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## **The Role of Track Two Diplomacy in Resolving India-Pakistan Dispute: Case Study of PIPFPD<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract:**

The India-Pakistan conflict is one of the longest disputes in the Indian subcontinent, dating back to 1948. During this period, the dispute between the two countries has many times been to the brink of a war, and has led to it four times. The deterioration of the conflict required that several measures be taken at various levels of diplomacy to resolve it. Simultaneously with the activities in the field of official diplomacy, and even at the time of the severance of official relations between the two countries, Track two activities have been running between the elites along the borders. The article will briefly review the most important activities of Track Two Diplomacy to resolve this dispute, one of the most important of which is the activities of the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy. This activity was successful to show a different dimension of the conflict to public and elites along the borders, however, was not able to manifest long lasting peace. The most important achievement to be counted for PIPFPD is reducing the tensions, especially at the time of diplomatic deadlocks. The article answers to the question of why PIPFPD has failed to achieve some of its defined goals after nearly 25 years' activity? Describing various aspects of the conflict, besides limitations PIPFPD has been faced, the article concludes that complexity of the dispute caused by the multiplicity of actors and interest which is affected by regional and international issues won't let the conflict ripen. Since actors involved in the conflict don't come to this logic that consensus over resolving dispute is more beneficial than continuing it.

**Keywords:** Track Two Diplomacies, India-Pakistan Conflict, PIPFPD

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1. Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy

## Introduction

Track Two Diplomacy as one of the conflict resolution tools has been used in different types of conflicts, in the form of various projects. One of the prominent specifications of this type of diplomacy is paving the way for participants, involved in a conflict, to talk face to face about their ideas, thoughts, and concerns. As a result of this process, the concept of the enemy will change, each side finds a more human image, and views changes from zero-sum game to positive one, considering ideas and beliefs of the other sides (Neginraz & etal, 2020, p.1).

Track Two Diplomacy is an activity in which influential representatives of conflicting parties come together by the mediation of informal third party to examine the root causes of the conflict and the tools to resolve it positively (Çuhadar, 2007, p.157). This type of diplomacy is run through informal activities, and will establish communication channels between the parties to the conflict, mostly when official tracks are blocked. Track Two initiatives will help to clarify different dimensions of the conflict and resolve ambiguities after formal agreements, providing a conducive public environment for lasting peace. However, the non-binding nature of Track Two Diplomacy achievements and the lack of attention to the balance of power of the parties to the conflict can be count as the main limitations of these initiatives (Jones, 2013), (Burgess, 2010, pp.15-20), (Kelman, 2005, p.328). Cooperation of Track One and Two Diplomacy can address the weaknesses of each and be an effective step toward lasting peace. This cooperation can happen in all stages of a conflict, including conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-war peacebuilding (Montville, 1987, pp.162-163).

India-Pakistan conflict is one of the longest disputes in the Indian subcontinent, dating

back to 1948 and has led to war four times. Besides formal endeavor to solve the dispute, track two diplomacy activities have been carried out to resolve the conflict. The article will briefly review the most important activities of the Track two diplomacy implemented to resolve India-Pakistan dispute, emphasizing on Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy. The article answers to the question of why PIPFPD has failed to achieve some of its defined goals after nearly 25 years' activity? Complexity of the dispute caused by the multiplicity of actors and interest which is affected by regional and international issues won't let the conflict ripen. As a result, players in the conflict won't reach consensus over an accepted scenario to solve the conflict.

## History of India-Pakistan Conflict

Following Britain's withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent and the independence of some countries in the region, including India and Pakistan, in 1947, the situation in several regions on the subcontinent, including Kashmir, remained unclear. Claiming sovereignty over Kashmir region has sparked fierce clashes between India and Pakistan, since then. The region was ruled by India during the British Empire colonization, and after independence, the government of India called for the annexation of Kashmir, and Maharajah of Kashmir after some events announced the annexation of its territory. On the other hand, because the majority of the population of Kashmir was Muslim, the Pakistani government had a similar demand for the annexation of Kashmir to its territory (James, 2005, p.435). The conflict between the two countries has so far led to four wars between India and Pakistan in 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1999; And pushed the two countries to the brink of a fifth war.

After the divisions in 1947, Maharaja of Kashmir and several other regions decided not to join India. In October 1947, Muslim tribes attacked Kashmir. As a result of the attack, Maharaja of Kashmir fled to India and sought military assistance from the Indian government. The Indian government pre-conditioned providing assistance to him to the signing of the annexation agreement. And Maharaja was forced to sign the agreement. Immediately after signing of the agreement, the Indian army moved towards Kashmir and occupied the area. As a result, the Pakistan army moved towards Jammu and Kashmir and the 1948 war had started and continued between the two sides. After several days the war was ceased with the intervention of the United Nations and the formation of an interim government for the region (Suddepto, 2010, pp.77-80).

