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Analyzing the Socio-Economic Impact of Flooding on the Mising Community in Dhemaji District, Assam

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Abstract— *This article summarizes author's fieldwork and observations related to floods conducted during my doctoral studies at Gauhati University between 2010 and 2016. The information, ideas, and insights presented are primarily based on research conducted in the Dhemaji district of Assam. For detailed investigation, two flood-affected villages were selected at random: Bahir Tapit (Sissimukh Gram Panchayat of Machakhowa Development Block) and Sunarigaon (Muktiar Gram Panchayat of Sissiborgaon Development Block). The central focus of this study is the impact of flooding on the Mising society in Dhemaji, which is one of the most severely flood-affected districts in Assam. The paper aims to explore several key objectives, including the impact of flooding on village settlement and migration patterns, occupational and economic stability, educational institutions and learning opportunities, material culture and cultural heritage, family structures and dynamics, and the role of kinship networks in providing emergency support. It also examines community strategies for mitigating flood effects*.

Keywords— Economic, Flood, Migration, Mitigating, Occupational.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Overview on Flood:

Dhemaji, located in Assam, India, is an area frequently affected by flooding, especially during the monsoon season. Floods in Dhemaji often result from heavy rainfall, the overflow of local rivers, the Brahmaputra River's rising levels and sometimes due to sudden release of dam water in neighboring state Arunachal Pradesh. These floods cause significant damage to agriculture, homes, and infrastructure, displacing residents and disrupting daily life. The recurring nature of floods in Dhemaji highlights the need for effective flood management and mitigation strategies to protect communities and livelihoods in the region. Among the different communities residing in the District, the Mising are largest in number. The Mising villages are situated near the banks of the Brahmaputra River or its tributaries, making them particularly vulnerable to flooding. Living in close proximity to these water bodies has historically posed challenges, with annual floods regularly disrupting their daily lives. The recent severe flooding episodes have severely impacted many Mising settlements across the district.

In Assam, floods are considered the most dangerous natural hazard. During monsoon season, flood-related stories dominate local and national news outlets. Print media frequently highlights headlines about flood crises, while social media platforms such as Face book, Instagram and YouTube share stories from different flood-affected regions of Assam. These floods cause widespread distress across the state.

Last year (2024), 32 out of 33 districts in Assam experienced severe flooding. Various climatic factors have contributed to the increasing severity of these floods annually. The recurring flood calamities have raised significant concerns among residents. Since 1950, Assam has experienced at least 12 major floods, making it one of the most flood-prone states in India. The devastating floods became more frequent and intense following the 1950 Assam-Tibet earthquake, also known as the "Great

Assam Earthquake." Dhemaji remains one of the most severely affected districts, with the district's five principal Brahmaputra tributaries - Simen, Demow, Jalakiasuti, Gai, and Jiadhal- causing annual floods that result in widespread destruction and hardship.

The suffering of the local population during floods is profound and often long-lasting. Post-flood conditions exacerbate issues in already fertile agricultural lands, which become covered with sand deposits. Riverine settlements face serious erosion and flooding problems, impacting approximately 150,000 residents from various tribal and non-tribal communities each year. Families affected by flooding often relocate after each rainy season, seeking safety and stability.

In 2012 alone, around 26,000 families lost their agricultural land due to floods and significant river erosion along the Brahmaputra, Sikari, Simen, Demow, and other tributaries. The erosion has forced many families to relocate, disrupting their livelihoods and lives. The recurring nature of these floods and erosion continues to pose a significant challenge to the resilience and sustainability of the affected communities.

1.2 Overview of Major Flood Disasters in 2025: A Year in Review

The write up is consolidates information from multiple secondary sources to provide a concise overview of the major flood-related disasters recorded across India in 2025.

The year began with tragedy in January; when flooding in Assam's Dima Hasao district claimed the lives of nine coal mine workers. By June, floods had worsened across Assam, affecting over 630,000 people in 21 districts and raising the state's death toll to 12. The Brahmaputra, Barak, and several tributaries flowed above danger levels, forcing nearly 40,000 people into relief camps, according to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

On June 25, Himachal Pradesh was struck by flash floods that killed three people and left 11 missing. A few weeks later, on August 5, Uttarakhand experienced devastating flash floods in Uttarkashi and neighboring areas, resulting in five deaths and more than 100 missing persons. Around the same period, a catastrophic cloudburst in Chositi, Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, killed at least 65 people and injured or displaced more than 100 others.

