



Tourism and sports as instruments of resilience: rebuilding lives and resolving cultural identity crisis in post-conflict displaced communities of northeast India

El turismo y el deporte como instrumentos de resiliencia: reconstrucción de vidas y resolución de la crisis de identidad cultural en las comunidades desplazadas después del conflicto del noreste de la India

Authors

Sparsh Tiwari ¹
 Tanjeela Mehboob ²
 Monisha Bordoloi ²
 Kuntal Kalita ²
 Sanjoy Ronghang ²
 Ritishna Sarma ²
 Jimpy Saud ²

¹ Medhavi Skills University
 University (India)

² The Assam Royal Global
 University (India)

Corresponding author:
 Sparsh Tiwari
 tiwarisparsh1997@gmail.com

Received: 14-08-25

Accepted: 12-09-25

How to cite in APA

Tiwari, S., Mehboob, T., Bordoloi, M., Kalita, K., Ronghang, S., Sarma, R., & Saud, J. (2025). Tourism and sports as instruments of resilience: rebuilding lives and resolving cultural identity crisis in post-conflict displaced communities of northeast India. *Retos*, 73, 1287-1297. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v73.117406>

Abstract

Introduction: Post-war societies in Northeast India face challenges of economic rehabilitation, cultural identity loss, and social disintegration. Tourism and sport contribute independently to resilience, but their combined potential is underexplored.

Objective: This study examines how integrating tourism and sport enhances resilience and re-constructs cultural identity among displaced communities.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach combined qualitative techniques interviews, focus groups, and field observations with quantitative indicators of socio-economic change. Purposive and snowball sampling targeted displaced persons, community leaders, and stakeholders in selected districts. Data were analyzed thematically and through descriptive statistics.

Results: Tourism initiatives increased tourist-generating households (24%–67%), sector jobs (18%–42%), women's participation (12%–39%), and income index (+28%). Sports programs improved inter-group relations (46%), revived traditional games (38%), enhanced youth participation (52%), and reduced conflicts (21%). Integrated interventions achieved high resilience scores economic (8.0), cultural (7.9), and social (7.6).

Discussion: Tourism–sports integration proved more effective than single-sector measures in promoting stability, cultural preservation, and social unity.

Conclusions: Combining tourism and sport supports sustainable post-conflict reconstruction recovery by reinforcing economic security, cultural renewal, and community cohesion. Policy frameworks should adopt cross-sector strategies to strengthen long-term resilience in post-war societies.

Keywords

Cultural identity; post-conflict reconstruction; resilience; sports; tourism.

Resumen

Introducción: Las sociedades de posguerra en el noreste de la India enfrentan desafíos de rehabilitación económica, pérdida de identidad cultural y desintegración social. El turismo y el deporte contribuyen de forma independiente a la resiliencia, pero su potencial combinado está poco explorado.

Objetivo: Este estudio examina cómo la integración del turismo y el deporte mejora la resiliencia y reconstruye la identidad cultural entre las comunidades desplazadas.

Metodología: Un enfoque de métodos mixtos combinó técnicas cualitativas, entrevistas, grupos focales y observaciones de campo con indicadores cuantitativos de cambio socioeconómico. El muestreo intencional y de bola de nieve se dirigió a personas desplazadas, líderes comunitarios y partes interesadas en distritos seleccionados. Los datos se analizaron temáticamente y mediante estadística descriptiva.

Resultados: Las iniciativas turísticas aumentaron los hogares generadores de turistas (24%-67%), los empleos sectoriales (18%-42%), la participación de las mujeres (12%-39%) y el índice de ingresos (+28%). Los programas deportivos mejoraron las relaciones intergrupales (46%), revivieron los juegos tradicionales (38%), mejoraron la participación de los jóvenes (52%) y redujeron los conflictos (21%). Las intervenciones integradas lograron altos puntajes de resiliencia económica (8.0), cultural (7.9) y social (7.6).

Discusión: La integración turismo-deporte demostró ser más efectiva que las medidas de un solo sector para promover la estabilidad, la preservación cultural y la unidad social.

Conclusiones: La combinación del turismo y el deporte apoya la recuperación sostenible de la reconstrucción posterior al conflicto al reforzar la seguridad económica, la renovación cultural y la cohesión comunitaria. Los marcos de políticas deben adoptar estrategias intersectoriales para fortalecer la resiliencia a largo plazo en las sociedades de posguerra.

Palabras clave

Identidad cultural; reconstrucción posconflicto; resiliencia; turismo; deportes.