According to the UN resolution, the Indian government has promised to pave the ground for referendum in Jammu and Kashmir. But this opportunity has never been provided for residents of the region. This upset the Pakistani government and Muslims living in Kashmir. In August 1965, Muslim militias infiltrated the Kashmir region and tried to incite the people (Bose, 2003, pp. 83-85). Despite all the plans, the Indian security forces prevented the local uprising and handed over a large number of insurgents to the Indian central government after their arrest. After Pakistan's efforts in the international community to release the detainees failed, it launched a large-scale attack on Akhnoor on September first 1965 to cut off the Indian Army's line of communication to Kashmir. In response, India expanded its war front and targeted the city of Punjab, crossing the official Pakistani border. The Second Indo-Pakistani War lasted until September 22. Eventually, with the signing of the Tashkent

Treaty, the two sides returned to their positions before the conflict and agreed not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

The third military confrontation between the two countries took place in 1971. Long before 1971, Indians began inciting the people of East Pakistan to revolt against the central government of Pakistan and to secede from this country to form their own independent state. Finally, on March 26, 1971, the Battle of Bangladesh began with the Pakistani army's attack on the Bengali rebels. The Indian government has turned to economic, military and diplomatic support for the Bengali insurgents to make things worse for Pakistan. This angered Pakistan and their military action against India. Kashmir may not have been the focus of the third Pakistan-India war this time, but it actually began with the Pakistani Air Force's pre-emptive bombardment of 11 Indian military air bases in the Kashmir region. The war lasted 13 days. During the war, the Indian and Pakistani armies clashed simultaneously on the eastern and western fronts. As Pakistani forces on the eastern front came under increasing pressure and more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers were captured by the Indian Army and Bengali insurgents, the Pakistan Eastern Command finally surrendered on March 26, 1971, and signed the Treaty of Bangladesh.

In 1999, Pakistani oriented militia occupied parts of India-controlled areas in Kashmir called Ladakh. Following this event, India deployed its forces to the region. As a result, heavy fight broke out between the two countries, which led to the recapture of most of the lost territory by India. Eventually, the Pakistanis were forced to withdraw from the remaining areas under international pressure. This battle was the last serious confrontation between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region.

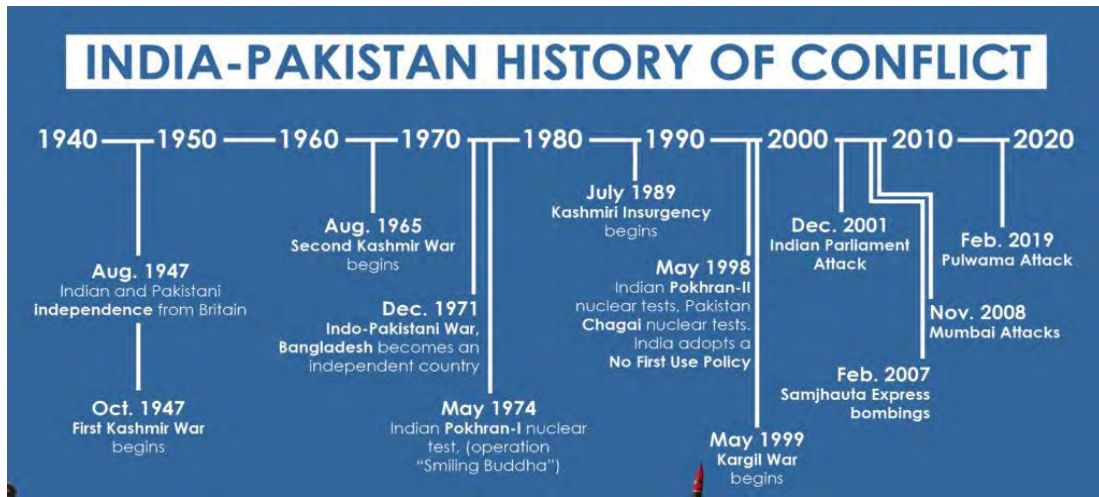


Fig 1. India-Pakistan History of Conflict

### Geopolitics of Kashmir Region

Kashmir is located in Southeast Asia and north of the Indian subcontinent. It has borders with China in the north and east, with Afghanistan in the northwest, with Pakistan in the west, and with India in the south.

The territory includes the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, the Free Kashmir of Pakistan, and the northern part of China. The border between Kashmir of India and Kashmir of Pakistan is a ceasefire line set by the United Nations after the third India-Pakistan war.

