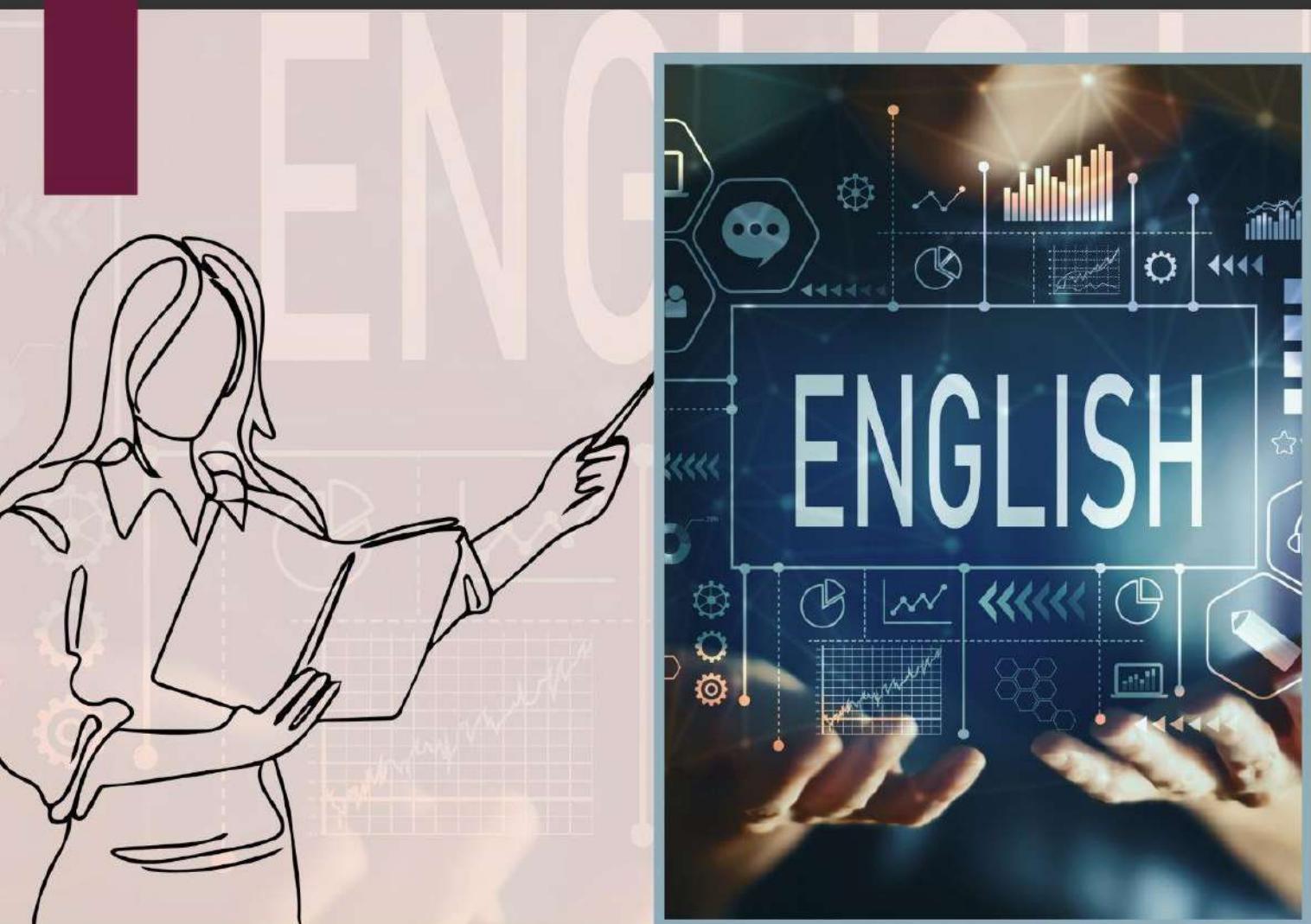


Monthly Peer Review Journal

# JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LITERATURE & CULTURE



**VOLUME-1, ISSUE-1**

**October 2025**



## Preface

We are delighted to present, with great pleasure, the **inaugural issue Volume-1, Issue-1, September 2025 of the Journal of Creative Research in English Literature & Culture (JCREL)** — a peer-reviewed international journal devoted to the exploration and advancement of literary and cultural scholarship.

JCREL is part of the **SPARC Institute of Technical Research** publication series and was envisioned to meet the growing global demand for an academic platform that unites critical thinking, creative inquiry, and interdisciplinary research in the field of **English Literature and Cultural Studies**. The journal aims to serve as a bridge between scholars, educators, and practitioners, providing an inclusive space for diverse voices and perspectives.

The mission of JCREL is to foster intellectual exchange, innovation, and academic excellence by publishing original and thought-provoking research in areas such as:

### **English Literature:**

Literary theory and criticism, comparative literature, postcolonial studies, modern and contemporary literature, diaspora studies, gender and identity, eco-criticism, digital humanities, narrative and stylistic studies, and creative writing.

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Media and popular culture, film and performance studies, cultural theory, identity politics, globalization and culture, heritage and memory studies, translation and intercultural communication, visual arts, and linguistic representation in literature and media.

Each article published in this inaugural issue exemplifies the journal's commitment to promoting meaningful scholarship and fostering dialogue that connects literature and culture with the evolving dynamics of society.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all **Editorial, Reviewer, and Advisory Board Members** who have contributed their expertise, as well as to the **authors** whose valuable research enriches this publication. Our appreciation also goes to the **editorial team of the SPARC Institute of Technical Research** for their consistent guidance and support in bringing JCREL to life.

We hope that this inaugural issue of JCREL will serve as a valuable resource for scholars and readers alike, inspiring continued exploration and critical engagement in the vibrant domains of **English Literature and Cultural Studies**.

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TEFL Educator and Researcher, Department of English, Isfahan University, Iran

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**Research Areas:** English Literature, Translation Studies, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Language and Society.

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Holds a Master's degree in Motor Behavior. Research encompasses sports history, sociology, diplomacy, and the nutritional aspects of physical performance.

**Research Areas:** Motor Behavior, Sports History, Sports Sociology, Sports Diplomacy, Physical Education & Nutrition.

## Table of Contents

### Volume-1, Issue-1, September 2025

S.No	Title	Page No.
1	<p><b>Contrast between Indian Sub-Continent and Western Male Homosociality in context to Mario Puzo's <i>The Godfather</i></b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Prakash Qattari</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-1">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-1</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-1</p>	01-06
2	<p><b>Foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and its impact on Echmiadzin based on the Persian documents of Matenadaran</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Abbas Eghbal Mehran; Mohammad Reza Alam; Arsen Avagyan</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-2">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-2</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-2</p>	07-13
3	<p><b>Ethical Foundations and Responsibilities in Modern Teaching Practice</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Dr. Jasbir Singh</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-3">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-3</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-3</p>	14-17
4	<p><b>Analyzing the Socio-Economic Impact of Flooding on the Mising Community in Dhemaji District, Assam</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Dr. Likhan Chandra Doley</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-4">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-4</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-4</p>	18-28
5	<p><b>Gendered Voices in Literature: Representation, Resistance and Redefinition</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Naresh Amatya</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-5">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-5</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-5</p>	29-35
6	<p><b>Language in Practice: A Performance of Socio-Cultural Consciousness</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> Aayushman K.C.</p> <p> <b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-6">https://doi.org/10.65962/jcrelc-sep-2025-6</a></p> <p> <b>Digital Identification Number:</b> JCREL-C-SEP-2025-6</p>	36-43

# Contrast between Indian Sub-Continent and Western Male Homosociality in context to Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*

Prakash Qattari

Critic, Researcher, Nepal

Orcid ID: 000-0007-4959-4355

Email: qattari.p99@gmail.com

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**Abstract**— *The research carefully examines whether the text provides enough evidence to support its main hypothesis. It focuses on male homosociality and masculinity as a response to the crisis in masculinity caused by rising feminist movements, changing gender roles, and the capitalist nature of Western society. The novel portrays dominant male characters and the crime world, making it seem like a typical masculine text. On one side, there are strong, macho men, while on the other, female characters are submissive and insignificant. The plot mainly highlights masculine virtues and vices, while women are confined to minor domestic roles. Each male character exhibits a desire for homosocial bonding, which helps them reaffirm their masculinity, which the study suggests is in crisis. The traditional idea of masculinity and the patriarchy that supported it lost its power as the century turned, influenced by rapid technological changes and evolving ideologies. As women questioned femininity, they crossed gender boundaries and explored new territories, often leaving men feeling confused. In "The Godfather," the depiction of male camaraderie and the story of a charismatic patriarch address this male anxiety of feeling threatened.*

**Keywords**— *Masculine, Patriarchy, West, East, Homosociality.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Male Homosociality, Masculinity and *The Godfather*:

Men have traditionally held a superior position in their relationships with women, but they often find themselves caught in complex power struggles, not just with women but also among themselves. There is a clear but unspoken hostility, along with some compassion and camaraderie among men. Their relationships shape their behavior, education, and identity. While masculinity is often discussed and desired, it has not been critically examined in terms of its evolution and the factors that influence it. Male homosociality is familiar yet complex due to the societal position of masculinity (Brid, 1996).

In Mario Puzo's, *The Godfather*, male homosociality the social bonds between men is shown differently when we compare the Indian sub-continent and Western contexts. In the Western setting of the novel, male relationships revolve heavily around power, loyalty, and dominance. Men bond through competition, violence, and shared control, often excluding women from these spaces. This world is shaped by strict codes of masculinity, where men prove their strength to gain respect and authority (Oliver 5; Chiampi,80-6).

Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* explores male fraternity and modern masculinity within the crime world, focusing on the character Don Vito Corleone. This paper examines the nature of male relationships in the novel, highlighting the complex dynamics of bonding and hostility that exist alongside respect and admiration. As the concept of masculinity evolved, history took unexpected turns. The rise of feminist movements and gay and lesbian culture challenged traditional macho ideals. In response, masculinity sought to reassert itself through art and literature, particularly in crime fiction, buddy movies, and war films. These

expressions often sidelined female characters, reinforcing the idea of male superiority. In the story, Carlo arranges Sonny's murder, leading Vito to reluctantly join the narcotics business he once rejected. He ensures the safe return of his youngest son, Michael, who has changed and is now ready to take control of the family business. Michael seeks to marry his longtime partner, Kay. After Don Vito dies from a stroke, Michael becomes the new Godfather and orders the deaths of rival families, expanding his power in New York. However, Michael's life becomes complicated. He moves the family business to Nevada, promising Kay that he will legitimize it, but instead, he expands into hotels and gambling while planning operations in Cuba. During this time, he forms an alliance with Hyman Roth, who plots against him with Fredo as a go-between (Cawelti, 19). As Michael tries to negotiate with Roth, tensions rise, and Roth turns to the FBI for protection. Meanwhile, Michael faces personal struggles, including the news of Kay's miscarriage.

Despite his influence, Michael escapes legal troubles but continues to have issues with Kay, who wants to end their marriage. The family faces more challenges with the death of Mama Corleone, which brings them closer together. Connie pleads to be part of the family again, and even Fredo returns. To regain his power, Michael must eliminate his enemies, including Fredo. Ultimately, he succeeds and reestablishes his dominance.

## 1.2 Homosociality in *The Godfather*:

The concept of male homosociality and homosocial desire has existed throughout history, likely dating back to the early days of humanity when distinct male and female identities emerged. Men have consistently tried to assert their masculinity, while women have remained true to their nature (Cawelti, 326-44; Britton, 154-9). Although identity and self-perception have always been influenced by various cultural, historical, economic, and social factors, humanity has largely managed to form a general sense of identity that varies among individuals.

Male homosociality has been significantly shaped by ideals of masculinity, while female bonding has often embraced the "feminine mystique." This suggests that male homosociality has consistently aligned with masculine ideals, which have played a crucial role in defining male relationships with each other and with women. Historically, most societies have been patriarchal, with a few exceptions like the Amazonian civilization. Until relatively recently, men have held dominant positions, and masculinity has served as a guiding principle for them. Male homosociality has always adapted to the expectations and demands of masculinity. In the novel, we can see a trace of homophobia when there is a description of Michael as a timid man lacking the masculine virtues, "Michael Corleone was the youngest son of the Don and the only child who had refused the great man's direction. He did not have the heavy, cupid-shaped face of the other children, and his jet black hair was straight rather than curly. A worry that was put to rest when Michael Corleone became seventeen years old" (16). Vito Corleone, Michael's father and protagonist of the novel, is a traditional man with an air of masculinity around him all the time, in the ways he talked, walked and did things. Whenever there is a description of Vito in the novel there is not a single trace of feminine sensibilities. The novelist narrates, "The Don was a real man at the age of twelve. Short, dark, slender, living in the strange Moorish – looking village of Corleone in Sicily, he had been born Vito Andolini, but when strange men came to kill the son of the man they had murdered, his mother sent the young boy to America to stay with friends. And in the new land he changed his name to Corleone to preserve some tie with his native village" (192). The novel, which revolves around the lives of the Corleone family, is also a tale of friendship, male bonding, male relationship and the complex patterns of affiliations and the business that men do. For instance, in the novel, the definition of friendship comes in stark contrast with the general assumptions and commonly held notion about it, it means business in men's world not just an innocence and intimate association, "Don Vito Corleone was a man to whom everybody came for help, and never were they disappointed. He made no empty promise . . . Only one thing was required. That you can proclaim your friendship. And then, no matter how poor or powerless the supplicant, Don Corleone would take that man's troubles to his heart . . . His reward?" (14). If we take a look at the above mentioned passage, we can sense a fair degree of awe that the Don commanded on the people who came for his help and his distinct way of helping others so that he eventually has control over the person whom he chose to help. To shed blood in the name of friendship and brotherhood, and to maintain stoic endurance is an adherence to the norms of homosociality.

The novel is never short of tell-tale instances of male homosociality and men's adherence to the unwritten code of masculinity. Throughout the novel, there is not a single event that portrays Don Vito Corleone as a coward but even when he carries with him that air of superiority and inspires awe on other peoples around him, he acts 'rational' enough by not 'interfering' into his daughter's personal affair her being beat up by her husband. In one instance Connie complains to Vito about her sufferings due

to her husband. "Connie had said angrily to her father, "did you ever hit your wife?" She was his favorite and could speak to him so impudently. He had answered, "She never gave me a reason to beat her." And her mother had nodded and smiled (238).

Nevertheless, Puzo's *The Godfather* is a novel, a crime fiction to be more specific, that has spent most of its pages on masterfully depicting a god-like protagonist a masculine man and has also proved to be less generous on the elaborations and development of female characters in the entire course of story development. While the depiction of violation has earned place of fairly elaborate graphic representation, the case of women has been under shadow of violence most of the time in the novel and Puzo seems rather economical in his representation of women in his text. There is domestic violence, there is sexual predation if not illicit sexual encounters if not adventures of Sonny, Fredo and Jonny Fontane and little has been mentioned on the female's perspective, crime fiction that it is. Puzo, an American male, writer seems to take pleasure in writing about the male world of crime fraternity that can often be viewed an artist's endeavour to fortify the masculinity that has arguably suffered bruises in the later half the last century. We will not be wrong if we call *The Godfather* a protomasculine novel aiming at re-asserting masculinity.

*The Godfather* with its storyline based on crime a sure-fire topic stormed the book markets and took the modern readers by their foot with its masculine themes dominating the whole plot structure. But, it is unclear whether the novel was widely welcomed and appreciated by the female readers as well as by the men. If we look at the history of arts and literature, be it in religious text or anonymous myths that have been passed from generations to generations, the story of father and sons both males that they are have always been popular and widely accepted by the readers. From the classical mythology to religious texts, traditional folklores and literatures, the father-son combination has always marked their presence and entertained people (Eisler and Skidmore, 155). We have the great Greek tragedy of fateful Oedipus destined to kill his father King Laius, we also have the traditional folk tale of fated over-reacher Icarus and cautious and wise Daedalus, or the Shakespearian story of the prince of chronic procrastination, Hamlet, and his father King Claudius and we also have father-son story in Aesop's fable. It is not just the father-son adventures that have entertained the readers throughout the history but the point that the paper intends to make is the combination has worked for notable part and size of the history of story-telling. And one common thing, if not theme, that most of the father-son adventures or stories have explored are the stories of heroism, greater passion of art and ambition, revenge, remorse and redemption, manhood, machismo and masculinity, valor, vengeance and vendetta. In *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo, we can find not a single thing to make a comparison, but one thing we all can see is after all the novel is also a story that revolves around father and son business. The story after all is about men.

Now turning back to the theories, according to Adam and Samran, the theory of masculinity that came to the attention of English scholarship during the second half of the twentieth century calls out that "the critical analysis of masculinity must be distinguished not only by its subject matter but a new self-consciousness about the theoretical and methodological assumption underlying traditional disciplinary formations (Simerka, 522)." This claim if not statement carries with it the belief that the patriarchy has long been influential in almost all areas of the studies that may cross path with the masculinity studies itself. In the same vein, they write, "Taking its lead from feminism, masculinity studies is thus dedicated to analyzing what has often seemed to be an implicit fact, that the vast majority of societies are patriarchal and that men have historically enjoyed more than their share of power, resources, and cultural authority(5)." While admitting the theoretical and methodological diversity of the scholarship of masculinity they state that the issue of masculinity is difficult to anthologize. Adam and Savran draws from Bryce Traister and writes, "because, 'masculinity has for so long stood as the transcendental anchor and guarantor of cultural authority and 'truth,' demonstrating its materiality, its 'constructedness,' requires an especially energetic rhetoric and critical insistence (7)". The idealized man of the past still influences modern ideas of masculinity, but a global understanding of change and progress is reshaping what it means to be a man today. The modern man can be a gentleman, a scholar, a comedian, a strongman, and an athlete, all while being kind-hearted. This new representation of masculinity blends both masculine and feminine traits, which, when viewed through the lens of traditional masculinity, may seem feminine.

In the novel, we can see this transformation in the characters of Don and Michael, who represent two different generations of masculinity. The younger generation feels the need to prove their manliness to the older generation, and both are connected by the patriarchal beliefs that shape their lives. Characters like Johnny Fontane and Freddie constantly feel the pressure of the male gaze, and their masculinity is questioned when they struggle to manage their chaotic lives. Among the three sons, Freddie is seen as an outsider. The family does not trust him with important tasks, and he is labeled a "ladies' man," content with his

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life in Las Vegas. Neither Don, his father, nor Michael and Sonny seek his help, as he knows he is not capable. In contrast, Michael, the youngest son, is often viewed as a reincarnation of his father. However, he initially shows little interest in the family business, indicating a new generation of masculinity that rejects violence. Michael understands what it means to be a modern man and diverges from traditional expectations.

Despite his efforts to distance himself from his father's legacy, Michael ultimately cannot escape Don's shadow and ends up following the path he once rejected. This change in Michael can be seen as a surrender to patriarchal authority. Sonny, the eldest son, embodies a typical masculine character who tries to make independent decisions in his father's absence but ultimately fails. His impulsive strength leads to his downfall. In this way, we can see the ongoing struggle between two worlds of men, where the new generation are challenged and questioned to prove their manhood. In one instance in the novel, we can see how this conflict has started questioning the future of coming generations:

Let me say that we must always look to our interest. We are all men who refused to be fools, who have refused to be puppets dancing on a string pulled by the men on high. We have been fortunate here in this country. Already most of our children have found a better. Some of you have sons who are professors, scientists, musicians, and you are fortunate. Perhaps your grandchildren will become the new pezzonavanti. (290)

In the above mentioned quote by the Don during a meeting with other family members of New York crime fraternity, we can sense a change of attitude and slowing down of the traditional masculinity. We can argue that he is showing concern for his people's future and in a way trying to convey the end of masculine heroism of his time. Interestingly, he is addressing to an exclusively male gathering and all he can say in the name of future generation is about his sons getting to better positions. It is interesting to note that he misses out daughters though he himself has a lovely one.