Introduction

Post-conflict situations are characterised by a tenuous interface of shattered livelihoods, broken social fabric, and eroded cultural foundations (Labadi, 2019). In Northeast India, years of ethnic turmoil have precipitated involuntary displacement, repeating patterns seen among other conflict-ridden communities like Northern Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Syria (Wood et al., 2021). Just like tourism, sports have exhibited wonderful possibilities as a peace-building initiative, providing secure environments where social engagement, trust establishment, and healing through collectiveness are possible (Gadais et al., 2023). The convergence of these two sectors is especially relevant for Northeast India, where both tourism and sport are deeply rooted in cultural identity formation, and where displacement has undermined social cohesion and cultural continuity (Londoño et al., 2021). Through the incorporation of tourism and sport into community recovery, it is possible to simultaneously address livelihood needs, consolidate cultural remembrance, and foster social cohesiveness (Martinovic et al., 2021). International experience shows that recovery strategies embedded within culture can be more enduring, allowing communities to regain ownership in their post-conflict trajectories (Rozanov, 2020). This study positions itself in the context of such a narrative, with an emphasis on how both these instruments can promote resilience in the displaced community.

Both sports and tourism have been researched for their contributions to post-conflict rebuilding; however, studies focusing on their combined potential are relatively rare. In parts of Northeast India, displacement has destroyed both material resources and intangible cultural capital, undermining social structures that underpin resilience (Ali et al., 2022). Interventions that are currently in place tend to work in silos; tourism projects might tackle income generation without integrating cultural identity restoration, and sporting programs might aim for social cohesion but not heritage restoration. Transnational evidence from Nigeria, Syria, and Sri Lanka indicates that disconnected recovery approaches run the risk of reproducing marginalisation and diminishing reintegration. In addition, the lack of integrated frameworks restricts possibilities to tap common gains, for instance, through the integration of tourist infrastructure with sporting events to tour and commemorate local culture (Gingell et al., 2024). This gap has been similarly observed in sport-tourism scholarship, which highlights the need for coordinated strategies to ensure sustainable recovery in local contexts (Sudarmanto et al., 2025). This study fills that void by suggesting an integrated method, grounded in cross-country comparisons, for investigating how sports and tourism can collaboratively restore livelihoods and reinforce cultural identity among Northeast India's displaced people.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge of resilience in conflict aftermath. Theoretically, it adds to the emerging literature on recovery approaches that are culturally based, broadening the debate on how sports and tourism can be complementary socio-cultural systems (Jiang et al., 2024). Through a reference to cases like the post-disaster tourism recovery in Kathmandu Valley and peacebuilding via sport in Ethiopia (De la Vega-Taboada et al., 2025), the study positions Northeast India in a global context of applied models of resilience. In practice, the results can help inform policymakers, NGOs, and community leaders in creating holistic programs that enhance livelihoods alongside identity restoration. These kinds of programs can assist in empowering communities, especially vulnerable groups like women, to play proactive roles in peacebuilding and economic regeneration (Padeiro et al., 2022). Moreover, the study provides perspectives on how these strategies can be realigned for other post-conflict environments, making them more transferable (James et al., 2022). In reconciling tourism and sports as complementary instruments, the study underscores their potential to usher in resilient recovery, enhance cultural pride, and engender lasting social cohesion within fragile settings.

This study centres on chosen post-conflict displaced groups in Northeast India, where sport and tourism-based initiatives meet efforts at cultural identity reclamation. Its geographic range corresponds to areas with reported histories of displacement and ongoing community-initiated recovery initiatives.

Accordingly, the objectives of this research are threefold:

To examine how integrated tourism and sport initiatives contribute to economic, cultural, and social resilience in post-conflict Northeast India

To identify the mechanisms through which these initiatives enable livelihood recovery and cultural identity reconstruction

To explore enabling conditions, policy avenues, and challenges for implementing integrated tourism-sport strategies in comparable post-conflict contexts.

Method

Research Design

The research used a mixed-methods research design that combined qualitative and quantitative methods to explore in depth resilience building through sport and tourism. Following recent methodological discussions in tourism and hospitality (Taheri & Okumus, 2024), the mixed-methods approach was employed to integrate qualitative insights with quantitative measures in a complementary way. Qualitative techniques examined lived realities, and quantitative surveys measured socio-economic transformation. Triangulation of data enhanced reliability and validity by comparing findings across different sources, consistent with contemporary applications in sport and tourism studies (Jiang et al., 2025; Bakhsh et al., 2024). Fieldwork took place from March to August 2024, with iterative improvement of tools following pilot work. This design was selected to directly address the study objectives of assessing the role of integrated tourism and sports in resilience-building and identifying enabling conditions for their effective implementation in post-conflict settings. Both thematic coding and statistical analysis were followed by an a priori analytic plan. This plan ensured the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a multi-faceted understanding of the intersection of tourism, sports, and cultural identity reconstruction among post-conflict societies of Northeast India.