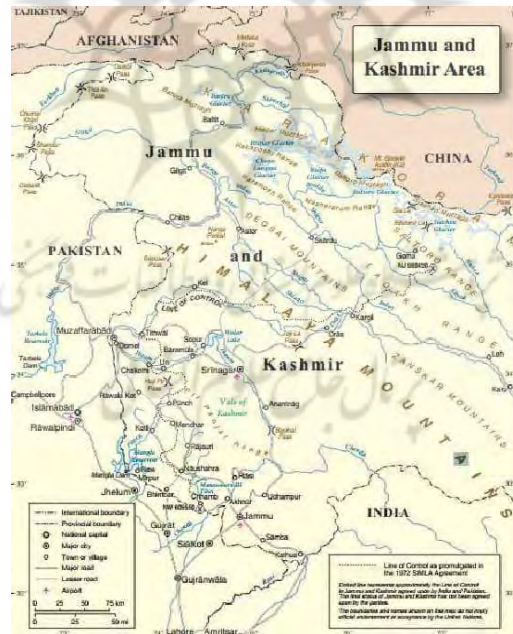


Figure 2. Map of Jammu and Kashmir Area

Kashmir region is strategically located in the heart of Asia, having borders with China, India, and Pakistan. Its common borders with

Afghanistan, China and Russia are considered important for India in terms of defense (Seyed Naseri, 2001, p.24). The five major

rivers of the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas and Sutlej rivers are located in the Kashmir region, originating in the mountains of this region or passing through this land and flowing into Pakistan. These rivers play a significant role in India's agriculture and economy, and the control on Kashmir is an effective tool for putting pressure on Pakistan to moderate its positions in necessary cases. On the other hand, the largest corridor between South Asia, China, and Central Asia pass through the northern part of Kashmir. This corridor which is called Karakoram, connects Pakistan and China, and is located in the northern part of New Delhi, and can give meaning to a strategic alliance and endanger India's security (James, 2005, p.4). This region also makes it possible to dominate the surrounding environment due to its high altitude. This has made it easy for major Pakistani cities such as Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and the capital, Islamabad, to be easily threatened. (Kashmir: The View from Islamabad, 2003, 211)

#### **Actors in India and Pakistan Conflict**

The actors in the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir can be divided into three categories: domestic, regional and international actors. The most important domestic actors are the people of this region and the armed groups. The Kashmiris are more supportive of autonomy and want a referendum. Some analysts believe that one of the structural reasons for the violence in Kashmir is that the people of Kashmir are not heard. This is evident in the peace talks and when the Kashmir MPs are not invited to attend the meetings in regard to issue. Armed groups are another group of domestic actors. Some studies have identified as many as 120 groups. The most important of these groups are the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and the Islamic Group (Ma-

riana Rus, 2015). The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, which is the largest internal organized force, wants independence for the Kashmir region. From their point of view, the Kashmir has been an independent territory from the beginning, although it was once considered part of the Indian subcontinent, it has been under the separate rule. On the other hand, given the long-standing disputes between the Indian government and the Kashmir people, they believe that it is impossible for India to continue domination over the Kashmir region (Hussain, 2009, p.1016). The Islamic Group, which is smaller than the Liberation Front, calls for the annexation of the region to Pakistan.

The regional actors in this conflict are India and Pakistan. India considers Kashmir an important region and wants it to remain in Indian territory. India claims the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir and controls about 43% of the state's total land, including most of the territory of Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Ladakh and Siachen (Noorani, 2014). India claims that Maharaja Hari Singh, the legitimate government of Kashmir region, like other Indian states, signed the documents of annexation to the Republic of India in October 1947 (Manoj Joshi, 1999). On the other hand, Pakistan tends to annex the region to its territory due to cultural and religious similarities, and of course for logistical reasons. Pakistan considers Kashmir to be a disputed and occupied territory and believes that the final status of the region should be determined by referendum. Pakistan denies India's claim that Kashmir was annexed by the Kashmir ruler, stressing that Maharaja of Kashmir did not have the right to sign a document on Kashmir's annexation to India. (Ajam, 2017, 178)

What makes the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir so important internationally is

the two countries' access to nuclear weapons. India's nuclear program was peaceful until the mid-1960s, but three factors, such as nuclearization of China's, India's disputes with Pakistan, and acquisition of prestige and global status, persuaded India to acquire nuclear weapons. India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974 (Sajjadpour, 2011, 229-230). Pakistan's efforts to achieve peaceful nuclear energy began with the participation of the US Atoms for Peace Initiative; but disputes between India and Pakistan, the 1965 conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and Pakistan's defeat, and the 1974 Indian peaceful nuclear explosion, has persuaded Pakistan to acquire a nuclear weapon; Finally, Pakistan conducted a nuclear test in May 1998.