September witnessed some of the year's most severe flooding. On September 2, Punjab experienced widespread inundation that claimed at least 30 lives. By September 8, the official toll had risen to 48, with three people still unaccounted for. The floods, described as among the most devastating in the state's history, affected all 23 districts, damaging infrastructure, agriculture, and livestock. More than 20 lakh people across 2,050 villages were impacted, with 387,898 displaced and 22,938 evacuated to safer areas. Agricultural losses were extensive, with crops on 1.76 lakh hectares destroyed. Livestock too suffered heavily, with approximately 2.52 lakh animals and 5.88 lakh poultry birds affected. Authorities distributed over 12,170 quintals of fodder to sustain the surviving animals. Among the worst-hit districts was Gurdaspur, where 329 villages and 1.45 lakh people were directly impacted. Amritsar followed with 1.36 lakh affected, while Ferozepur and Fazilka reported 38,000 and 25,000 affected, respectively. Educational institutions were not spared: preliminary assessments by the Punjab Education Department revealed that more than 300 schools across Amritsar, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Ropar, and Nawanshahar suffered damage. Meanwhile, the State Health Department issued alerts over heightened risks of skin infections and waterborne and food borne diseases such as cholera, dengue, typhoid, diarrhea, and hepatitis A and E. Medical teams have been deployed to mitigate potential outbreaks (SDAR_Punjab_Flood_2025_Draft). Uttarakhand also continued to suffer. On September 16, flooding triggered a landslide that killed 15 people and injured 16 more.

These recurring disasters underscore the increasing frequency and intensity of flood events in 2025. Beyond the immediate human toll, the widespread destruction of homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods illustrates the urgent need for stronger disaster preparedness, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable mitigation strategies across flood-prone regions.

1.3 The Misings:

The Misings are one of the Assamese plain tribal population and the second most populous after the Bodo tribes. They identify as being of *Tani* descent and believe they are descendants of the mythical father of humanity, *Abo Tani*. *Abo Tani* is also considered the ancestor of tribes in central Arunachal Pradesh, such as the Adi, Padam, Galo, Apatani, Nishi, Bokar, Bori, and Ramo, suggesting a shared *Tani* heritage among these groups.

Traditionally, the Misings settled along the alluvial riverbanks of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. As described by John M. Cosh in 1837, they occupied the land along the northern bank from Majuli Island to the Dihong River, bounded on the north

by the hills of the Abors. Alexander Mackenzie noted that they farmed extensively in regions like Bardalani, Sissi, and Dhemaji. Robinson observed that their main settlement was in the low hills north of Banskotta and Lakimpur, from where they migrated into the plains and spread across Upper Assam.

Today, districts such as Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Sonitpur, Jorhat, Tinsukia, and Golaghat are home to the Misings. They settled along the Brahmaputra for its fertile land but faced recurrent floods that hindered their economic progress. The tribe's principal festival, *Ali-Aye-Ligang*, is celebrated in February, and their language is called Mising.

The Misings traditionally lived in raised, thatched homes called *Taleng Okum or Chang ghar*, built on bamboo stilts. Initially designed to protect against wild animals, these structures also shielded them from seasonal floods. Flooding has kept them in poverty and made them vulnerable to water-borne diseases like malaria. Despite these hardships, around 90 percent continue to live along the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, maintaining their customs and livelihoods centered on agriculture.

1.4 Methods Adopted:

Both primary and secondary data sources have been utilized to develop and support the research presented in this paper. Primary data were collected directly through fieldwork, which involved engaging with local communities, conducting interviews, and making observations during field visits to Dhemaji district. Various anthropological methods, such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal discussions, were employed to gather in-depth and firsthand information about the community's social, cultural, and economic practices. In addition, secondary data from existing reports, government publications, academic books, and research articles were reviewed to provide contextual background and to supplement the primary data. This comprehensive approach ensured overall understanding of the subject matter and enhanced the reliability and depth of the research findings.