Every thing he does he does to earn respect that is why even the crimes he commits do not look like one. This whole theme of respect has, in a way, made the crime look glamorous and Robin Hood like. This lust for respect makes his look like the old face of patriarchy while the maneuver for legitimization is the new face of masculinity. In one of the dialogue between Kay and Michael after his return from exile in Italy, defends his father's stature and gives his own thought on living the life of his father:

What you have to understand is that he considers himself the equal of all those great men like Presidents and Prime ministers and Supreme Court Justice and Governors of the States. He refuses to live by rules set up by others, rules which condemn him to a defeated life. But his ultimate aim is to enter that society with a certain power since society doesn't really protect its members who do not have their own individual power. In the meantime he operates on a code of ethics he consider far superior to the legal structures of society. (369)

Michael, who used to shun the crime and violence that his father's business called for, after his return from Italy talks about his father's thought and ideologies with some degree of respect and defends his father's act. He is now conforming to the codes of ethics of the masculinity.

There is little place for women in the novel and even smaller space for their voices. In one instance when Kay is talking with Tom about Michael, it's Tom's response that weighs heavy.

Kay said, "He's not the man I married." Hagen laughed shortly, "If he were, he'd be dead now. You'd be a widow now. You'd have no problem. Kay blazed out at him, "What the hell does that mean? Come on, Tom, speak out straight once in your life. You are not Sicilian, you can tell a woman the truth, you can treat her like an equal. A fellow human being. (442)

Two messages can be traced in the above mentioned statement; when Tom replies that if he was the same he would not have survived subtly meaning that a man who is not masculine enough or a lover boy will not survive in a man's world and Tom was right in saying this because, Michael is changed man now after he killed Sollozzo and McCluskey to protect his father and his family's dignity. He became a real man of the family as he started filling up the responsibility of his father's business. But before he always hated his father's world and business and always tried to stay away from this. And Kay Adams was in love with that man who he was in the past. She only knew that Michael who used to hate violence. But now he is a changed man, a

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man in the eyes of his people. Another that is mentioned in the above statement is about how a Sicilian treats women; they never include them in private matters. Women are always outsider to them in business and private matters.

Inside the circus of male homosocial interaction lays the feeling of competition, competition is something that has an essentially male face. Bird writes, "Competition with other men provides a stage for establishing self both as an individual and as appropriately masculine. Competition also contributes to the perpetuation of male dominance." He draws from Johnson for elaboration, "To establish self as not female, young men seek out other men with whom to display "non-femaleness" (23). He continues that the homosocial group interactions provide feedback and support for masculinity self-conceptualization. In this sense, masculinity conceptualization is itself a form of competition. While the presence of female cannot be ignored for the assertion of male identity and masculinity as the later compliment the former, the presence of men themselves is of primary interest for the execution of masculinity in a patriarchal society. Men need men for the confirmation of their masculinity and this means the practical side of the homosocial interaction. During the opening scenes of the novel, there is an equally significant piece of conversation between the Don and his friend Luca Brasi a man fearful reputation during the wedding reception of Connie. "He stuttered over the flowery congratulations he offered and his formal hope that the first grandchild would be masculine (25). Men love men and show this feeling to join the men's club.

*The Godfather* with its all dominating male characters with an air of masculinity is a clear depiction of the celebration of malehood. As Kyle Frackman states for Puzo, an American male writer, seems to be taking pleasure in writing about crime world- the Sicilian mafias, and *The Godfather*, which is populated with brave men, often with a tinge of the writer's admiration and fascination. The novel is a tale of male homosociality, associating it with all the male virtues and vices with least trace of feminine virtues and company. In Hagen's word, "The Corleones' world, the physical beauty, the sexual power of women, carried not the slightest weight in worldly matters. It was a private affair, except, of course, in matters of marriage and family disgrace (60)." The males indulge themselves in promiscuity, rashness, drinking, gambling, risk taking, asserting their opinion, fighting and the conquest of women in order to constantly prove their masculinity and virility to other men and themselves, to whom they must show all signs of masculinity.

## II. CONCLUSION

Homosociality, as explained by Kimmel, could be called an attitude a principle that all men, including heterosexual ones, are raised up in the culture to be more eager to please other men and seek their approval than women. Men do 'manly' things like whistling and yelling to connect to other men no just to grab female attention. And we don't find in most contemporary Western cultures men criticizing their buddies' attitudes towards women and gender as an adherence to the unwritten code of masculinity and homosociality. It is, therefore, not at all surprising and uncommon for men to be out of their comfort zone taking feminist position in all male environment given their desire for male approval.

The novel *The Godfather* explores masculinity and male social desire in a deep way. Masculinity is not fixed; it changes over time and is shaped by society (Sedgwick, 92, Gardaphé, 23). Historically, male power has dominated human history, but today traditional ideas of masculinity face challenges from feminism, modernization, and new cultural values. Despite these changes, masculinity still tries to prove its importance. Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* is a story full of strong male characters. It shows a male-only world where men prove their strength, honor, and courage. Women in the story are mostly minor and have little importance. The book focuses on male relationships where men compete but also share a special bond called "male homosocial desire." This means men support each other socially and emotionally while competing. Masculinity in the book is shown through behavior like emotional distance, competition, and seeing women as objects. These behaviors create brotherhood among men, even if they compete. Men are expected to be logical, compete for respect, and enjoy their power over women. This way of thinking divides men and women into opposites, where men feel superior. *The Godfather* portrays a world where masculinity is central involving competition, power, and male bonding reflecting traditional male dominance but also showing its complexity in changing times. In contrast, male homosociality in the Indian sub-continent emphasizes family honor, duty, and social roles within extended kinship networks. Here, men's relationships are deeply connected with family responsibilities and social hierarchy, linked to cultural and religious traditions. While dominance and loyalty are central in both contexts, the Indian model incorporates more communal and familial obligations that shape male identity. Puzo's *The Godfather* primarily reflects Western male homosociality but offers insight into how masculine power operates through patronage and patriarchal authority, concepts that can also be found in South Asian societies but expressed differently. Thus, the contrast lies in the

Western focus on individualistic power struggles and criminal brotherhood, while the Indian sub-continent's male bonds are more rooted in family, social order, and duty. Both systems uphold male dominance but through culturally distinct practices.

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# Foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and its impact on Echmiadzin based on the Persian documents of Matenadaran

Abbas Eghbal Mehran<sup>1\*</sup>; Mohammad Reza Alam<sup>2</sup>; Arsen Avagyan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of History, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Department of History, Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia

\*Corresponding Author Email : [abass.em1987@gmail.com](mailto:abass.em1987@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**— *The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire have had profound effects on the border regions, especially on the city of Echmiadzin in Armenia, during different historical periods. The documents available in Matenadaran, the National Library of Armenia, as a reliable source, represent the political, economic, and cultural interactions between these two empires. This research examines how these relations affected the social and religious situation of Echmiadzin. According to the available documents, it can be seen that the political and military competitions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire have affected not only the geographical borders but also the cultural and religious identity of the region. Also, these relations have led to the formation of new religious and social institutions in Echmiadzin. This research seeks to answer the following questions using an analytical-documentary method: 1. How have the political competitions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire affected the social and religious situation of Echmiadzin? 2. What roles did religious institutions play in Echmiadzin in response to changes in Iranian-Ottoman relations? The research findings suggest that 1. The changing relations between Iran and the Ottomans led to significant changes in the social and religious structure of Echmiadzin. 2. Religious institutions in Echmiadzin acted as intermediaries that not only helped preserve the region's cultural identity but also resisted political pressures from the two empires.*

**Keywords**— *Foreign relations, Iran, Ottoman, Echmiadzin, Matenadaran.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire from the Safavid to the Qajar period were influenced by political, religious and economic factors. During the Safavid period, Iran as a Shiite power and the Ottoman Empire as a Sunni empire were in conflict with each other. This religious conflict led to numerous wars between the two countries, the most important of which was the Battle of Chaldoran in 1514AD and subsequent wars in the 16th and 17th centuries AD. Over time, both countries sought to expand their influence in the border areas. The Safavids, relying on their Shiite identity, tried to absorb Sunni areas, while the Ottomans sought to consolidate their power in Islamic lands. These rivalries led to constant tensions and military conflicts. During the Qajar period, the situation changed, and with the emergence of Western powers, both countries were somewhat weakened. The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire during the Qajar period were influenced by domestic and international political and social developments. As both empires weakened due to external pressures and internal unrest, new interactions were created. The Qajar government sought to consolidate its power against external threats, especially from Russia and Britain, and this led them to improve relations with the Ottomans. During this period, both countries faced similar challenges, including the influence of Western powers and internal discontent. This situation led the Qajar government and the Ottomans to try to prevent foreign influence by cooperating with each other. This cooperation took place mainly in the economic and military fields. However, religious tensions still existed. The Qajars, as a Shiite state, and the Ottomans, as a Sunni empire, were sometimes in conflict with each other. These tensions sometimes led to border conflicts. Also, issues related to Kurds and Arabs on the common borders also affected relations. In general, Iranian-Ottoman relations

during the Qajar period were somewhat complex and contradictory. On the one hand, there were attempts to cooperate and ally against external threats, and on the other hand, religious tensions and border disputes prevented the formation of a stable and friendly relationship. These conditions reflected the need for both countries to protect their national interests in a tense environment.