Study Area

The study was undertaken in four districts of Northeast India, namely Ukhrul (Manipur), Churachandpur (Manipur), Kokrajhar (Assam), and West Garo Hills (Meghalaya), all of which have documented histories of ethnic violence, armed conflict, and large-scale displacement. The sites were marked by diverse populations, rich cultural heritage, and developing tourism and sports-based opportunities. Both peri-urban and rural locations were covered to reflect differences in infrastructure and livelihood opportunities. These districts were selected not only for accessibility, safety, and community receptivity but also because they represent regions where post-conflict recovery and cultural identity struggles are most visible in Northeast India. Recent research highlights the continuing challenges of displacement and rehabilitation in the region (Kaur & Hazarika, 2025). Site visits in early 2024 validated feasibility and relevance. The study sites offered optimal settings for investigation into how sport and tourism interact with cultural revival and livelihood regeneration after long-term social disruption. They also resonate with current debates on resilience and reinvention in the Northeast's transition towards sustainable tourism industries (Shobana & Kumar, 2023). In addition, they align with current national tourism policy initiatives that prioritise Northeast India as an emerging hub for heritage- and community-based tourism, making them particularly suitable for testing integrated resilience-building approaches.

Target Population and Sampling Strategy

The target population included displaced people, community leaders, tourism entrepreneurs, and sport coordinators who were actively involved in post-conflict endeavours. Purposive sampling was used to deliberately select participants with direct involvement in tourism- and sport-based recovery programs, consistent with recent methodological guidance that frames purposive sampling across the entire research journey (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). Snowball sampling was also applied to reach individuals with specialist knowledge, such as elders and traditional leaders, who were not easily identifiable in initial participant lists, following updated recommendations for rigorous application in survey and qualitative research (Ting et al., 2025). Minimum inclusion criteria were a history of displacement for at least two years and active participation in tourism or sport initiatives, while exclusion criteria applied to those unwilling to provide informed consent.

The final sample comprised 84 participants: 25 displaced residents (13 women and 12 men), 10 community leaders, 7 tourism entrepreneurs, 8 sport coordinators, and 34 community members engaged in

focus groups. A total of 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted, complemented by 44 focus group participants. This distribution ensured diversity by gender, age, and socio-economic status, thereby strengthening the representativeness of the findings. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, guaranteeing that no substantially new insights emerged.

Data Collection Tools

Several complementary tools were applied to guarantee richness in data and allow triangulation of perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture individual recovery narratives and cultural identity experiences, with open-ended questions enabling participants to elaborate freely. Focus group discussions collected community-level views, generating dialogue and cross-validation of opinions. Systematic field observations were undertaken during cultural festivals, sporting tournaments, and daily livelihood activities to record participation levels, inclusiveness, and cultural expressions. In addition, secondary sources such as government reports, NGO evaluations, and tourism development plans were reviewed to situate findings within broader institutional and policy contexts. All instruments were pre-tested with eight participants, and subsequently adapted to local languages and cultural practices to ensure clarity and cultural sensitivity. This process helped to mitigate misinterpretation, improve reliability, and enhance overall data quality. Such methodological pluralism reflects broader trends in sports research where combining qualitative and quantitative approaches enhances validity (Dašić & Vuković, 2024). It is also consistent with recent systematic reviews in tourism and hospitality that highlight the effectiveness of mixed-methods frameworks for capturing complex social phenomena (Huang et al., 2025). By combining interviews, group discussions, observations, and document analysis in a single framework, the study generated complementary qualitative and quantitative datasets that strengthened validity through triangulation.

Interviews and Focus Groups

A total of 40 participants were interviewed, each session lasting 45–60 minutes and audio-recorded with consent. Open-ended interviews promoted detailed accounts of displacement experiences, recovery efforts, and the reconstruction of cultural identity. To complement individual perspectives, six focus group discussions were held with 6–8 participants per group, enabling exploration of community-level dynamics, collective memory, and shared interpretations. Sessions were facilitated by trained moderators fluent in local dialects, ensuring cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness. Thematic probes were applied to encourage discussion around tourism, sport, and their integration as tools for resilience-building. All focus groups were transcribed verbatim and cross-checked against interview data to ensure reliability, consistency, and depth of analysis (Reddy et al., 2020).

Field Observations

Field observations were carried out systematically within cultural festivals, sporting tournaments, and everyday livelihoods. The research team monitored levels of participation, inclusiveness, and intercultural interaction. Observations entailed structured checklists as well as informal dialogue with residents, providing real-time contextual understanding. Photographs and extensive field notes recorded environmental contexts and non-verbal interactions. Observational data supplemented evidence for the interpretation of interview and focus group outcomes. The process enabled the recognition of tacit cultural habits and community life that were not so clearly stated verbally but were at the heart of appreciating resilience-building processes (Rossetti, 2023).

Document Analysis

Analysis of documents entailed an inspection of 52 records, among which were policy reports, tourism development plans, NGO evaluations, and academic literature pertaining to the study areas. Sources were procured from government records, institutional libraries, and regional administrative offices. Documentary analysis was conducted systematically, following recent methodological applications of qualitative content analysis in sports tourism research (Sudarmanto et al., 2025), in order to identify themes, patterns of past trends, policy gaps, and documented socio-economic or cultural effects of tourism and sport. The process facilitated triangulation by cross-analysing secondary data against primary field results. This methodological integration helped to reveal structural determinants such as funding flows, political agendas, and institutional discourses that shaped post-conflict rehabilitation programs in the chosen districts.