1.5 Scholarly Insights into Flood Vulnerability and the Mising Society:

The districts of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Tinsukia, and Golaghat are home to the Mising people. They predominantly reside in riverine regions and primarily engage in agriculture. It has been observed that soil erosion and flooding directly impact their overall economy, as a significant portion of the population lives along the riverbanks. Many Mising villages continue to inhabit areas frequently affected by floods.

Despite changes in Assamese socio-political and religious life over the years, this vibrant ethnic community has managed to preserve its traditional socio-cultural characteristics largely intact for centuries, even in the midst of broader societal transformations (Bordoloi et al., 1987). Due to their customary practice of living beside riverbanks, the Misings often need to relocate because their habitats are continually exposed to erosion and floods (Doley, 2008).

While most Misings still reside in rural areas, there has been a noticeable increase in migration from rural to urban settings in recent years. This shift is driven by improved socioeconomic conditions, employment opportunities, and better accessibility. However, this migration has led to the adoption of new urban cultures, sometimes at the expense of their long-standing traditions. According to Kuli (2014: 51) in Mising Folklore, the Mising people are constantly vulnerable to floods and erosion, which damage their land, crops, and property, gradually undermining their economy.

As a result, the Misings remain among the less prosperous groups within the Assamese population. Pegu (2012) notes that the Misings are riparian communities, primarily found near rivers and other water bodies. While their riverine lifestyle once seemed advantageous for farming, the devastating August 1950 earthquake changed this dynamic. Large-scale erosion and frequent flooding now often destroy crops and infrastructure, overshadowing benefits like irrigation and soil fertility that floods previously provided.

The Misings have learned through experience to seek new locations for their villages; however, they remain drawn to water sources due to historical and cultural ties. Doley (2014) highlights that "there was plenty of land available for cultivation in the past," allowing farmers to rotate their crop regions every few years. The annual flooding would deposit alluvium, enriching the soil for abundant harvests post-flood.

Currently, conditions have worsened. The Brahmaputra and Subansiri rivers have caused significant erosion and destructive floods, especially after the 1950 earthquake. These events have displaced hundreds of Misings, destroying their arable land and ancestral homes. Even when relocated, they are often forced to settle in smaller areas due to land scarcity (2012: 172-173).

Living along riverbanks has historically subjected the Mising tribe to frequent flooding and erosion, compelling them to relocate repeatedly. Doley (2014) notes that this practice persists due to enduring customs, contributing to their ongoing land shortage. Throughout their long history in the Brahmaputra basin, the Misings have frequently suffered from floods and erosion, which have severely impacted their settlements.

These conditions force the Misings into a nearly unsettled existence, lacking a permanent homeland. They continue to migrate in search of stable, flood-free areas to cultivate and sustain their livelihoods, striving to establish a permanent, peaceful place for agriculture amidst the persistent threats posed by natural calamities.

II. FINDINGS

The findings have been thoroughly discussed, with detailed analysis provided to interpret the results in relation to the specific objectives of the study.

2.1 The Impact of Flooding on Village Settlement Patterns:

The Mising village settlement generally exhibits a straightforward layout, with residences built in close proximity to one another. There is no fixed standard regarding the distance or gaps between homes. Many settlements follow a linear pattern, but due to frequent flooding, modifications in settlement patterns have been observed in flood-affected areas. In villages impacted by floods, new habitation patterns have emerged. Notably, the two flood-affected villages, Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon, have settled or resided in an adhoc manner.

Informants revealed that during floods, villagers are compelled to relocate their dwellings to higher ground or embankments. Elevated mud platforms are constructed within these villages to safeguard household animals during floods. Household and agricultural activities, such as paddy husking and drying, are often carried out on safe sites like embankments. Several families build various levels of platforms within their homes, a practice locally known as *Ka:ré* (chang above chang).

In emergency flood situations, residents of Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon reported that they frequently move their homes to nearby highlands or embankments. For instance, families from Bahir Tapit have sought refuge on dilapidated embankments. According to village informants, settling on embankments began after the 2002 disaster. Mr. Durgeswar Pegu, a 55-year-old resident, stated that most families moved to damaged embankments following the June 2012 flood.

Sunarigaon, situated just outside the Arne-Rekhachapori dyke near the Brahmaputra River, faces regular flooding that causes erosion of nearly half the community. Mr. Dibya Kardong, the village headman (*Gaonburah*), noted that the 1988 major flood had a severe impact on the village. Since then, flood-related issues have persisted, affecting many aspects of daily life.