## II. BACKGROUND

Analyzing the foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and its impact on the historical city of Echmiadzin, especially from the perspective of the documents available in Matenadaran, is an objective that helps us understand the political and cultural complexities of these two empires. These documents indicate the diplomatic, military, and economic interactions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire that led to the formation of the cultural identity of the Armenians and religious institutions in Echmiadzin. The necessity of this analysis lies in the fact that political and military changes have affected not only the geographical borders but also the social and religious structure of this region. By examining these relations, we can gain a better understanding of the role of Echmiadzin as the cultural and religious center of the Armenians and its challenges in the face of external pressures. This study can also help to reinterpret the history of the region and its effects on ethnic and religious identities. This research, using an analytical-descriptive method, attempts to examine the various dimensions of the subject. Regarding the present research entitled "Investigation of Iranian-Ottoman Foreign Relations and Its Impact on Echmiadzin Based on the Persian Documents of Matenadaran", no independent and comprehensive analytical research has been conducted so far, and only limited case studies and studies have been conducted on this subject. Therefore, the present research has been conducted in line with this existing necessity. Books, articles, and writings that were used as sources in this research and are relevant to the content of the present research are introduced. The Persian Orders of Matenadaran, written by Kristineh Gostikian (2021), are documents related to Armenian villagers. In the field of political, social and economic history of Armenia in the Middle Ages, the Persian documents of the archive of the manuscript repository "Matnadar" in Yerevan provide very valuable information about the life of the Armenian peasants. The first attempts to scientifically study these documents were made by Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi (1763-1780), and their results are presented in one of his works called "Jamber". For the aforementioned study, only the collection of documents available in the Echmiadzin Cathedral and several neighboring religious centers was available to the author, while since then, with the gradual collection of many documents and evidence from other places, the collection of said documents has increased significantly in terms of volume and number, and the most important of them, translated into Armenian and Russian, along with the original text of the documents, were printed and published in Yerevan by Hakob Papazian (1968) in two volumes with an introduction, commentary and detailed footnotes. Shahen Hospian (2006) A brief look at the history of Yerevan; Andarnik Hovian (2001) Iranian Armenians, Armenians of Iran; Armen Maleki (2006) The Ottoman military force; Arp Manukian (2014) How Armenians settled in New Julfa.

## III. SAFAVID TO ZANDID

Both the Safavid and Ottoman states were founded and formed on the basis of religion, each emphasizing its own rightfulness, and from the very beginning, anger, hatred, and hostility dominated their relations. Shah Ismail formed his state with the help of the Qizilbash tribes. These tribes had come to Iran from Asia Minor and obeyed the Shah as their great guide and protector. The Ottoman state, which fanatically supported the Hanafi<sup>1</sup> school of thought, treated the Alawites of Asia Minor cruelly and forced a group of them to emigrate to Iran. Of course, some Alawites remained in Asia Minor and maintained their relationship with the Safavid state. To lead them in each area, individuals called "caliphs" were sent from Iran. In the early years of the Safavid state, hundreds of these caliphs carried out the orders of the great guide within the Ottoman Empire and robbed the rulers of that state of sleep [1]. Shah Ismail did not treat the Sunnis in Iran well. In order to reduce the hostility between the two governments, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II sent an ambassador named Muhammad Chavash to Tabriz in 910 AH to congratulate Shah Ismail on his victories and the establishment of the Safavid government. The ambassador asked the Shah to refrain from oppressing the Sunnis. The Shah apparently accepted Mohammad Chavash's request. However, he continued his policy of persecuting the Sunnis. In return, the Ottoman Sultan prevented Iranian pilgrims from traveling to Iraq. Shah Ismail sent an ambassador to Istanbul (912 AH) to obtain permission for the pilgrims to travel again. However, when the Shah killed Shibak Khan Uzbek, Bayezid resented this action because of the common religion and friendly relations he had with him. At the same time, Shah Ismail incited his Sufis and followers to kill the Sunnis in the Ottoman territory [2]. The Shiites of Asia Minor, encouraged and funded by Shah Ismail Safavi and led by a man named Shah Qoli, rebelled in this region. This was while Bayazid II was facing problems at home [3]. Sultan Selim set out for Iran in 920 AH with a large army. On the way,

<sup>1</sup> Sunni Muslims have followed four schools of jurisprudence from around the seventh century to the present day and believe that every Muslim should adhere to one of the four schools of jurisprudence in religious rulings and imitate them.

messages were exchanged between the two sultans, which indicated threats, insults, and boasting. Finally, in the Chaldran Plain, near the city of Khoy, a province of Chughur-Saad, a battle took place between the two sides, which resulted in the defeat of the Safavid Shah. Sultan Selim returned to Istanbul after staying in Tabriz for eight days, as the signs of rebellion had become apparent in his army[4]. Although the relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire were based on the Treaty of Zahab (1049 AH), and the Iranian government, due to its inactivity and inaction, and the Ottoman government, due to its intense and frequent conflicts with European countries, especially Austria, respected the aforementioned treaty and observed its provisions, there were still cases where the Treaty of Zahab was in danger, and only the forgiveness of both parties ensured that the matter did not lead to war and that peace and tranquility remained stable. Just as the issue of Basra and the rebellion of Amir Hussein Beg occurred during the reign of Shah Abbas II, it also happened that the issue of the dispute between the two countries during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussein was also Basra[5]. In this era, Shia and Sunni became the plaything of the differences between two similar but hostile political powers, the Safavids and the Ottomans, and the instrument of the petty grudges that existed between the two states, and at a level that was sometimes so childish that it was surprising! The Ottomans had a "Bab-e-Ali" and the Safavids built "Ali-Qapu"! The Ottomans called their servants: Pasha (king) and in return, the Safavids called their slaves: "Sultan"! And so on[6]. During the years of conflict between the Safavids and the Ottomans, no internal force motivated by Sunnis took any action to support the Ottomans[7]. In the second campaign of Suleiman the Magnificent, Shah Tahmasp sent an Iranian envoy as a plenipotentiary, and a peace treaty was concluded between the two parties on 8 Rajab/29/962 May 1555 in the Sultan's camp in Amasya, and this treaty was the first peace treaty concluded between the Safavids and the Ottomans. This treaty remained in force until the death of both rulers, i.e. until 986/1578[8]. Border disputes between Iran and the Ottoman Empire date back to the Safavid era and to some extent stem from foreign policy during the reign of Shah Abbas. During the reign of Shah Tahmasp, there were also some issues, but during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, the hostility between the two states reached its peak. In fact, Shah Abbas' wars with the Ottoman Empire were related to the liberation of the Central European states from the pressure of the Turks, who had gone as far as Vienna and besieged that city. Shah Abbas's campaign against the Ottoman Empire caused the Turks to abandon the siege of Vienna and return to fight the Safavid Shahryar, and it was this return that prevented them from continuing their conquests in Europe. Nader Shah Afshar, who had realized the danger of the Turks, tried to put an end to these border disputes forever and for this purpose he had collected a lot of ammunition in Kermanshah to realize his dream, but death did not spare him and he died and this matter remained silent. "Nader" held the position of commander-in-chief of Tahmasp Mirza's forces. Nader's quick victory in the war against Ashraf Afghan in Mehandost Damghan and Morchekhort Isfahan caused Ashraf to flee from city to city and see Nader's army chasing him everywhere and finally he was killed by the Baluchis in Baluchistan in the year (1142 AH). Nader started a war against the Ottomans to regain the invaded points. Nader's operations were successful and he advanced to the siege of the city of Yerevan; but due to the chaos in the east of the country he went to Khorasan. Shah Tahmasp tried to continue the fight against the Ottomans personally, but he was defeated in two consecutive wars and lost everything that Nader had gained. Finally, he signed a shameful treaty in Baghdad, according to which he ceded Ganja, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Nakhchivan, Shamakhi, and Dagestan, that is, all of Georgia and Armenia, to the Ottomans. In return, the Ottomans promised to send forces to help the Iranian army to take back the territories occupied by Russia. Nader did not accept such a treaty and protested. Tahmasp summoned him to Isfahan, but Nader came to Isfahan at the head of fifty thousand horsemen, deposed the Shah from the throne and exiled him to Khorasan. He elected the deposed Shah's infant son, Shah Abbas III (1145-1148 AH), as king, and he himself assumed the role of regent for him and asked the Ottoman government to return the occupied provinces. The Ottoman Sultan, concentrating his forces, went to war with Nader (1146 AH) and after a bloody battle due to rebellions in Kerman and Shiraz, signed a ceasefire agreement and went to southern Iran. Nader also demanded the return of the occupied provinces from Russia. After Peter, Russia was ruled by the new empress Anna. He agreed to return the provinces of Mazandaran and Gilan and, by arranging the "Treaty of Rasht" in 1144 AH, be an ally of Iran against the Ottomans. The war between Iran and the Ottomans began again. In Muhamarram 1148 AH, the Ottoman forces were defeated by Nader in the Arpachai Plain and as a result of this war, Georgia and Shirvan were captured by Nader. And in 1149 AH In 1191, the "Sublime Bab" proposed peace and the Treaty of Istanbul was signed, and the Ottomans gave up all their possessions with the exception of Baghdad. During the war between Russia and the Ottomans, with the rare threat of the cities of Baku and Derbent, they returned to Iran[9].