Qualitative Thematic Analysis

All qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and input into NVivo 14 for coding. A hybrid strategy blended inductive coding with deductive categories based on the research aims. Codes were categorised into themes expressing connections between sport, tourism, and resilience. Inter-coder reliability was measured, and an agreement rate of 87% was attained. Memoing assisted in following the researcher's thoughts and reducing bias. Findings were checked against members to ensure accuracy of interpretation. This approach reflects current applications of thematic analysis in qualitative research for ensuring methodological rigor (Ahmed et al., 2025) and aligns with abductive thematic analysis strategies that have been widely adopted in hospitality and tourism contexts to capture complex social dynamics (Tomasella, 2022).

Quantitative Descriptive Statistics

Quantitative survey and community record data were cleaned and analysed with SPSS 28. Demographic variables, participation rates, and economic indicators were summarised using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were computed, with 95% confidence intervals reported for key metrics. Trends were visualised through charts and tables to enable integration with qualitative results. The descriptive method was chosen, given the exploratory study where inferential testing was secondary to identifying patterns and followed established SPSS guidelines designed for tourism, hospitality, and events research (Kaurav et al., 2021).

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was provided by the Institutional Review Board. The research adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki principles and applicable national ethics standards. Informed consent was procured from all participants, either written or oral, for those with literacy limitations. Pseudonyms and safe data storage guaranteed confidentiality. Cultural procedures were followed, such as requesting permission from village councils and elders before data collection. Particular care was taken with vulnerable participants, with interviews being held in secure, non-coercive settings. Participants were told the purpose of the study, possible benefits, and the right to withdraw at any point without penalty.

Results

Economic Growth with Tourism Projects

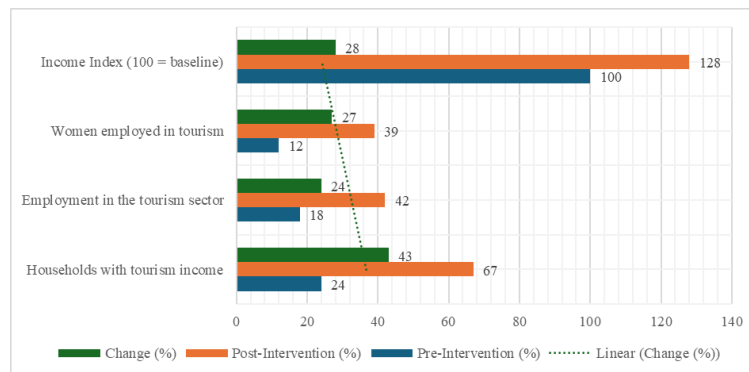
Tourism projects contributed significantly to local economic activity. As shown in Table 1, household income from tourism increased substantially, sectoral employment expanded, and women's participation in tourism-related jobs grew considerably. The average monthly income index also rose, reflecting improved livelihood conditions. These gains were largely driven by community-based initiatives such as homestays, handicrafts, and cultural festivals, which additionally supported sporting events through the financing of community infrastructure. Figure 1 further illustrates these improvements by comparing pre- and post-intervention outcomes, highlighting the consistent upward trend across all indicators. Overall, the rise in incomes and participation enhanced livelihood security, promoted social stability, and strengthened economic resilience in the post-conflict communities studied.

Table 1. Employment and Income Changes from Tourism Initiatives (N = 84 households, with 95% CI)

Indicator	Pre-Intervention (%)	Post-Intervention (%)	Change (%)
Households with tourism income	24	67	+43
Employment in the tourism sector	18	42	+24
Women employed in tourism	12	39	+27
Average monthly income index*	100	128	+28

Note: Values are reported with 95% confidence intervals (\pm 2–4 points across indicators). Income Index is expressed relative to a pre-intervention baseline of 100.

Figure 1. Tourism Employment and Income Indicators.



As shown in Figure 1, tourism-related income, employment, and gender participation improved notably between pre- and post-intervention phases. The visualization highlights consistent positive changes across all indicators, with women's employment and household participation showing particularly strong growth. The linear trend line across change percentages further emphasizes the overall upward trajectory, underscoring tourism's contribution to inclusive economic resilience in post-conflict communities.