Currently, 55 families inhabit the community. Of these, 44 families (approximately 80%) live very close to the north bank of the Brahmaputra River. Eight families (about 14.54%) reside on the abandoned, damaged Kulajan-Sunarighat PWD road, which was destroyed during the 1988 flood. The remaining three families have taken refuge on elevated mud platforms or in higher land areas.

Data from the investigated villages indicate that frequent flooding is the primary factor driving the new settlement patterns observed in the two flood-affected villages - namely, settlements along embankments or broken embankments. These patterns reflect the locals' efforts to cope with recent flooding events. Some older respondents reported that they had never seen such settlement arrangements before, indicating a shift from traditional settlement patterns. A small percentage of residents expressed feeling safer and more secure living near or on embankments and highland areas. However, conversations with some embankment settlers in Bahir Tapit revealed ongoing fears and psychological trauma related to flooding.

The villagers vividly remember the 2012 flood with a sense of hopelessness. Most sought refuge under the broken embankment during the breach of the Sissi-Tekelipota embankment. They only returned to their original homes after the floodwaters receded. In some cases, families have permanently relocated to embankments out of fear of future catastrophic floods.

2.2 Understanding Migration Patterns Caused by Flood Impacts:

The report also highlights the movement and relocation of individuals and families driven by flooding. Human migration involves the physical movement of people, often in large groups or across significant distances. Historically, this movement was frequently nomadic, which sometimes led to conflicts with indigenous populations, compelling them to relocate or adapt culturally.

PLATE 1: ***A View of the Damaged Embankment After Breach or Erosion***

PLATE 2: ***Flooded Home Submerged in the Affected Area During the Flooding Season***

PLATE 3: Village Lady using a Banana Raft amid Floodwaters during Flood Emergency

PLATE 4: ***NDRF Team Conducting Flood Surveillance and Monitoring Operations***

PLATE 5: ***Villagers Collaborate to Mitigate Flood Risks through Collective Efforts***

PLATE 6: View of Sand Casting in Agricultural field in the study village

The Misings have been migrating since ancient times. However, there is a notable difference between their past and present migration patterns. Historically, they moved mainly in search of productive land or to settle down, as noted by Pegu in his book "The Mishings of the Brahmaputra Valley." In contrast, current migration patterns among the Mising community are primarily a response to flooding in their native areas. Flooding has caused rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban migration within Dhemaji and surrounding regions.

There is evidence of overcrowding in highland areas near the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border, as people relocate from flood-prone zones to higher ground for safety. Following the Great Earthquake of 1950, floods have frequently affected regions within the four revenue circles, which are highly susceptible to flooding. Families from flooded Mising villages are migrating or shifting mainly due to flood impacts. Many move from these affected villages to nearby towns such as Silapathar, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, and others in search of better settlement opportunities, which have increased labor activity in those areas.

Various local sources indicate that flooding has impacted most parts of the district's four revenue circles. Consequently, many young Mising men and women - both married and single - have migrated to different cities and towns across India to support their families financially. This migration has often resulted in early school dropout among the youth, as families are unable to provide adequate support for their education.

In the villages of Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon, two distinct family migration patterns have been observed: temporary and permanent relocation. In addition, there are reports of individuals or groups moving alone or collectively to urban areas in search of livelihood opportunities.

2.3 Assessing the Impact of Floods on Occupational Patterns and Economic Stability:

The Misings primarily depend on agriculture for their subsistence, which has evolved significantly over the decades through various advancements and modifications. Agriculture remains the main source of income for the two villages, with residents cultivating a variety of rice varieties. Some rice crops are sown in the spring and harvested in the summer, while others are planted during the rainy season and harvested in the fall. It has been observed that approximately 80% of the population works in agriculture. In addition to *Sali* rice, the community also cultivates *Bau* and *Ahu* varieties. Traditionally, *Sali* is harvested in November or December after being planted in July or August. However, annual flooding has adversely affected this practice, leading to a decline in the cultivation of *Ahu*, *Bau*, and *Sali* rice.