#### IV. QAJAR

During the Qajar period, since Iran was drawn into the sphere of international politics, the issue of border disputes also became part of the sphere of political intrigue. Whenever the British government deemed it necessary, it would provoke the Ottoman government and threaten and encroach on the borders of Iran, and as soon as the political purpose of the party was achieved, the Ottoman government would calm down with a gesture. Mohammad Shah's trip to Khorasan and Herat was not in accordance

with the wishes of the British government, but he tried in every way to prevent this trip, but it was ineffective. It was at this time that the Minister Plenipotentiary of the British Government residing in the court of Tehran, Henry Ellis, wrote to Lord Palmerston: "The reason why the Shah of Iran is marching to Khorasan and Herat is because the peaceful borders of the south and west of the country of Iran are a source of freedom and peace of mind for the Shah and a means of strengthening him to go anywhere and act for the common good". During the reign of Mohammad Shah Qajar, the Ottoman government's provocations and aggressions began on the borders of Iran, causing hardship to the Iranian population at several border points, and plundering Iranian merchants on Ottoman soil and plundering their property. The Ottoman Kurdish tribes invaded Qatur and Khoy, and at the instigation of the governor of Ravanduz, they plundered the surrounding areas of Urmia. The governor of Baghdad sent an equipped force, and they plundered Muhammaren, plundered the people's property, and destroyed the city. Pasha Bayezid engaged in provocations among the Kurdish tribes of Iran and encouraged them against the Iranian government. In Karbala, the Ottoman government began to kill and plunder Iranians during the reign of Mohammad Shah Qajar (1249-1264 AH/1834-1848 AD). Many of them were killed in this incident and their property was plundered. During these times, the Ottoman government did not hesitate to commit any kind of aggression against Iran and Iranians, until Mohammad Shah Qajar returned from Herat and, seeking revenge, prepared an army to prepare for war. But by this time, the British government's goal had been achieved and the Iranian army had moved away from the vicinity of Herat. Since the Iranian king was no longer a nuisance to the ruler of Herat, there was no question of a war between the Ottoman government and Iran. Therefore, like a benevolent reformer, they intervened and brought peace and tranquility to the conflict between the two Islamic states [10]. In addition to performing administrative services, Amir Kabir carried out important political missions in Erzurum to resolve disputes between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and conclude a treaty with that government. The first mission was carried out during the reign of Fath Ali Shah and the second mission was carried out during the reign of Muhammad Shah. Iran's relations with foreign countries in the early days of the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar led the king to appoint someone to be responsible for managing Iran's foreign relations, and for this purpose, Mirza Abdol-Wahhab Neshat Motamed-ud-Dawla Isfahani was appointed to this position, but Motamed-ud-Dawla did not have the title of minister. In early 1339 AH, Haji Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Shirazi was appointed by Fath Ali Shah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which at that time had the title of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A - The five departments included: 1 - Department of Printing, Translation and Ambassadorial Office; 2 - British Department; 3 - Russian Department; 4 - Ottoman Department; 5 - Department of Non-Neighboring Countries [11]. The importance and sensitivity of the Ottoman government to the Qajar government was such that it established a department under the title of Ottoman Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## V. SUPPORT FOR ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ( 1235AH)

In order to establish its right to sovereignty and legitimacy over the Holy See, the Qajar government, in addition to issuing the decree of the caliphate of the caliphs over the Holy See, also took steps to inform the leaders of the Ottoman government: "His Highness the Caliph Ephrem, the Caliph of the Holy See, should know that His Highness Mirza Farajullah, the recorder of the government, should know that since until now there has been no statement regarding the issuance of the decree of the Caliph of the Holy See, the Caliph Ephrem from this government against the authority of the governor, the issuance of his caliphate decree from that court has been delayed and complicated by the delay. Therefore, the officials of the government have written an explanation of the book of the merits and salvation of the chief of the book. After visiting the number of the Qadashim, he should inform the leaders of the Ottoman government of the caliphate and issue and send the decree of the caliphate of the said caliph, which is being delayed due to the issuance of the decree of some of the ammunition that the said caliph has in the provinces of Rome" [12]. The decree, emphasizing the status and position of this caliph, points out the importance of issuing his decree by the Ottoman government. In this text, words such as "Alijah", "Majdat", and "Fakhamat" indicate the respect for the position of Caliph Ephrem by the Qajar government. The Qajar government refers to the delay in issuing the caliphate decree and expresses concern that this delay may harm the important affairs that the caliph has in the Roman provinces. In addition, the reference to the confirmation of his caliphate by Christian monks and priests indicates the support of the religious community for this caliph. The decree requests that after examining and reflecting on this issue, the Ottoman authorities be informed so that the caliphate decree can be issued and sent. This text, in a way, reflects the complex political and religious relations between the Ottoman government and the Armenians at that time. In fact, the Qajar government tried to draw the attention of the Echmiadzin to its positions, and since the Armenians in Iran were under the leadership of Caliph Ephrem, as well as the Armenians who lived in Ottoman lands, the Ottoman government should have paid special attention to not interfering in the affairs of the Caliph, who was under the Qajar government's appointment. "The petition and explanation that His Eminence Ephrem, the Caliph of the Supreme Church, should know that the petition and explanation that he had written was very good and its contents were noted regarding his departure to the Caliphate of Istanbul, which he had written was very good. What was necessary was written to the Caliphate at his request and request, and of course it will be useful for the benefit

of all." [13]. This decree, which seems to have been written to Caliph Ephrem, clearly glorifies the high position and status of the recipient of the decree, who is described as "His Highness." The main subject of the decree is the request for Caliph Ephrem to travel to the Caliphate of Istanbul, which could mean an attempt to establish direct communication with Ottoman officials. The decree also emphasizes that the requests of the Ephrem Cell were transmitted to the Ottoman authorities through the Qajar government.

## **VI. CALIPH DAWUD'S RELEASE TO GO TO BAYAZID AND FATH ALI SHAH'S SUPPORT FOR THE CALIPH (1219 H)**

A decree was issued to Mahmud Pasha, the governor of Bayazid, to provide the means of support and satisfaction for Caliph Dawud, the Caliph of the Church of Och-Kalessa, who had been sent to provide the means for the fire and the servants there. In fact, the Qajar government made every effort to support the Caliph of Och-Killasa and the staff of the Ojak so that they would not have any tendencies to deviate from the center. "Alijah Mahmud Pasha, the ruler of Bayazid, should know that since His Highness the Caliph Daoud, the Caliph of Och-Killasa, requested that we release him to go to a place under His Highness's authority in terms of supplies and equipment for the Ojak and its staff, and Nawab Humayun has released him so that whenever he wants to go, His Highness the Masharalie will enter His Highness's presence. It is ordered and decreed that after gaining knowledge and information about the content of the world's command, obey the king and His Highness the Masharalie will enter, and that He should act in a manner that will satisfy His Highness's good conduct" [14].

## **VII. THE RIGHT TO APPOINT THE CALIPH OF EJMIATSIN BY THE QAJAR GOVERNMENT**

The historical relations between Armenians and Iranians entered a new stage in the 17th century. After the forced migration of Armenians from ancient Jolfa to Iran, by order of Shah Abbas I, densely populated Armenian colonies appeared in Iran. The largest example was the city of Jolfa in Isfahan. The Safavid government gave Armenians certain privileges to interest them in Iran. Armenians gradually got used to the new conditions in Iran and entered the social and economic life of Iran with the feeling that they were a part of the greater Iran. "The Armenians, who were hardworking and intelligent people, engaged in trade, and as a result of their efforts, Jolfa became a progressive city." [15]. The presence of Armenians in the Iranian society in the form of human complexes occurred during the reigns of Shah Tahmasp I and Shah Abbas I of Safavid. The various campaigns of Shah Tahmasp I of Safavid to different regions of the Caucasus led many captives of Georgian, Circassian and Armenian tribes to Iran. This trend also expanded during the reign of Shah Abbas I by pursuing various policies. As a result of these trends, Armenian forces have played an effective role in every corner of Iran since the Safavid era, actively present in various fields, especially trade and commerce[16]. Shah Abbas did not like the Armenians of Iran to make a pact of solidarity with the Roman Church and was more interested in appointing the Armenian Caliph himself and for the Armenian Caliphate to be subject to the orders of the Iranian court. "The Augustinians [around Saint Augustine or Saint Augustine who lived from 354 to 430 AD] arrived in Isfahan in 1012 AH at the height of Portuguese power in Asia and were given a large and beautiful mansion near the Grand Mosque of Isfahan in the Husseiniyeh neighborhood by the king's order. At the beginning, the Karmahs had high hopes for their mission in Isfahan and especially hoped to create an effective and lasting solidarity between Iranians and Europeans against the Ottomans in order to achieve a decisive victory over them. They also hoped to convert Shah Abbas to the Catholic faith. But they soon realized that Shah Abbas accepted the alliance with Europe and even wished for such an alliance to be concluded, but he looked down on the activities of barefoot missionaries in the field of converting Muslims and did not at all like the Armenians of Iran to sign an alliance with the Roman Church. He was more interested in appointing and installing the Armenian Caliph himself and having the Armenian Caliphate obey the orders of the Iranian court[17]. The apparent government of the Armenians of Julfa is in the person of the Shah. The guilty are severely punished. On behalf of the Shah, a person called the Sheriff is selected from the Armenians themselves to deal with the claims and complaints of the residents of Julfa. This man is also responsible for collecting taxes from the Armenians. The Armenians are the wealthiest people in the country, both because the Shah has given them long-term loans and because of the foreign silk trade with them. At the same time, they are very content and thrifty, and the money they spend on travel goes deep into their pockets[18]. Given the importance of the church to the Qajar government, any disruption in its affairs was not permitted. So that when the Qajar government learned that the Ottoman government had appointed a caliph for the Church of Och-Kale and was interfering in the affairs of the Caliph David of Mehrasia, in a decree addressed to Pir-Goli Khan Qajar, the governor of the Azerbaijan province, it was noted that the right to appoint the Caliph of Och-Kale was solely the responsibility of the Qajar government. Fath-Ali Shah reminded that Och-Kale belonged to Iran and the removal and installation of its caliph was reserved for the sovereign of the Iranian monarchy and had no involvement in the Roman Empire, and Pir-Goli Khan Qajar must provide the grounds for the independence and order of the affairs of Caliph David and the ruler of the said place, who was another caliph, and convince them in this way that the caliph assigned by the Qajar government is legitimate. "His Highness Pir-Goli Khan