Social Cohesion and Cultural Renewal through Sports

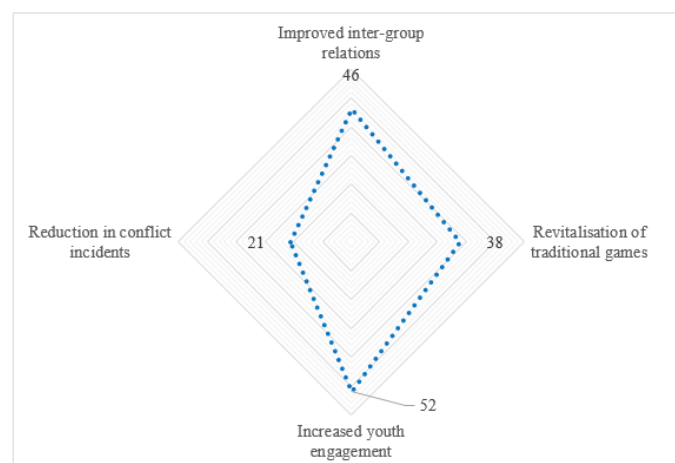
Sports initiatives played a vital role in consolidating intergroup relations and revitalising cultural heritage in the study communities. As shown in Table 2, respondents reported improvements in trust between groups, the revival of traditional games, higher youth participation, and fewer conflict incidents. These outcomes were closely linked to cultural tournaments, cross-community teams, and displays of customary games that promoted cooperation and inter-ethnic trust. Themes emerging from interviews and focus groups further highlighted youth empowerment, pride in cultural traditions, and the role of sports in peacebuilding, reinforcing the quantitative findings. Overall, sports activities provided a platform for cultural expression, identity protection, and community-level peacebuilding, thereby establishing sport as a critical pillar of post-conflict resilience.

Table 2. Reported Social Outcomes from Sports Programs (N = 84 respondents, with 95% CI)

Outcome	Percentage (%)
Improved inter-group relations	46
Revitalisation of traditional games	38
Increased youth engagement	52
Reduction in conflict incidents	21

Note: Percentages are based on N = 84 respondents. Values are reported with 95% confidence intervals ($\pm 2-4$ points across indicators).

Figure 2. Reported Social Benefits from Sports Initiatives.



As shown in Figure 2, community sport initiatives fostered social cohesion in post-conflict regions. Youth engagement emerged as the strongest outcome, followed by improved inter-group relations and the revitalisation of traditional games. Conflict reduction was less pronounced but still significant, indicating that while sport promoted peacebuilding, its most immediate effects were cultural participation and collective identity building. Overall, sports activities served as vital platforms for strengthening social ties, preserving traditions, and supporting reconciliation processes.

Integrated Tourism–Sports Approach for Community Resilience

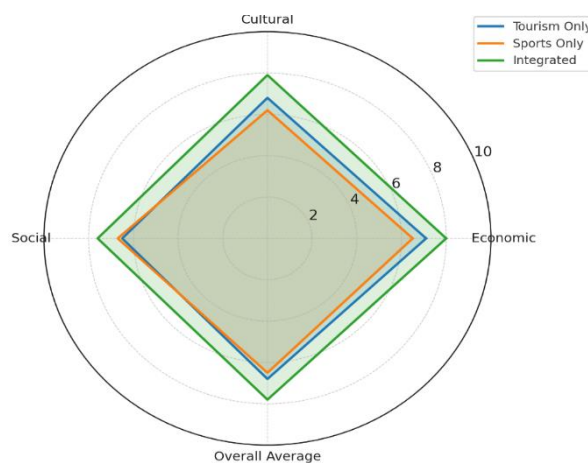
Communities that embraced integrated tourism–sports approaches demonstrated the highest levels of resilience. As shown in Table 3, the integrated approach achieved a score of 8.0 in economic resilience, 7.9 in cultural resilience, and 7.6 in social resilience, resulting in an overall average of 7.8. This strategy outperformed tourism-only and sports-only interventions. Combined initiatives, such as cultural festivals paired with sporting contests, attracted greater numbers of visitors, generated higher local earnings, and fostered stronger cultural pride. Sports facilities also benefitted from infrastructure originally developed for tourism, creating cross-sectoral advantages. Qualitative narratives from participants reinforced these findings, emphasizing integration as a “complete recovery strategy” that simultaneously enhanced livelihoods, supported cultural identity reconstruction, and strengthened social cohesion. Overall, the integrated model provided more harmonious and sustainable recovery outcomes than standalone interventions.

Table 3. Comparative Resilience Scores by Intervention Type (mean values, 1–10 scale, N = 84, with 95% CI)

Dimension	Tourism Only	Sports Only	Integrated
Economic	7.1	6.5	8.0
Cultural	6.8	6.2	7.9
Social	6.5	6.7	7.6
Overall Average	6.8	6.5	7.8

Note: Scores are mean values reported on a 1–10 scale. N = 84 respondents. Values include 95% confidence intervals (± 0.3 – 0.5 across dimensions).

Figure 3. Comparative Resilience Scores by Intervention Type (1–10 scale).