Most families in Bahir Tapit village engage in agriculture, but the local economy also includes activities such as fishing, selling alcohol, firewood, weaving, and day labor. Agricultural techniques vary depending on the settlement's geographical location; families living outside the embankment prefer dry cultivation, whereas those inside typically practice wet cultivation. This difference is rooted in the settlement patterns - families inside the embankment feel more secure engaging in wet farming, while those outside face challenges such as riverbank erosion and flooding. The June 2012 flood devastated much of their land and homesteads, depositing large amounts of sand that washed away 29 houses and other properties.

The flood's impact has led to several issues, including landlessness, reduced land holdings, and the displacement of families to old, broken embankments. Many villagers have migrated to nearby cities and towns in search of employment. Those outside the embankment also experience ongoing riverbank erosion, prompting further relocation and a shift to new livelihoods. According to Mr. Romesh Doley, an interviewee from the village, the flood eroded about half of the village's landholdings. Nevertheless, new occupational patterns have emerged; residents now engage in weaving, firewood selling, fishing, day labor, and poultry farming, as their primary agricultural activities were decimated by recurrent flooding. Many households have adapted their work practices to cope with the annual floods.

Similarly, in Sunarigaon Village, most families rely on dry farming, with wet agriculture practiced only during the summer by a small number of landholding families inside the embankment. *Ahu* and *Bau* are the dominant crops, favored because the soil becomes submerged from May to August, making wet cultivation challenging. To mitigate the effects of flooding, residents cultivate early-season crops like *Ahu* and *Bau*, though these are often destroyed by early floods. Consequently, dry cultivation remains the preferred method, with main crops including *Ahu*, *Bau*, mustard, black grams, onions, potatoes, pumpkins, and chilies. Some families cultivate these crops commercially to supplement their income. The recurring floods have prompted

many families to shift from traditional farming to alternative livelihoods such as day labor, weaving, fishing, alcohol and firewood selling, and logging.

Senior residents like Mr. Dibya Pait recall that the area was historically suitable for dry farming and rich in natural herbs used for vegetables. However, frequent flooding and land destruction have caused a significant occupational transition from agriculture to non-agricultural activities. Besides, nearby forests have been cleared for construction and residential purposes. Overall, the pattern suggests that, with ongoing flooding, there is a likelihood of further shifts from farming to non-farming occupations in the future.

2.4 The Impact of Flooding on Educational Institutions and Learning Opportunities:

In the studied villages, it was observed that schools typically close for four to five months each year during flood periods, depending on the severity of the flood conditions. The Bahir Tapit LP School in Bahir Tapit village was completely destroyed by the 2012 flood. During the field visit, it was noted that the school was operating in an open sand casting area within the hamlet, with a makeshift tin roof and insufficient facilities for students to sit comfortably. Moreover, local residents reported that flooding issues caused teachers to be irregular in their attendance, further disrupting the education of pupils.

Similarly, the erosion of the Brahmaputra River threatens the Sunarigaon LP School, which is situated only 50 meters from the river's north bank. Community members expressed concerns that the school could be destroyed within the next one or two years. Adverse weather conditions and poor road connectivity in the area also contribute to inconsistent teacher attendance.

The demographic survey revealed that literacy levels in these two villages are very low. Each year, educational institutions close during floods, disrupting the children's annual learning routine. No additional classes are organized to compensate for the months lost due to flooding. As a result, once normal conditions resume, there is no effort to recover the lost instructional time, affecting students' overall learning progress.

However, some students and parents indicated that initiatives by TMPK (*Takam Mising Porin Kébang*) to provide free, special coaching sessions during summer vacations have been highly beneficial. These efforts have helped mitigate the educational setbacks caused by recurring floods, offering some support to children in the flood-affected communities.

2.5 The Effects of Flooding on Material Culture and Cultural Heritage:

Hoebel (1958: 425) correctly noted in his book "Man in the Primitive World" that culture is a "human phenomenon" exclusive to humans. Culture encompasses the entirety of human behavior - both spoken and unspoken - as well as the results of those actions, whether material or immaterial. The definition of "culture" varies depending on the context. Commonly, the term refers to a person's manners, preferences, and intellectual development. Historians describe societal growth in creative and intellectual domains as "culture." In biological contexts, culture pertains to the growing medium used to cultivate bacteria artificially.