Qajar, the governor of the Azerbaijan province, should know that last year, our Nawab Homayun, out of the perfect compassion and mercy of His Majesty, His Highness the Grand Patriarch of the Church, sent David of Mehrasia to We have mentioned the Caliphate of the temple of the Uch-Church, the proud and distinguished figure of the Qadashim of Masharaliyya, among the distinguished peers. At this time, it has been reported to the Aqfans of the Astan-e-Nawaz that another Caliph has been appointed by the government against the Ottomans in the area of the said temple and has come to sit in Bayazid and close the church for the movement of his caravans and ascetics, disrupting the order of the Caliph David. Therefore, the ruling of the world is issued to that Highness, who has done the necessary diligence in the independence and order of the affairs of the said Caliph David, and in no way is it permissible to fail, and a letter is written to the ruler of the said place that the other Caliph has written to me and persuades them in this way that the Uch-Church belongs to Iran and the removal and installation of its Caliph is reserved for the world's royal decisions and has no involvement in the Roman Empire. However, that Highness should not forbid them from such movements and interference in the affairs of the Iranian Empire so that they do not disrupt the order of the Caliph David, and what is necessary is to take care of it. "He has his usual independence and organizes his affairs as he should." [19]. In a decree, it is announced that the Caliph Ephrem Uch-Kilsa is assigned to manage the affairs of Vank-Daniel, Vank-Eklis, Vank-Al-Najaq, and Qizil, and the Nakhchivan. "At this time, in view of the ability and competence of the Muslim leader of the Mahrasiya and the abundance of mercy and concern for the Masharaliya, at the request of His Highness, the Caliph Ephrem Uch-Kilsa has assigned and delegated the management of the affairs of Vank-Daniel, Vank-Eklis, Vank-Al-Najaq, and Qizil, and the Nakhchivan to His Highness the Masharaliya, so that out of complete honesty and sincerity of intention, he will devote himself to the management of the affairs and supervision of the Mahrasiyas of the said Ojaqs and will show and demonstrate his good care in their settlement. It is decided that His Highness Karim Khan Kankarlu, the ruler of Nakhchivan and Azad-Jiran, will, in accordance with the decree, assign the management of the affairs of the said Ojaqs to His Highness the Masharaliya, and the requirements of the said job, and return them to His Highness the Highness the Highness the Closest of His Majesty. "Aliya Mustofavian, the head of the bookkeeping department, shall record and record the account number in his books." [20]. Russian statesmen showed great interest in making the Echmiadzin Monastery and its high priests subordinate to state authorities, because they considered Echmiadzin a prelude to their presence and influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. For this reason, they made efforts to attract the attention of the Echmiadzin trustees. "Almost all Armenians in Turkey and Iran follow the national and historical religion of their origin, which is the Gregorian religion. The interest and importance that the Russian government shows in making the Echmiadzin Monastery and its high priests subordinate to state authorities, in order to help them pave the way for their future victories in Asia, is well understandable." [21]. The Russian Empire intended to repopulate the villages of the Yerevan and Nakhchivan khanates, which had been devastated and depopulated by long wars. It also sought to harm the economy of the region by abandoning Iranian Azerbaijan. To achieve these two goals, the Russians took advantage of the unfavorable situation that the khans of Iranian Azerbaijan had created for the Armenian inhabitants of the region. In the Russian invasions of Iran, Armenians and Muslims fought side by side to defend Iran and lost their lives in the process. "Of course, you have heard the details of the unrest in Russian soil and the spread to the Caucasus, which reached Nakhchivan and resulted in the killing of many Armenians and Muslims there. For two days now, there has been a commotion on the border of Julfa, and Salmas and Urmia have become very dangerous and dangerous places; in the city of Tabriz itself, hungry people are running around, shouting and shouting. "With the lack of talent, the absence of an army, the Shah's travel, the absence of the procession of Massoud and His Holiness the Holy Spirit of Sacrifice, the cries of the Azerbaijani people, the differences in religious and clerical beliefs, and the enmity between Armenians and Muslims, what is my position as a person in this country?" [22]. In disputes and conflicts over the boundaries of the forts between Iran and Russia, Armenians were used as interpreters. "In this year, Russia insisted that the place known as Baglu, Goni, and Gogjeh-Dengiz, which are part of the Iravan interior, belonged to the Russian government within the limits of division. Hussein Khan, the commander of Iravan, presented the matter, and General Yermolov, the commander of Georgia, sent Bolkonok Mizrawi, the Russian government's representative, with the Armenian Shahmir Khan as an interpreter, to the court of the Khagan Sahibqaran." [23]. In disputes and conflicts regarding the boundaries of the forts between Iran and Russia, Armenians were used as interpreters. "In this year, Russia insisted that the place known as Baglu, Goni and Gogjeh Dengiz, which are the functions of Iravan, within the limits of division, belong to the Russian government. Hussein Khan, the commander of Iravan, presented the matter, and General Yermolov, the commander of Georgia, sent Bolkonok Mizrawi, the representative of the Russian government, with the Armenian Shahmir Khan as an interpreter, to the court of Khaqan Sahibqaran." [24].

### VIII. CONCLUSION

The Matenadaran documents clearly demonstrate that the principled policy of the Qajar government was serious and continuous support for the Armenians. The absence of forced conversion, support for the construction and maintenance of churches in different regions of Iran, the right of the Iranian kings to appoint a caliph, freedom to hold religious ceremonies, the allocation

of an Armenian sheriff for the Jolfa neighborhood, and other matters are part of this historical reality. The role of Echmiadzin in regulating the relationship of the Qajar kings with the Armenians of Iran as a religious and social institution is of particular importance in the history of Iran. As a center for the consolidation and representation of Armenians, Echmiadzin was able to act as an effective mediator between the Qajar government and the Armenian community. The foreign relations of Iran and the Ottomans, as two great powers in the region, had a deep and widespread impact on the border regions and especially on the historical city of Echmiadzin in Armenia. The documents in the Matenadaran indicate the complex political, economic, and cultural interactions between these two empires. These documents indicate that military and diplomatic rivalries between Persia and the Ottomans affected not only the geographical borders but also the cultural and religious identity of Echmiadzin. At various times, political changes in these two empires had an impact on Echmiadzin. Echmiadzin served as a center of social gatherings and activities, and in response to political and military pressures, it played an important role in preserving the cultural identity of the Armenians.

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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# Ethical Foundations and Responsibilities in Modern Teaching Practice

Dr. Jasbir Singh

Punjabi Teacher in DOE, Govt. of NCT Delhi

E-Mail: [dr.jasbirsingh07@gmail.com](mailto:dr.jasbirsingh07@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**— *Ethics and teaching practice are inseparably linked, as education is not merely a process of knowledge transmission but also a moral endeavour that shapes the character and values of learners. A teacher's ethical behaviour establishes the foundation for trust, respect, and fairness in the classroom. This article examines the meaning and importance of ethics in teaching, emphasizing how moral values influence the attitudes, decisions, and professional conduct of educators. It explores the historical and philosophical roots of educational ethics and identifies key ethical principles such as honesty, justice, equality, and compassion that guide effective teaching practices. The study further discusses the ethical responsibilities of teachers toward students, colleagues, and society, along with the challenges they face in maintaining integrity within diverse educational contexts. Strategies for fostering ethical awareness, reflective practice, and value-based decision-making are also presented. Through global and Indian perspectives, the article highlights how ethical teaching nurtures responsible citizenship, strengthens school culture, and contributes to the overall quality of education.*

**Keywords**— *Ethics, Teaching Practice, Moral Values, Professional Conduct, Educational Integrity, Teacher Responsibility, Ethical Challenges, Classroom Ethics, Value-Based Education.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ethics, in its broadest sense, refers to the principles that govern human behavior, distinguishing between what is right and wrong, just and unjust. In the field of education, ethics assumes a particularly significant role because teachers are not only responsible for delivering knowledge but also for shaping the moral, social, and intellectual character of students. Ethical teaching practices ensure that the learning environment is fair, respectful, and supportive, fostering both academic growth and holistic development.

Teaching is inherently a moral enterprise. Every interaction, decision, and pedagogical choice made by an educator carries ethical implications. From the treatment of students to the evaluation of their work, the conduct of a teacher establishes a precedent for fairness, integrity, and responsibility. In this context, ethics is not an abstract concept but a practical guide that influences daily classroom activities, institutional policies, and broader educational strategies.

The importance of ethical practices in teaching cannot be overstated. In contemporary education, where classrooms are diverse and dynamic, teachers face complex situations that require careful consideration of moral principles. These situations include addressing unequal learning opportunities, managing conflicts, maintaining confidentiality, and supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being. Ethical teachers are those who navigate these challenges with wisdom, empathy, and a commitment to fairness.

Moreover, ethical teaching has long-term implications for students' character development. Children and adolescents are highly impressionable; the behaviors and values modeled by teachers often leave lasting impressions. A classroom characterized by ethical conduct cultivates trust, mutual respect, and a sense of responsibility among students, thereby contributing to their growth as conscientious citizens. Conversely, unethical teaching practices, such as favoritism, dishonesty, or neglect, can undermine student motivation, diminish trust in the educational system, and adversely affect learning outcomes.

This article aims to explore the multifaceted relationship between ethics and teaching practice. It will examine the philosophical foundations of ethical education, outline the responsibilities of teachers, identify common ethical challenges, and suggest strategies for promoting moral conduct in schools. Additionally, the article will provide real-life examples, analyze their impact on students and school culture, and highlight global and regional perspectives on ethical teaching. Through this comprehensive exploration, the article seeks to underscore the indispensable role of ethics in creating effective, equitable, and respectful learning environments.

## II. FOUNDATIONS OF ETHICS IN EDUCATION

Ethics in education is rooted in both philosophical thought and practical considerations. Understanding the foundations of ethics helps teachers make informed decisions and maintain consistency in their professional conduct. The study of educational ethics has evolved over centuries, shaped by moral philosophy, societal norms, and pedagogical theories.

