents of the Battel area are also economically impacted since they have suffered significant losses in their agricultural lands. In the Battalion, there are a variety of jobs available, including farming and rearing, livestock, civil services, and industries. However, a smaller number of people applied for Battalion Jobs. Meanwhile, many are farmers and rely only on agricultural lands. As the resident of battle stated:

"مہنگائی اس وقت اتنی زیادہ ہے کہ ملازمین کا ذریعہ معاش انتہائی مشکل ہو گیا ہے۔ یہاں کی زندگی بہت مشکل ہے، ہم کہیں اور چلے گئے تو کیا کھائیں گے۔"  
"Inflation is currently so high that employees' livelihoods have become extremely challenging. Life here is extremely difficult, so what would we eat if we went somewhere else?"

Despite the fact that they face imminent death, these residents refuse to leave their homes. During the study, the motivations for some of the individuals remaining in such a combat zone location were discovered. The antagonism between India and Pakistan is so profound that finding a form of
collaboration is tough. Many academics and politicians regard that the Indo-Pakistan relationship as a nil scenario in which the gain of one is seen as the loss of the other.

CONCLUSION
The ongoing regional conflict between Hindus and Muslims over the instability in Jammu & Kashmir seems to be a significant point of controversy in South Asia. Several solutions have been made to settle the Kashmir dispute since 1947, but nothing has been implemented (Kurr, 2015). Residents of Azad Kashmir are unwilling to flee their homes and go to other regions where they may live in peace as the situation in the Kashmir valley worsens. As a result, the latest study is being undertaken to investigate and connect the literary details on territorial affiliations, person's belongings, and conflicts inside Kashmir. In summary, this study looks into inhabitants' sentiments and experiences concerning their affiliation to the Battel area. Because unique relationships to nature cannot be adequately expressed using quantitative instruments, qualitative techniques are used to explain the concept of sense of place. Place formation is dynamic and impacted by human perception, cognition, and self-concept, as well as social dynamics, the economy, cultures, and history.

On the other hand, various elements influence place attachment, and study in this field often incorporates the emotional, socio-cultural, perceptual, as well as physical characteristics of places and people. Sense of place is a multidimensional phrase that expresses the link that people have with their meaningful surroundings. Therefore, it is beneficial to investigate these features while examining the factors that drive place connection with people. Place attachment, on the other hand, works in tandem with their concern for the environment and a beneficial role in people's lives. People who have a strong emotional attachment to a location are more inclined to take up arms to defend it.

Outcomes of this study reveal that numerous factors bind people to their native land, and they also have an emotional affinity to it. Furthermore, socioeconomic condition, attachment, and stronger risk perception may all have a favorable impact on people's willingness to deal with environmental concerns. When people have a great connection to a place, the consequence becomes weaker. Affiliation to the position is connected to human experience, cognition, self-perception, group relations, the economy, cultures, and history.

Moreover, the Baradari system is an important concept in people's attachment to their land. The people who are living near the line of control also have very deep ancestral affiliations which bind them to their homeland. In addition to this, these people considered their land as precious as their mother's. They are, therefore, unable to leave their land even in a threatening situation, and they have no sense of fear. Their land, family, and memories are extremely valuable to them, and the residents of Battel have said that they will fight till the last breath to safeguard their property and the people's rights. Some residents, on the other side, want to move out of the area but they are unable to shift because of their financial status. There were also those inhabitants who had become accustomed to their routine and were no longer terrified of the bombardment or shelling. People who live near the LoC have more than one reason for their devotion to the location. All of the inhabitants have varied experiences and perspectives of place attachment.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The current study would help prospective policymakers working on Pakistan-India state negotiations by providing life perspectives of people residing in border regions and highlighting existing challenges they face. As the international court of justice is a forum for resolving these issues, states must strictly adhere to it and accept whatever decision the court makes in order to maintain the international community's confidence. so, the practitioners of foreign policy should then contribute to ensuring that international law is purposefully and effectively implemented to resolve border issues, and in assisting public and political representatives in developing a good understanding of the value of international law.

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