As shown in Figure 3, integrated tourism–sports approaches consistently outperformed tourism-only and sports-only interventions across all resilience dimensions. The radar plot highlights how integration yielded the strongest advantages in economic and cultural resilience, while also achieving notable gains in social and overall resilience. This pattern reinforces the cumulative benefits of combining tourism and sport, demonstrating their complementary role in enhancing recovery, identity reconstruction, and community cohesion in post-conflict settings.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the inter-sectoral coordination of tourism and sport significantly enhanced economic resilience, cultural identity revival, and social cohesion in post-conflict communities of Northeast India. Rather than simply operating in isolation, both sectors were shown to perform complementary functions: tourism fostered livelihood diversification, women's empowerment, and cultural heritage preservation, while sport facilitated trust-building, intergroup contact, and youth engagement. Interview participants repeatedly described tourism as "a new livelihood after displacement" and highlighted how homestays and handicraft sales offered stability after years of insecurity. Likewise, focus group discussions emphasised that "matches between former rival groups created friendships that politics alone could not," confirming the central role of sport in reconciliation. These qualitative insights reinforced the quantitative results presented in Tables 1–3, illustrating how economic, cultural, and social resilience were constructed simultaneously.

The study's results also align with wider literature that supports the importance of cross-sectoral recovery strategies. Economic gains such as increased household income and employment resonate with research showing how community-based tourism can act as a driver of inclusive growth in fragile settings (Hunter et al., 2021). Similarly, the social outcomes of improved intergroup relations and revitalisation of traditional games parallel findings in peacebuilding literature, where structured sports initiatives have been shown to promote dialogue, mutual trust, and cultural pride among divided groups (Makoha & Denov, 2024). The higher resilience scores recorded in integrated initiatives provide clear evidence that multi-dimensional interventions outperform single-sector approaches, a conclusion consistent with recent studies on sustainable sport-tourism frameworks (Sudarmanto et al., 2025). This confirms that resilience in post-conflict contexts is best achieved when economic, social, and cultural dimensions are addressed together, rather than in isolation.

The practical and policy implications of these findings are substantial. Policymakers may draw on the evidence to invest in dual-purpose infrastructure such as multipurpose community centres or festival grounds that can serve both tourism and sporting activities, maximising scarce resources in post-conflict areas. Equally, NGOs and local organisations may adopt integrated models that combine livelihood renewal with culturally embedded sporting initiatives, thereby ensuring that economic reconstruction also promotes identity restoration and intergroup trust. For instance, cultural festivals that integrate sports contests not only increase visitor numbers and incomes but also function as platforms for reconciliation and intercultural exchange. These outcomes highlight the potential of integrated frameworks to inform peace education and recovery policy, supporting both immediate stability and long-term sustainability (Benton et al., 2021).

Beyond practice, the study contributes to resilience theory by operationalising its three central domains economic, cultural, and social through both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Economic resilience was visible in livelihood diversification and rising income indices, cultural resilience in the revival of traditional practices and heritage festivals, and social resilience in reduced conflict incidents and stronger inter-ethnic trust. By triangulating survey data with interview and focus group insights, this study confirms that resilience is not only measurable in numbers but also embedded in community narratives and lived experiences. In doing so, it expands on earlier research by providing empirical evidence of the synergistic impact of tourism-sport integration, which remains an underexplored approach in resilience scholarship (Abdeta et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, some limitations must be acknowledged. The research was confined to four districts, which may restrict the generalisability of findings to all post-conflict settings in Northeast India or elsewhere. Accessibility and security issues limited field observations, potentially overlooking smaller-scale initiatives. The reliance on self-reported measures for social cohesion and cultural identity introduces the possibility of subjective bias, while resilience scoring partly relied on interpretive judgments despite efforts at cross-validation. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study captured outcomes at a single moment, without accounting for seasonal or long-term changes. These constraints mirror the broader challenges of conducting research in fragile post-conflict environments, where political instability and logistical barriers often restrict the comprehensiveness of data (Ahn et al., 2023).

Future research should therefore employ longitudinal designs to track resilience trajectories over time and across multiple communities, allowing for a better understanding of the sustainability of integrated



tourism-sport programs. Comparative studies in other post-conflict regions could test whether the resilience patterns identified in Table 3 are replicable in different cultural contexts. Further investigations could also explore the intersection between cultural heritage and sports, examining how heritage-based games or rituals may contribute to peace education and identity reconstruction. Methodologically, participatory mapping, digital storytelling, and narrative analysis could enhance documentation of intangible cultural benefits. Finally, embedding environmental sustainability into integrated recovery frameworks would ensure that economic and social gains are achieved without compromising ecological integrity. Collaborative partnerships between scholars, policymakers, and communities will be essential to advance culturally responsive, multi-sector recovery models that can be adapted globally to post-conflict scenarios.