### 2.1 Historical Perspective:

The roots of ethical teaching can be traced back to classical civilizations. In ancient Greece, philosophers such as Socrates and Plato emphasized the moral development of students alongside intellectual growth. Socrates advocated for critical thinking, honesty, and integrity as cornerstones of education, while Plato underscored the role of educators in nurturing virtues such as justice, courage, and wisdom.

In the Eastern context, Confucian philosophy stressed the importance of moral exemplars. Teachers were expected to embody ethical conduct, as their behavior directly influenced students' moral character. Similarly, in Indian educational traditions, texts like the Upanishads and the writings of Chanakya emphasized teacher responsibility, moral integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge for the welfare of society. These historical foundations illustrate that ethical teaching is a universal and enduring concept.

### 2.2 Philosophical Underpinnings:

Ethical principles in education are informed by several philosophical frameworks:

- 1) **Deontology:** This framework, proposed by Immanuel Kant, emphasizes duty and adherence to moral rules. For teachers, deontological ethics implies that certain actions—such as fairness in grading, honesty in communication, and respect for students—are obligatory, regardless of outcomes.
- 2) **Consequentialism:** Rooted in utilitarian philosophy, consequentialism focuses on the outcomes of actions. Ethical teaching, from this perspective, prioritizes practices that maximize overall student well-being and learning success while minimizing harm.
- 3) **Virtue Ethics:** Originating from Aristotle, virtue ethics emphasizes moral character over specific rules. A teacher guided by virtue ethics demonstrates qualities such as empathy, patience, integrity, and diligence, inspiring students to emulate these traits.

### 2.3 Core Ethical Principles in Education:

Across historical and philosophical contexts, several ethical principles consistently emerge as central to teaching:

- **Honesty:** Teachers must communicate truthfully with students, colleagues, and parents. Misrepresentation of facts, manipulation of grades, or deceit undermines trust.
- **Fairness and Equity:** Every student deserves equal opportunity to learn and succeed, regardless of background, abilities, or personal characteristics.
- **Respect:** Respecting students' dignity, cultural backgrounds, and opinions is fundamental to fostering a positive learning environment.
- **Integrity:** Teachers should model moral consistency, ensuring their actions align with professed values.
- **Responsibility:** Educators bear responsibility not only for academic instruction but also for the emotional, social, and ethical development of their students.

These principles form the foundation for practical ethical decision-making, guiding teachers in the complex, dynamic realities of modern classrooms.

### III. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS

Ethical teaching extends beyond theory; it manifests in concrete responsibilities toward students, colleagues, institutions, and society.

#### 3.1 Responsibilities to Students:

Teachers have a primary ethical duty to their students, encompassing fairness, inclusivity, and support. Ethical responsibilities include:

- Providing equal access to educational resources and opportunities.
- Encouraging critical thinking and intellectual honesty.
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding students' personal information.
- Supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being.
- Avoiding favouritism and bias in evaluation or interaction.

#### 3.2 Responsibilities to Colleagues and Institutions:

Collaboration and professionalism are key ethical responsibilities within the school community. Teachers should:

- Treat colleagues with respect and avoid harmful gossip or competition.
- Uphold institutional policies while advocating for ethical improvements.
- Share knowledge and resources to promote collective growth.
- Maintain transparency and integrity in professional communications.

#### 3.3 Responsibilities to Parents and the Community:

Teachers act as intermediaries between schools and the broader community. Ethical duties include:

- Communicating honestly with parents about student progress.
- Encouraging parental involvement while respecting family values.
- Contributing to community development through education.
- Promoting values that reinforce social cohesion and civic responsibility.

### IV. ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN TEACHING PRACTICE

Despite a clear framework, teachers often face ethical dilemmas in practice. Some common challenges include:

Conflicts of Interest: Personal relationships or external pressures can compromise impartiality in assessment or opportunities.

- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries:** Teachers must balance supportive relationships with professional distance to avoid exploitation or favoritism.
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** Ensuring fairness while respecting diverse learning needs presents ongoing ethical considerations.
- **Handling Sensitive Issues:** Teachers encounter topics related to culture, gender, religion, or trauma that require discretion, empathy, and ethical judgment.

### V. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ETHICAL TEACHING

Effective strategies include:

- **Developing an Ethical Framework:** Schools can establish clear codes of conduct that guide classroom behaviour.
- **Curriculum Integration:** Incorporating ethics education in lessons helps model and reinforce moral principles.

- **Mentoring and Role Modelling:** Senior educators can mentor younger teachers to demonstrate practical ethical decision-making.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** Workshops, seminars, and training sessions on ethics promote on-going reflection and improvement.

## VI. CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES

**Case 1: Favouritism in Grading** – A teacher grading students unequally due to personal biases leads to decreased trust and motivation. Corrective action involved anonymous grading and peer review.

**Case 2: Confidentiality Breach** – Sharing a student's personal struggles publicly caused distress. Ethical response included an apology, counselling support, and policy reinforcement.

**Case 3: Role Model Excellence** – A teacher mentoring students in honesty and integrity positively influenced school culture, demonstrating the long-term impact of ethical behaviour.

## VII. IMPACT OF ETHICS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND SCHOOL CULTURE

Ethical teaching fosters trust, engagement, and respect, which enhance learning outcomes. Schools with strong ethical cultures experience:

- Increased student motivation and confidence.
- Reduced behavioural issues and conflicts.
- Stronger parent and community engagement.
- Sustainable professional integrity among teachers.

## VIII. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL ETHICS

International organizations, such as UNESCO, promote ethical teaching through professional codes, emphasizing inclusivity, fairness, and human rights. Regionally, India's NEP 2020 encourages values-based education, focusing on moral development alongside academic achievement. Ethical frameworks vary across countries but consistently prioritize student well-being and professional integrity.

## IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethics is not a supplementary aspect of teaching but its core foundation. Teachers who adhere to ethical principles positively influence student development, school culture, and society at large. Recommendations include:

- Institutional adoption of explicit ethical codes.
- On-going teacher training in ethical decision-making.
- Inclusion of ethics in curriculum and assessment.
- Encouragement of reflective practice to maintain integrity.

Through consistent application of ethical principles, education can fulfill its dual mission: imparting knowledge and shaping responsible, conscientious citizens.

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

**Dr. Likhan Chandra Doley**

Anthropological Survey of India  
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India  
Sub – Regional Centre Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh  
Email: ahkalson@gmail.com

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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 (Muktia 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 sanskruti, 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 (*íá*), reeds (*rébi*), 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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# Gendered Voices in Literature: Representation, Resistance and Redefinition

Naresh Amatya

M.Phil.-PhD Scholar, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: [nareshamatya.np@gmail.com](mailto:nareshamatya.np@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**— *Gender in literature has long been a site of cultural reflection, resistance and transformation. This article examines the representation of gender across classical, modern, postcolonial and contemporary literatures, highlighting how texts encode, reproduce and challenge prevailing gender ideologies. Using a qualitative textual analysis grounded in feminist literary criticism, queer theory and intersectionality, the study traces the evolution of gendered voices in literary traditions from ancient epics to contemporary narratives. Findings reveal that classical literatures, including Greek tragedies, Roman epics and South Asian texts, predominantly reinforce patriarchal hierarchies, with women depicted as loyal, passive, or dangerous and resistance often resulting in punishment. However, seeds of defiance appear in figures such as Antigone and Draupadi, signaling early critiques of gendered power. Modern and feminist literature marked a paradigm shift, with authors such as Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir and Margaret Atwood challenging systemic inequalities and foregrounding women's autonomy. Feminist fiction expanded the scope of women's voices while later movements incorporated intersectional and postcolonial perspectives, as seen in the works of Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy and Tsitsi Dangarembga. Contemporary global literature further diversifies gender representation by embracing queer, non-binary and trans identities, with authors such as Jeanette Winterson and Ocean Vuong interrogating heteronormative and binary constructions. Across these periods, literature emerges as both a mirror of societal norms and a medium for cultural resistance, with narrative strategies such as symbolism, non-linear structures and hybrid language enabling the articulation of marginalized perspectives. Literature thus remains central to global gender studies as a tool for critique, empowerment and redefinition.*

**Keywords**— *feminist criticism, gender, intersectionality, representation, resistance.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background:

Gender is not merely a biological category but a complex cultural and social construct [1]. Across societies, gender identities shape norms, expectations and hierarchies, influencing how individuals are represented in cultural texts. Literature, as both an artistic practice and a repository of cultural memory, reflects and reproduces prevailing notions of gender. It also provides a stage on which gender norms are questioned, negotiated and redefined [2]. Classical texts such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey positioned male heroism at the center, with female figures like Helen or Penelope portrayed in roles defined by beauty, loyalty, or betrayal. Similarly, in South Asian epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, women often embody ideals of devotion and sacrifice [3]. These depictions not only reinforced patriarchal structures but also influenced cultural perceptions of gender roles for centuries. By contrast, modern and contemporary literature, shaped by feminist and queer movements, has sought to rewrite these narratives. A Room of One's Own (1929) and The Second Sex (1949/2011) exemplify feminist literary critiques that highlight the marginalization of women and call for gender equality in cultural production. Postcolonial writers such as Arundhati Roy, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o foreground gender alongside race, class and colonial histories, underscoring the intersectionality of oppression [4].

### 1.2 Literature and Gender Studies:

The intersection of gender studies and literature has produced critical insights into how texts are structured by power relations. Feminist criticism, queer theory and masculinity studies have each highlighted how literature encodes cultural ideologies of gender [5]. For example, feminist readings of Shakespeare have revealed both the constraints and subversions of patriarchal norms in his plays [6]. Meanwhile, queer readings of modernist texts challenge heteronormative assumptions embedded in canonical works [7].

### 1.3 Rationale for the Study:

Despite vast scholarship on gender in literature, three gaps remain. First, much research remains Eurocentric, neglecting non-Western traditions. Second, classical texts are often studied in isolation rather than in relation to contemporary reinterpretations. Third, while feminist critiques have gained prominence, the analysis of queer and non-binary representations remains underexplored in mainstream literary criticism.