United States of America, China, and the former Soviet Union are key international players in this conflict. The intervention of the great powers in this region is due to its special geopolitical position. These characteristics and the conflicts between the governments of the region have provided a good platform for the great powers to compete with one another to influence the balance of power and gain more benefits from this region. During the Cold War, India and Pakistan sought to balance power. This led to the formation of blocks in the region, which exacerbated the crisis in Kashmir. During this time, India established close ties with the Soviet Union, and Pakistan became an ally of the United States under the CENTO Treaty. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, regional equations took a different turn, and Pakistan's importance in US foreign policy diminished; Conversely, India's relations with the United States have been strengthened. Signing of a nuclear deal between India and the United States, cooperation between the two countries to counter the emerg-

ing global challenges such as terrorism, the transfer of advanced US nuclear technology to India and the purchase of advanced weapons from the United States were signs of strengthening bilateral relations. The US goal to help India in the nuclear field was to create a balance with China. In such circumstances, Pakistan has also tried to maintain a balance of power between China and India by approaching China (Wanis, 1997, p.16).

There are several reasons for the US to support India after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. US support for India could help build a US base in the country. The United States can use its base in the region to monitor the performance of China, India, Russia, Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. United States presence in the region will put it between three civilizations of Islam, Hinduism, and Confucius. This is essential for managing international challenges (Adel Sheikh, 2002, 38). Kashmir, on the other hand, is a region through which the United States can infiltrate in the subcontinent and exercise its dominance over the region. This tool allows the United States to alien Pakistan and India with its own interests (Kumar, 2003).

As one of the oldest and most important actors in the conflict at the international level, China considers the northwestern part of Kashmir to be an integral part of the country and has not accepted the British-drawn colonial borders of the Kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir in northern China and Karakorum. In 1962, Chinese and Indian forces fought in an area claimed by each of the two countries, and China annexed the Aksai Chin (Ajam, 2017, 180). On the other hand, given the relations between India and the United States and the international competition between China and the United States, China will make every effort to prevent the increase of American

power on the Indian subcontinent. That is why China has such an important goal in supporting Pakistan and preventing Kashmir from joining India. In 1996, however, India and China signed a confidence-building agreement to demilitarize parts of the Himalayan border and not to conduct large-scale military exercises. This reduced the tension in the area (Wanis, 1997, p.16).

### **Formal Measures to Resolve the Dispute between India and Pakistan**

Over the past 70 years, several bilateral and multilateral measures have been taken to resolve the Kashmir issue. Some of these actions were formal and some were informal. The most important formal steps taken are as follows:

- Following the 1947 Indian-Pakistani War, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 47 on April 21, 1948. The resolution called for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of tribal militia and Pakistani nationals from Jammu and Kashmir, and called on the Indian government to withdraw its troops and minimize the number of troops in the state, and hold a referendum based on the right to self-determination. The resolution was adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and was therefore not binding. Proposals for demilitarization of the region was accepted by Pakistan but rejected by India (Ajam, 1396, pp.183-185). After that, the United Nations has revised the resolution and the revised version was approved by the two countries. Following the adoption of its amended resolution by India and Pakistan, the United Nations Commission established a subcommittee on the ceasefire" so that they could find the basis for an agreement between the two governments with the help of military advisers.
- Signing of Tashkent Declaration after the 1965 war between the two countries with the mediation of the former Soviet Union is another official step taken to resolve the conflict. According to the declaration, the two countries agreed to "make every effort to establish good neighborly relations between India and Pakistan in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" and to return all their forces from the war fronts to the previous position.
- The Shimla Agreement was signed in 1972. After the 1971 war that has led to the formation of an independent state of Bangladesh. The purpose of the agreement was to establish lasting peace, friendship and cooperation between India and Pakistan. It is mentioned in this agreement that the government of India and the government of Pakistan are committed to end the conflict that has so far destroyed their relations and work to promote friendly relations and establish lasting peace on the subcontinent; and both countries devote their resource and energy to the important task of promoting the well-being of their people.
- In 1988, India and Pakistan agreed to prohibit any type of attack against nuclear installations and facilities. According to this agreement each party shall refrain from conducting, encouraging or participating directly or indirectly in any action aimed at destroying or damaging any nuclear facility in the other country."
- In 1992, India and Pakistan signed an agreement banning the use of chemical weapons. In the agreement, the two sides pledged to refrain from developing, possessing or using chemical weapons, as well as assisting, encouraging or forcing anyone to participate in the development,