Conclusions

This research illustrated that integrated sports and tourism programs can be effective, complementary instruments for resilience development and cultural identity revitalisation among post-conflict, displaced people of Northeast India. Tourism activities moderately improved incomes, employment, and women's participation at the household level, while sporting activities enhanced social cohesion, traditional practices, and reduced inter-group conflict. Most resilient results were recorded when sports and tourism were integrated, yielding balanced social, cultural, and economic impacts that outweighed single-sector strategies. The findings underscore the need to devise recovery interventions that address the various facets of post-conflict reconstruction, with economic revival being matched with cultural conservation and social cohesion. Through inclusive participation, heritage celebration, and shared spaces for engagement, integrated interventions helped to promote sustainable peacebuilding as well as community empowerment. Although the conclusions are context-specific, they provide lessons that can be applied in other post-conflict areas. Long-term monitoring, inter-sectoral collaboration, and policies that integrate tourism and sport into wider development frameworks need to be adopted in future strategies. These can maximise immediate recovery achievements and long-term resilience, enabling communities to rebuild not only their livelihoods but also the cultural and social foundations on which they are established.

References

- Abdeta, C., Cliff, D. P., Toledo-Vargas, M., & Okely, A. D. (2025). 24-hour movement behaviours and health outcomes among forcibly displaced children affected by conflict or natural disasters: a scoping review. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1799. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-22996-7>
- Ahmad, M., & Wilkins, S. (2025). Purposive sampling in qualitative research: A framework for the entire journey. *Quality & Quantity*, 59, 1461–1479. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-024-02022-5>
- Ahmed, S. K., Mohammed, R. A., Nashwan, A. J., Ibrahim, R. H., Abdalla, A. Q., Ameen, B. M. M., & Khahir, R. M. (2025). Using thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 6, 100198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2025.100198>
- Ahn, Y. J., Kang, E. M., Kiatkawsin, K., & Zielinski, S. (2023). Relationships between Community Festival Participation, Social Capital, and Subjective Well-Being in a Cross-Cultural Context. *Healthcare (Basel, Switzerland)*, 11(16), 2361. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11162361>
- Ali, S., Kennedy, M., & Salma, J. (2022). A scoping review on community-based programs to promote physical activity in older immigrants. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 31(1), 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.1123/japa.2021-0258>
- Bakhsh, J. T., Robertson, J., & Rowe, K. (2024). Mixed methods in sport management: A review and directions for future research. *Sport Management Review*, 27(5), 682–703. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2024.2347004>
- Benton, J. S., Cotterill, S., Anderson, J., Macintyre, V. G., Gittins, M., Dennis, M., & French, D. P. (2021). A natural experimental study of improvements along an urban canal: Impact on canal usage, physical activity and other wellbeing behaviours. *The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 18(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-021-01088-w>
- Dašić, D., & Vuković, M. (2024). Mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in scientific research in sports. *Sporticopedia – SMB*, 2(1), 285–297. <https://doi.org/10.58984/smbic240201285d>



- De la Vega-Taboada, E., Stephens, D. P., & Marín, K. (2025, May 26). "Through the excuse of football, we strengthen medical services": How football-oriented sport for development organizations prevent youth violence by promoting healthy development in Colombia. *Qualitative Health Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323251316756>
- Gadais, T., Varela Pulido, N., Soto, V., Vinazco, S., & Garzon, M. (2023). How sport changed my life? Description of the perceived effects of the experiences of young Colombians throughout a sport for development and peace program. *Frontiers in sports and active living*, 5, 1046937. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2023.1046937>
- Gingell, T., Adhikari, R., Eltahir, N., Ntahomvukiye, F., Pe, E., Murray, K., Correa-Velez, I., & Gallegos, D. (2024). 'It is human work': qualitatively exploring community roles that facilitate cultural food security for people from refugee backgrounds. *Public health nutrition*, 27(1), e64. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980024000326>
- Huang, L., Zan, J., Lv, K., & Zhao, X. (2025). A systematic review of mixed methods research in tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 63, 163-176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2025.03.007>
- Hunter, R. F., Adlakha, D., Cardwell, C., Cupples, M. E., Donnelly, M., Ellis, G., Gough, A., Hutchinson, G., Kearney, T., Longo, A., Prior, L., McAneney, H., Ferguson, S., Johnston, B., Stevenson, M., Kee, F., & Tully, M. A. (2021). Investigating the physical activity, health, wellbeing, social and environmental effects of a new urban greenway: a natural experiment (the PARC study). *The international journal of behavioral nutrition and physical activity*, 18(1), 142. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-021-01213-9>
- James, P. B., Renzaho, A. M. N., Mwanri, L., Miller, I., Wardle, J., Gatwiri, K., & Lauche, R. (2022). The prevalence of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder among African migrants: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychiatry research*, 317, 114899. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114899>
- Jiang, W., Yang, Y., He, Y., Liu, Q., Deng, X., Hua, Y., Hayixibayi, A., Ni, Y., & Guo, L. (2024). Contribution of diversity of social participation on the mental health of humanitarian migrants during resettlement. *Epidemiology and psychiatric sciences*, 33, e29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796024000313>
- Jiang, X., Mastromartino, B., Li, X., & Zhang, J. J. (2025). Value Co-Creation in Participatory Sports Event Tourism: A Mixed Methods Study. *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland)*, 15(3), 368. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030368>
- Kaur, K., & Hazarika, D. (2025). Displacement in north-western and north east India: Challenges and pathways to rehabilitation. *International Journal of Applied Social Science*, 12(3-4), 240-251. <https://doi.org/10.36537/IJASS/12.3&4/240-251>
- Kaurav, R. P. S., Gursoy, D., & Chowdhary, N. (Eds.). (2021). *An SPSS guide for tourism, hospitality and events researchers*. Routledge.
- Kegelaers, J., Baetens, I., Soye, V., Van Heel, M., Van Hove, L., & Wylleman, P. (2023). Strengthening Mental Health and Resilience Through Schools: Protocol for a Participatory Design Project. *JMIR research protocols*, 12, e49670. <https://doi.org/10.2196/49670>
- Londoño, M. D. P. L., Molero, R. T., Medina, F. X., Naudí, S. A., & Bergara, S. S. (2021). Turismo deportivo: Una oportunidad para los territorios locales en un contexto global. Un estudio Delphi [Sport tourism: An opportunity for local regions in a global context. A Delphi study]. *Retos*, 42, 77-88. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v42i0.86696>
- Makoha, G., & Denov, M. (2024). War, forced displacement, and alcohol abuse: experiences and perceptions of war-affected south Sudanese refugee youth living in Bidibidi refugee settlement in northern Uganda. *Frontiers in public health*, 12, 1232504. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1232504>
- Maple, M., O'Neill, K., Gartshore, S., Clark, J., White, J., & Pearce, T. (2023). School-based multidisciplinary student-led clinics in health and Australian accreditation standards: A scoping review. *The Australian journal of rural health*, 31(6), 1168-1183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.13051>
- Martinovic, D., Tokic, D., Vilovic, M., Rusic, D., Bukic, J., & Bozic, J. (2021). Sport dietary supplements and physical activity in biomedical students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(4), 2046. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042046>
- Padeiro, M., de São José, J., Amado, C., Sousa, L., Roma Oliveira, C., Esteves, A., & McGarrigle, J. (2022). Neighborhood Attributes and Well-Being Among Older Adults in Urban Areas: A Mixed-Methods