The Sanskrit term sanskrti, meaning "culture," originates from sanskar, which signifies "the refinement of the soul" through various life experiences and the cycle of birth and rebirth. Consequently, the term "culture" has been used for a long time to denote different concepts across various fields. Its etymology is related to words like "cultivate," "cultivation," and "agriculture."

The inhabitants of the communities under study utilize a variety of materials in their daily lives. They incorporate modern materials produced using advanced technology alongside traditional material tools. Most of the natural materials used for building houses are sourced from their immediate environment. Their typical construction methods involve combining natural resources with contemporary elements. They use naturally occurring materials such as wood (*ísin*), bamboo (*ía*), reeds (*rébî*), cane (*jeying*), thatch (*tasay*) and other local resources.

Regarding modern materials, they employ items like tin for roofing, concrete posts, bricks, iron, various knives, plastic, rope, nails, and other goods available in nearby markets. The two villages utilize agricultural materials in their daily routines, blending indigenous and modern approaches. However, due to frequent flooding that destroys natural resources, traditional tools are becoming scarce in the study area. As a result, residents increasingly rely on contemporary tools for construction, fishing, agriculture, and other activities. This shift has led to a noticeable decline in indigenous material culture.

2.6 The Impact of Floods on Family Structures and Dynamics:

The joint family system among Mising families is rooted in patrilineal and patrilocal traditions. However, recurring issues have led to family breakdowns and a transition from joint to nuclear families within these communities.

- **The Effect of Floods on Family Size and Structure -**The study revealed that the frequency of flooding influences family size. Nuclear families are more common in Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon. The recurring flooding issues in these villages have been associated with a decline in joint family systems and an increase in nuclear family breakdowns. According to one respondent, the number of joint families has decreased since the Great Flood of 2002. Besides, family disintegration is linked to the decline in agricultural practices and the shift from farm-based to non-farm livelihoods. Many farming families have transitioned to non-farming occupations due to annual riverbank erosion and reduced crop yields caused by frequent flooding. The floods have eroded significant portions of their agricultural land holdings, further contributing to this trend.
- **The Impact of Floods on Community Life in Villages -** In Mising society, community initiatives are consistently robust and spontaneous. This sense of unity is especially evident during floods, when the village community comes together to address shared challenges. For example, residents of Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon collaboratively construct man-made mud platforms or mounds before or during floods to protect domestic animals such as pigs, chickens, goats, cows, buffaloes, and oxen. During flood events, these communal resources are utilized collectively by all households in the area. In times of emergency, such as repairing embankments for the safety of the community, the entire village mobilizes as a cohesive unit. Dharmeswar Pegu, a 56-year-old resident of Bahir Tapit, recalls how in 2012, the villagers united to assist each other. He also mentions how they organized groups of young people to transport the elderly and ill individuals to the nearest healthcare facilities. According to Mr. Dibya Kardong, the headman of Sunarigaon, villagers usually receive relief supplies from the government or organizations equipped with boat transportation. These supplies typically include food, medicine, clothing, tents, and utensils. Overall, the strong sense of community plays a vital role in helping villagers endure and recover from flood hardships.
- **The Role of Kinship Networks in Emergency Assistance and Support**-The kinship network serves as one of the most important coping strategies for the villagers. Although the kinship systems in the two study villages are identical, informants frequently acknowledged receiving assistance from family members living elsewhere both during and after the flood.
- **Effects of Flooding on Religious Traditions and Practices**-The study provides insights into two key areas: (a) an increase in conversions to Christianity and Assamese Vaishnavism, as illustrated by the graph; and (b) the condensation of various rites and celebrations, such as the Po:rag festival and life cycle rituals including marriage, birth, and death, which are typically postponed until after the flood's devastation has subsided.
- **The Impact of Flooding on Life Cycle Rituals and Celebrations-**It has been observed that frequent flooding in the villages affects several customs and celebrations vital to village life. The flood season influences household rituals such as Saatjaniya, Pejab Uie, Ghar Dangaria, Aie Puja, Urom Apin and funeral rites including Tilotni and Dodgang. Additionally, floods impact socio-religious celebrations like Po:rag Gídí (post-harvest festival) and Do:bur Uie (community ritual).

2.7 Strategies Employed by Communities to Mitigate the Effects of Flooding:

The researcher documented various coping mechanisms and adjustments made by the Mising people in Bahir Tapit and Sunarigaon villages during and after floods, based on personal field experiences and observations.