- production, acquisition, collection or use of chemical weapons.
- In February 1999, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided to negotiate, and in a very symbolic move, Vajpayee traveled by bus to Lahore. During the meeting, the two sides signed a joint declaration, known as the Lahore Declaration. Under the declaration, the two countries pledged to intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs. Accelerate their comprehensive and integrated dialogue for the early and positive outcomes of mutually agreed programs. Take immediate action to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.
  - Following the terrorist attacks in India after the events of September 11, they blamed Pakistan. As a result, tensions between the two countries escalated and the two countries' armies were deployed to the borders and were ready to confront. The mediation of the United States, which was involved in the war on terror in Afghanistan at the time, prevented a fifth war between the two countries. As a result of the peace talks, members of the Pakistani parliament visited New Delhi in May 2003, and in July of the same year members of the Indian parliament left for Islamabad. A few months later, a ceasefire was established in Kashmir. In January 2004, the Prime Minister met with President Musharraf at a meeting of The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Islamabad. The meeting began a new round of intensive negotiations which, of course, did not lead to a complete settlement of the conflict, but reduced tensions.
  - Such actions have continued to this day. In 2006, for example, a new agreement was reached to open a control line for bilateral trade between the two countries. In 2013, the prime ministers of Pakistan and India agreed to end tensions between their armies and begin a new round of bilateral relations. In 2015, Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar met his Pakistani counterpart Ijaz Chaudhry to discuss cooperation to resolve the dispute.
- So far, various scenarios have been proposed to resolve the Kashmir crisis, most of which are impossible considering the general conditions of the conflict, including the interests of actors at various levels. Only two scenarios seem applicable. One scenario is to formalize the status quo. That is, the borders that are now known as the ceasefire border will become the official border between India and Pakistan. It seems that this situation can end the current crisis if the necessary conditions are provided. But the main problem with this solution is the internal actors. The people of Kashmir want the right to self-determination to be exercised, and the imposition of this method could lead to internal uprisings (Ajam, 1396, p.186).
- Another scenario that may be capable to solve the conflict without bringing up internal riots is the formation of a smaller Kashmir. In other words, the current Kashmir should be divided between India, Pakistan and the internal forces. If this solution is accepted, both regional actors involved in the crisis will lose part of their territory, but will continue to rule part of Kashmir, and Kashmir groups will continue to pursue their long-held aspirations for a country and will gain independence as Kashmir. (Shafiee, 2011, p.228).



### **Track two Activities in the India-Pakistan Conflict over Kashmir**

As mentioned, the conflict between India and Pakistan is one of the longest and most complex conflicts in the international arena. The extremists in both countries in various political factions, religious groups, some academics, journalists, and the military infrastructure of both countries have thwarted regional and international efforts to resolve the conflict. The escalation of the conflict is so severe that four wars have taken place between the two countries so far, and the situation has repeatedly deteriorated to the break of another war. Official bilateral and multilateral initiatives to resolve the crisis, as well as official international measures such as UN resolutions, have not been effective in resolving the crisis.

Due to the worsening of the crisis and the failure of formal talks between the two sides and the importance of the conflict zone, unofficial figures from the 1980s made efforts in the form of Track Two diplomacy to resolve the conflict (Soherwordi & etal, 2015, pp.28-33). Track Two initiatives in Pakistan-India conflict can be divided into two categories, which are the indigenous efforts of intellectuals and the efforts of intellectuals supported by foreign players.

The 1972 Conflict Resolution Workshop by Herbert Kelman and Stephen Cohen, in which participants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh participated, can be considered the first informal initiative to bring Indians and Pakistani individuals together (Kelman & etal, 1972). In 1976, Ronald Fisher organized a pilot workshop on resolving disputes between India and Pakistan (Fisher, 1980, p.195). The Friendship Society, held in 1987 by former Indian Foreign Minister Kewel Singh, was another informal activity.

In 1990, the US Intelligence Service (USIS) conducted a series of meetings called WORLDNET between Indian and Pakistani experts, which discussed issues such as the prohibition of the development of nuclear weapons and regional economic cooperation. Neemranawas another activity launched by the US intelligence service that focused more on preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This activity, which began in 1991, continues to this day and has been one of the longest unofficial activities in this conflict, which was used as a communication channel even when the official communication was cut (Ahmed Rid, 2014, pp.113-114).