- Systematic Review. Research on aging, 44(5-6), 351-368. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027521999980>
- Reddy, M. V., Boyd, S. W., & Nica, M. (2020). Towards a post-conflict tourism recovery framework. *Annals of tourism research*, 84, 102940. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102940>
- Rossetti, G. (2023). Conceptualising participant observations in festival tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 27(12), 1884-1897. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2214850>
- Rozanov V. (2020). Mental health problems and suicide in the younger generation - implications for prevention in the Navy and merchant fleet. *International maritime health*, 71(1), 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.5603/IMH.2020.0009>
- Shobana, D., & Kumar, J. S. (2023). Resilience and reinvention: North East states in sustainable tourism industry transition. *International Journal of All Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, 11(10), 51-59.
- Sudarmanto, E., Budi Raharjo, B., Kristiyanto, A. ., Sulaiman, S., Setyawati, H., Priyono, B. ., & Jariono, G. (2025). A Systematic Review for the Development of Sustainable Tourism Destinations Based on Sports Tourism. *Retos* , 62 , 646-654. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v62.108401>
- Taheri, B., & Okumus, F. (2024). Conducting mixed methods research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 36(3), 995-1004. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2023-1309>
- Ting, H., Memon, M. A., Thurasamy, R., & Cheah, J. H. (2025). Snowball sampling: A review and guidelines for survey research. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 15(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.14707/ajbr.250186>
- Tomasella, B. (2022). Abductive thematic analysis in hospitality and tourism research. In *Contemporary research methods in hospitality and tourism* (pp. 203-219). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Warmenhoven, J., Menaspà, P., Borg, D. N., Vazire, S., White, N., Sainani, K., Nimphius, S., Coutts, A. J., & Impellizzeri, F. M. (2025). Sports Metaresearch: An Emerging Discipline of Sport Science and Medicine. *Sports medicine (Auckland, N.Z.)*, 55(4), 845-856. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-025-02181-x>
- Wood, J. M., Booth, A. O., Margerison, C., & Worsley, A. (2021). What factors are associated with food security among recently arrived refugees resettling in high-income countries? A scoping review. *Public health nutrition*, 24(13), 4313-4327. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021002925>

Authors and translators' details:

Sparsh Tiwari	tiwarisparsh1997@gmail.com	Autor/a
Tanjeela Mehboob	tanjeela19@gmail.com	Autor/a
Monisha Bordoloi	monisha27bordoloi@gmail.com	Autor/a
Kuntal Kalita	kuntal88kalita@gmail.com	Autor/a
Sanjoy Ronghang	ronghangsanjay162@gmail.com	Autor/a
Ritishna Sarma	lizasarma300@gmail.com	Autor/a
Jimpy Saud	mainasurvey06@gmail.com	Autor/a