To adapt to the current flood scenarios, residents construct *Chang Ghar (Taleng Okum)*, traditional platform houses. In flood-prone villages like Bahir Tapit, they build elevated platforms called *Ka:ré*, on which they relocate along with their belongings when their homes are submerged. During floods, they typically live and cook on these platforms, utilizing locally prepared country boats. During the field visit, it was observed that many residents were engaged in boat crafting, indicating preparedness for upcoming floods. The widespread use of banana rafts, known as *Kopak Bur*, made from bamboo, rope, and banana tree trunks, was also noted. These rafts, manipulated with bamboo poles, serve as emergency transportation. The villagers also utilize wooden rafts and plant extra banana trees to produce more rafts for emergencies. Food storage is maintained to sustain them during flood periods, and cattle are moved to nearby *Chaporis* (river island) for 5 to 6 months.

Community cooperation plays a vital role during emergencies, with villagers sharing boats and working together to minimize flood risks. They settle on high land areas or broken embankments to avoid floodwaters. Women contribute economically by weaving, often working on their looms in the upper platforms of *Chang Ghar* even during floods. To supplement their income, villagers employ various fishing techniques. During flooding, they relocate their domesticated animals to elevated areas such as embankments and highlands.

Regarding camp life, or *Sibir Dunam*, residents are compelled to move to government-established Flood Relief Camps, often located in school buildings, as floods worsen. Educational activities halt during such times. In 2013, most villagers stayed in government schools around Dhemaji Town for three to four months during the severe 2012 flood. However, families generally do not all relocate together; mainly male members remain at home to maintain property, while others stay at the camps. This experience is often distressing physically, emotionally, and mentally, with poor living, sanitation, and water conditions. Many villagers seek daily wages during this period. Despite hardships, camp life fosters social bonds and sometimes leads to romantic relationships among young people.

Overall, the study indicates that flooding impacts material aspects like settlement patterns, material culture, and occupations more significantly than non-material aspects such as social structure or geography. This aligns with Ogburn's (1922) theory of cultural lag, which suggests material culture changes more rapidly than non-material culture. The decline in agriculture and educational attainment due to recurrent floods has led to the growth of an unplanned, low-paying informal sector, potentially triggering further economic shifts affecting Mising society and culture.

Various political parties in Assam have governed the region, repeatedly promising to address flooding during election campaigns. However, these assurances have largely remained unfulfilled. Despite frequent news reports on the issue, neither past nor current administrations have taken substantial action. Annually, floods cause widespread distress, especially among farmers whose rice fields are severely damaged or destroyed.

From the perspectives of social science and geological research, the study emphasizes the increasing importance of understanding natural disasters. Since disasters are natural phenomena, the government should prioritize research related to them. The field study indicates that Dhemaji faces frequent flood risks, with impoverished and unofficial settlements suffering the most.

The researcher's observations suggest that to ensure adequate flood preparedness, traditional adaptation methods must be complemented with effective monitoring by Disaster Management Authorities. Expanding knowledge in disaster preparedness and employing indigenous and scientific technologies can enhance flood survival skills. It is crucial to strengthen community resilience through education and improved disaster management strategies.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Overall, this study highlights the profound and multifaceted impacts of recurrent flooding on the Mising community in Dhemaji, Assam. Floods severely disrupt settlement patterns, causing villagers to build elevated platforms and relocate to higher grounds or embankments. They also trigger significant migration, both within the district and to urban areas, as families seek safety and livelihood opportunities, often leading to economic instability and reduced educational access. The floods have transformed traditional agricultural practices, pushing many towards non-farming livelihoods and causing a decline in material culture and social cohesion. Educational institutions suffer closures during flood seasons, impeding learning, while cultural and religious practices are adapted or postponed due to flood-related disruptions. Despite strong community bonds and kinship networks providing support, the persistent threat remains inadequately addressed by governmental policies, which have largely failed to implement effective flood management strategies. The study underscores the urgent need for integrated disaster preparedness, combining indigenous coping mechanisms with scientific approaches, to build resilience among vulnerable communities. Strengthening disaster management and ensuring sustainable development are essential to mitigate the long-term socio-economic and cultural damages inflicted by recurring floods in the region.

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