The Shanghai as another Track Two Diplomacy Initiative was held in February 1994 in Shanghai, China. Participants from Pakistan, India, China and the United States of America participated in the event in their own capacity. The second Shanghai Initiative Seminar was held in February 1995 in Goa, India, and the third round of the conference was held in February 1997. (Ashraf, 2017, p.20)

The three-day meeting of the New Delhi Asian People's Association in 1996, the 2000 Pen for Peace Conference, The Illinois University's Program in Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security (ACDIS) were among the Track Two activities to address the India-Pakistan conflict.

### **Pakistan and India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD)**

One of the most important Track Two activities to resolve the India-Pakistan conflict was PIPFPD. This activity started in 1994 and continues to this day. The participants in this activity were people who had met each other in the former Track Two activities in 1980s. The main purpose of this activity was to create a forum to bring figures from legal

institutions, labor institutions, women's institutions, cultural institutions and people interested in the subject together (Ahmed RID, 2014, 129-131). In other words, the creators of this activity tried to mobilize public opinion in different fields in India and Pakistan toward providing a strong solution. When PIPFPD began, it was for nearly two decades that various track two activities were done to solve the conflict and has paved the way for PIPFPD.

PIPFPD is a non-governmental organization with offices in India and Pakistan and in various cities. The organizers of the event on the Pakistani side were Mobasher Hassan, Ibn Abdul Rahman, Keramat Ali, Koti, Anis Harun, Nejat Saeed Khan and Madiyeh Gohar, who attended the first informal PIPFPD meeting. From India, the most important participants are Nirmal Mukherjee, Rajani Kotari, Cannabiran, Gotam Nulakhah, and Tiesta Stalvad.

PIPFPD was formed to convey the message of peace to the people of the both countries and to show that the conflict can be seen in other dimensions than the hostile dimensions shown by the governments of the two countries. This does not mean that this activity was not planned for high-level leaders. In addition to influencing the ordinary people, it also sought to convey the achievements of these activities to high-ranking government officials.

The first meeting of the PIPFDP was formed on September 2, 1994 in Lahore, with 15 Pakistanis and 9 Indians. At the end of the meeting, participants issued a press statement showing the PIPFPD agenda. The very aim of the initiative was to start people to people negotiations on important issues of peace and democracy. The second meeting was held on 25 and 26 of November 1994 in Delhi. At this meeting, the organizational structure of

the PIPFPD was determined, and Rahman, the Pakistan Commissioner for Human Rights, and Nirma Mukherjee, the former governor of the Indian Punjab, were elected as the two presidents of the forum. (Ashraf &etal, 2017, p.20)

The first PIPFPD forum was held on February 24, 1995, in New Delhi. For the first time since the division of the subcontinent, about 200 Pakistanis and Indians met for two days to discuss controversial issues. Participants in the forum included artists, brokers, scientists, craftsmen, academics, businessmen, women's rights activists, anti-nuclear movements, human rights activists and peace activists. (Ahmed RID, 2014, 141) In the first forum, topics including war, civilization, peace and the benefits of peace, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the policy of religious intolerance in India and Pakistan, issues related to governing Kashmir between Pakistan and India was determined to be discussed in later meetings.

The second forum was held on November 10 and 11, 1995 in Lahore, where about 200 individuals from both countries had come together and pledged to work for the full emergence of non-proliferation at the regional level, gradual democratization of the region, reaching democratic resolution for Kashmir conflict, according to the inclination of the people of the country. Participants also made suggestions on public awareness, condemnation of belligerent perceptions, and intolerance.

The third forum was held from 28 to 31 December 1996 in Calcutta. Nearly 300 people from both countries attended the conference. The Calcutta Convention decided for the first time to refer directly to the people of Kashmir. The PIPFPD in its Joint Committee on Kashmir issue has decided to hold regular meeting with Kashmir leaders and with

members of the Indian and Pakistani parliaments, with the aim of putting pressure to reduce prohibitions in control line for free movement of people, trade and etc.

The fourth forum was held on November 21 and 22, 1998 in Peshawar. About 300 representatives from India and Pakistan, including members of trade unions, academics, lawyers, education professionals, retired military officers, social workers, journalists and members of parliament have attended the conference. The Peshawar Convention became particularly important in 1998 due to rising tensions between India and Pakistan over nuclear tests. At the end of the two-day debate, a statement was issued on 23 November 1998 stating:

Resolutions on these issues cannot be delayed, and the conference calls on the governments of the two countries to make more serious, transparent and immediate efforts to end the mistrust between the two countries in a short period of time.

The Fifth forum was held on April 6-8, 2000 in Bangalore. Nearly 300 people from both countries attended the conference. The Fifth forum was held under very difficult conditions. The Kargali war worsened India-Pakistan relations. The outcome of this meeting was the Bangalore resolution. In addition, two working groups on globalization and regional cooperation were added to the other working groups. The Bangalore resolution states:

Talks at the highest level on non-nuclearization at the horizontal and vertical levels and a comprehensive non-aggression pact, effective steps towards temporary disarmament until the end of both countries' nuclear disarmament, satisfaction with CTBT "Return to the FMCT negotiating ta-

ble and moving toward South Asia as a nuclear-free zone must be resumed.

The Sixth forum was held on 12 to 14 December 2003 in Karachi. About 600 people attended the forum. The Karachi forum also took place at a very important time in the history of India-Pakistan relations. From 13 December 2001 to the summer of 2003, Indian and Pakistani military forces were on the border between the two countries, due to the attack on the Indian Parliament by terrorists attributed to Pakistan. This action worsened the relations between the two countries. However, in October 2003, with the proposal of confidence-building measures by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the situation had somehow improved. (Ahmed Rid, 2014, p.150)

The Seventh forum was held on February 25-28, 2005 in New Delhi with the participation of nearly 650 people from both sides of the border. A delegation from Kashmir of Pakistan, attended the forum for the first time. In this forum an expert working group was established to distribute water reserves. The forum was also attended for the first time by nearly 100 young people, 22 of whom were from Pakistan.

The Eighth forum was held from 29 to 31 December 2011 in Allahabad, India. Establishing the seventh forum was delayed for six years and was attended by less than 200 people. In fact, this time it was Pakistan's turn to hold the forum, but it did not happen due to Pakistan's insecurity and the spread of terrorist activities in the country. The six-year hiatus has caused serious damage to the body of the activities, and the declining number of participants is a sign that the movement is weakening.

No other joint meeting with the mentioned dimensions has been held since 2011. According to the presidents of the organiza-

tion, the Ninth Assembly was scheduled to be held in Lahore in 2019 with the participation of 115 Indian figures, but this did not happen. Due to the fact that PIPFPD has organized institutions in various formats in both India and Pakistan, meetings are usually held at the national level. For example, India's PIPFPD held its national convention between September 20 and 22, 2013 in New Delhi. The convention centered on "Peace and Democracy in South Asia: Emerging Challenges," and brought together more than 160 delegates from all over India, along with a delegation from Pakistan.

#### **PIPFPD Achievements and Limitations**

In addition to providing a platform to familiarize middle and local level leaders on both sides of the conflict, PIPFPD have had achievements in form of statements and conventions that were later used in formal discussions as well as peace activities; In addition, when the official relations between the two countries were severed, the participants in the event exchanged some official messages in an informal format between the parties. The results of the meetings which were in the form of documents were also used in official bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan. Irfan Mufti, a founding member of PIPFPD, claims that the content of Lahore's 1999 declaration later became the basis for a formal dialogue between India and Pakistan during the 2004-2008 peace process. Although this activity did not solve the conflict completely, it undoubtedly had significant achievements in creating a common understanding between the two sides of the conflict. PIPFPD plays an important role in the crystallization of a broad peace dialogue in India and Pakistan on all important issues facing the two countries, from Kashmir to religious intolerance, democratic governance,

non-nuclearization, globalization, visa liberalization, Trade and water (Ibid, pp.134-170). The most important documents related to PIPFPD forums are as follows:

1. Lahore Joint Statement, September 1994,
2. Delhi Declaration of November 1994,
3. First Convention of the People of Pakistan and India on Peace and Democracy, New Delhi, 24-25 February,
4. Minutes of the Second Joint Conference, Lahore, November 1995, (This Convention is a turning point in the relations between India and Pakistan, as the two countries have not had any talks with each other for nearly two and a half years.)
5. Third Joint Convention, Calcutta, 28-31 December 1996,
6. Review of the Fourth Joint Convention, Peshawar, November 1998,
7. Resolutions adopted in the Peshawar Convention, November 1998,
8. Bangalore Declaration (April 8, 2000),
9. Karachi Declaration at the Sixth Joint PIPFPD Convention (December 2003),
10. Resolution adopted at the 10th Anniversary of the Commonwealth of Pakistan and India for Peace and Democracy, Lahore, September 5, 2004,
11. The joint statements of this body on various issues during the events that aggravate the tensions.

During the twenty-five years of this activity, the relations between India and Pakistan have undergone various events. Progress in formal negotiations has led to prosperity and development of PIPFPD, and tensions have made limitations. The India-Pakistan nuclear test in May 1998 was the first major crisis to emerge since the formation of the PIPFPD. The Kargil War was another event

that took place immediately after the Lahore Declaration in May 1999. Terrorist attacks in India from 2001 to 2003 were another issue that has affected negatively the PIPFPD process. The 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and the like, all severely limited the holding of joint meetings. This situation continues up to now. As can be seen, the last joint meeting was held in 2011 after six years, and the next round has not been held for nearly nine years. The possibility of terrorist attacks and the non-issuance of visas to participants is one of the most important problems.

Although this activity did not lead to lasting peace, it was undoubtedly one of the informal measures that greatly changed the public view and the politicians' attitude towards the conflict. The 25-year lifespan of this activity and the creation of epistemic societies along the borders of conflict indicate its relative success. PIPFPD began when bilateral talks between India and Pakistan failed. Therefore, the governments of the two countries agreed with these activities so that they could convey their messages informally. One of the evidences that can prove the governments of the two countries have supported this activity is the issuance of visas to PIPFPD representatives, except in some special cases.

On one hand, most PIPFPD members were well-known in the civil society of the two countries and were known for their social activities. On the other hand, middle-level leaders and local leaders who were members of PIPFPD, such as Dr. Mobasher Hassan, Dr. Rahman, and Keramat Ali, had access to high-level leaders in their social activities (Ahmed Rid, 2014, p.135). These two characteristics of the participants made transfer phase in the activities much easier.

The PIPFPD also led to peace movements on both sides of the border. Due to the exten-

sive program of this activity to impress the different strata and groups that have been discussed before, some participants established peacekeeping and alike institutions in each of the countries with the aim of building a bridge of peace between the two countries. These institutions have worked together in a variety of areas, usually at the height of tensions, to bring about peace talks and to lead the leaders of the two sides toward peaceful negotiations.

The PIPFPD faced structural and content limitations along the way. In some cases, these restrictions prevented meetings, the transfer of achievements, and even the loss of life and social credibility of participants. PIPFPD, on the other hand, was an attempt by local peace activists on both sides of the conflict that did not have the financial support of the two governments or international actors. This goal was far more ambitious than being achieved by them alone. On the other hand, extremist elements in Indian and Pakistani communities, including various political parties, religious groups, academics, journalists and military institutions in both countries, opposed the activity. Pakistani extremists see India's efforts to gain dominance in South Asia as an obstacle to normal relations between Pakistan and India. Indian extremists claim that Pakistan is interfering in India's internal affairs. Following the statement by the forums, the Pakistani and Indian extremist assemblies opposed Track two activities between the two countries. Commenting on the PIPFPD Convention in New Delhi on February 24-25, 1995, Rashid Torabi, Amir of Jamiat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, said: There should be no formal or informal negotiations. " (Ashraf, 2017, p.24).

The media of both countries, which are mostly state-owned, also support the government's position, and efforts to resolve con-

flicts are less than attempts to justify governments' positions and the aggressor. This media approach is very detrimental to Track Two diplomacy. The PIPFPD was no exception. The spread of news about the activity, especially in the early years, caused serious damage. "When we first formed this assembly in 1994 and held the first joint convention in 1995 in Delhi, about 120 Pakistanis came to Delhi. A Pakistani newspaper published a list of participants and called them traitors. They managed to intimidate some participants, thus avoiding them from continuing their activities. "said Keramat Ali, one of the founders of PIPFPD (Interview with Keramat Ali, 2009).

Lack of security in both countries and the occurrence of terrorist attacks have been one of the main obstacles to hold meetings in both countries. The presence of extremist groups at meetings, especially after 2001 and the terrorist attacks of September 11, caused many problems and obstacles. This seriously damaged the activity. As mentioned earlier, this activity has had only one meeting in the last 15 years. Weakening the cohesion of the elite network formed along the borders of the conflict and its development, the opportunity to get to know each other and get acquainted with the views and opinions of the other side and talk about existing problems and possible solutions, especially in the younger generations.

### Conclusion

As Ahmed Raid says (2014, 133), a conflict is resolved when it is sufficiently ripened. Otherwise, since both sides have not reached to the conclusion that the issue should be resolved, no solution will be found. Therefore, those who want to act as a mediator must help the conflict reach the stage of maturity. India-Pakistan conflict is a complex issue since a verity of players and interests are engaged.

It seems that PIPFPD, with all the success it has achieved in changing the attitude of the elites and, to some extent, the masses towards conflict and peace; It could not take a more effective step than reducing tensions. The move failed to convince both sides of the conflict, especially the government and extremist groups, that co-operation between the two countries and resolving the Kashmir issue could be of greater benefit to India and Pakistan than to continue it. The PIPFPD didn't set the ground for all actors to have representatives in the activity. Elites from India, Pakistan and in some meetings from Kashmir were the only participants. However, role of other regional, international and even internal actors was not taken in to consideration.

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