### 1.4 Research Questions:

This article seeks to address the following questions:

- How has gender been represented in classical, modern and contemporary literature across cultures?
- In what ways has literature reinforced patriarchal and heteronormative norms?
- How have writers used literature as a tool of resistance to reimagine gender roles and identities?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study:

This study contributes to global scholarship by synthesizing perspectives from classical, modern, postcolonial and contemporary literatures. It provides a comparative framework for understanding how gender roles evolve in literature and how literary texts serve as both tools of oppression and vehicles of liberation.

## II. METHODS

### 2.1 Research Design:

This study adopts a qualitative research design rooted in critical textual analysis. Unlike quantitative approaches that rely on numerical data, textual analysis allows for a nuanced examination of language, themes and representations within literary works. The method is particularly suited to gender studies, where power relations, cultural ideologies and symbolic meanings must be interpreted in context [8]. The study draws on the principles of feminist literary criticism, queer theory and intersectionality to analyze how texts both reflect and reshape social conceptions of gender. These theoretical lenses enable a layered understanding of literature as both a site of patriarchal reproduction and a medium of resistance.

### 2.2 Data Sources:

The corpus for this study includes a diverse selection of texts across historical and cultural contexts grouped into three categories:

- **Classical Texts** – Examples include Homer's *Odyssey*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and medieval European romances.
- **Modern and Feminist Texts** – Works such as *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *The Second Sex* (1949/2011) and *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) are analyzed to show shifts in gendered perspectives following feminist movements.
- **Postcolonial and Contemporary Texts** – Writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Arundhati Roy and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o highlight how gender intersects with race, class and colonialism.

The inclusion of texts from different cultures ensures a global scope while recognizing that gender is context-dependent.

### 2.3 Analytical Framework:

The study employs three interrelated theoretical frameworks:

- Feminist Literary Criticism [9]

- Queer Theory
- Intersectionality

These frameworks are not applied in isolation but are integrated to capture the multifaceted nature of gender in literature.

#### 2.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Each text was analyzed in terms of:

- Characterization
- Narrative Voice
- Themes
- Language and Symbolism

The analysis also traced diachronic changes, comparing classical depictions of gender with modern and contemporary reinterpretations.

#### 2.5 Ethical Considerations:

As this research involves textual analysis rather than human subjects, ethical risks are minimal. However, representation of marginalized voices is approached with sensitivity and interpretations are situated within broader scholarly conversations to avoid cultural misappropriation or reductive generalizations.

#### 2.6 Limitations:

This study does not claim exhaustive coverage of all literatures. The chosen corpus represents influential examples rather than the entirety of gendered writing across cultures. Moreover, the reliance on translated texts (e.g., Greek, Sanskrit and African works) introduces interpretive biases, as translation choices affect gendered meanings [10]. Despite these limitations, the methodological approach provides a robust framework for analyzing how literature encodes and resists gender norms across historical and cultural contexts.

### III. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Gender in Classical Literature:

##### 3.1.1 Greek and Roman Traditions:

Classical Western literature reflects a deep entanglement of gender and power. In Homer's Iliad and Odyssey (8<sup>th</sup> century BCE), male heroism, military valor and intellectual cunning dominate the narrative space. Figures such as Achilles, Odysseus and Hector embody ideals of masculinity, whereas female characters are often symbolic figures rather than autonomous agents. Helen, for example, becomes the "face that launched a thousand ships," yet her own voice and perspective are marginalized. Penelope is celebrated primarily for her loyalty and patience, embodying the ideal of domestic femininity [11]. Greek tragedy similarly reinforced patriarchal norms but allowed glimpses of female defiance. Sophocles' Antigone presents a heroine who challenges the authority of King Creon, representing an early literary articulation of female agency and resistance. However, her defiance leads to her tragic death, underscoring the limited space for women's survival within patriarchal systems [12].

##### 3.1.2 South Asian Epics:

The Mahabharata features women such as Draupadi, who resists humiliation during the infamous dice game scene. Draupadi's questioning of patriarchal norms; "Whom did you lose first, yourself or me?"; constitutes a moment of rhetorical resistance that disrupts the authority of male warriors [13].

##### 3.1.3 Medieval European Literature:

Medieval European romances, such as the Arthurian legends, reinforced chivalric ideals of masculinity while relegating women to roles of inspiration, temptation, or reward. Guinevere, for example, is portrayed through the lens of male desire and betrayal, while figures like Morgan le Fay embody the "dangerous woman" trope [14].

### **3.1.4 Summary of Classical Patterns:**

Across classical traditions, several patterns emerge:

- Patriarchal Centrality
- Silenced Voices
- Resistance as Punishment
- Symbolic Femininity

While classical texts reflect patriarchal worldviews, they also contain seeds of resistance, offering glimpses of alternative gender roles that later literatures would expand upon.

## **3.2 Gender in Modern and Feminist Literature:**

### **3.2.1 Shifts in Gender Representation:**

Writers such as Kate Chopin, Virginia Woolf and Charlotte Perkins Gilman exposed the restrictions of patriarchal norms while simultaneously envisioning new possibilities of female autonomy. These authors marked a departure from the silenced voices of earlier eras, foregrounding women's lived experiences and intellectual aspirations [15].

### **3.2.2 Feminist Literary Criticism and Virginia Woolf:**

A Room of One's Own (1929) is widely regarded as a foundational feminist literary text. In it, Woolf famously argues that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" [16].

### **3.2.3 Simone de Beauvoir and the Philosophy of Gender:**

The Second Sex (1949/2011) further advanced the feminist literary agenda by situating women's oppression within existentialist philosophy. Her declaration that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" [17] reframed gender as a social construct rather than a biological destiny.

### **3.2.4 The Rise of Feminist Fiction:**

Beyond theoretical works, modern fiction itself became a site of feminist resistance. Kate Chopin's The Awakening (1899) shocked audiences with its portrayal of a woman rejecting domesticity in pursuit of personal freedom. Similarly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper (1892) exposed the psychological toll of the "rest cure," critiquing medical and marital structures that pathologized female agency. Later, The Handmaid's Tale (1985) imagined a dystopian society where women are stripped of autonomy and reduced to reproductive functions.

### **3.2.5 Expanding Feminist Perspectives**

While early feminist literature primarily centered on white, middle-class women's experiences, later waves of feminist writing highlighted intersectionality. Morrison's Beloved (1987), for example, interrogates the legacy of slavery through the lens of motherhood and female suffering, demonstrating how literature can capture both individual trauma and collective memory.

### **3.2.6 Queer Theory and Gender Fluidity in Literature:**

Modern and contemporary literature also witnessed the rise of queer perspectives, challenging the binary logic of gender. Jeanette Winterson's Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit (1985) explores lesbian identity within a repressive religious environment, while Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous (2019) portrays queer desire within diasporic, intergenerational contexts.

### **3.2.7 Summary of Modern and Feminist Patterns:**

From Woolf to Atwood, Morrison to Winterson, modern and feminist literature reshaped the terrain of gender representation. Several key patterns emerge:

- Critique of Patriarchy

- Recovery of Women's Voices
- Intersectionality
- Queer Fluidity

These patterns reveal a clear departure from classical representations, where female agency was marginalized or punished. Modern and feminist literature not only critiques patriarchal systems but also reimagines new possibilities for gendered existence.

### **3.3 Postcolonial and Contemporary Literature:**

#### **3.3.1 Postcolonial Context and Gender:**

Postcolonial literature emerged as nations gained independence from colonial rule, offering a literary lens to examine not only political oppression but also social and cultural hierarchies, including gender. In postcolonial contexts, gender cannot be separated from race, class, ethnicity and colonial legacies; women's roles are often shaped by intersecting structures of oppression.

#### **3.3.2 African Literature:**

In African postcolonial literature, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works are pivotal. Her novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) depicts a young girl, Kambili, navigating religious authoritarianism and patriarchal violence in Nigeria. Adichie examines the domestic sphere as a site of gendered power, where women endure both physical and psychological control, yet also assert subtle forms of agency through education, storytelling and solidarity.

#### **3.3.3 South Asian Literature:**

In South Asia, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) foregrounds gender and caste oppression within the Indian context. Female characters, such as Ammu, experience both patriarchal subjugation and societal constraints based on caste and class. Roy employs a non-linear narrative and rich symbolism to expose systemic inequalities, portraying women's resistance in both overt and subtle forms.

#### **3.3.4 Contemporary Global Literature and Gender Fluidity:**

Contemporary literature increasingly challenges binary constructions of gender and embraces queer, non-binary and trans perspectives. Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) portrays a young lesbian woman navigating religious orthodoxy, highlighting how social institutions regulate gender and sexuality.

#### **3.3.5 Regional and Indigenous Literature:**

Postcolonial and contemporary literature also includes regional and indigenous voices, often underrepresented in global discourse. Authors from Latin America, South-East Asia and indigenous communities in North America and Australia weave gender into narratives of colonial displacement, cultural survival and social justice. These literatures frequently depict women as central to preserving cultural knowledge, resisting assimilation and challenging both patriarchal and colonial hierarchies.

#### **3.3.6 Summary of Postcolonial and Contemporary Patterns:**

Across postcolonial and contemporary literatures, several recurring themes emerge:

- Intersectionality
- Resistance and Agency
- Narrative Innovation
- Fluidity of Identity
- Global and Local Nexus

In sum, postcolonial and contemporary literature extends the work of modern feminist texts by incorporating a broader range of voices, perspectives and narrative techniques. Gender is not merely a theme but a lens through which literature interrogates power, identity and social transformation.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Literature as Reflection of Patriarchy:

The analysis of classical, modern and postcolonial texts demonstrates that literature has historically both reflected and reinforced patriarchal norms. In classical works, female characters were largely symbolic—representing loyalty, chastity or danger—and often punished for deviating from prescribed roles [3; 12]. Feminist literary criticism reveals that even when women occupy narrative centrality, they must navigate inherited patriarchal norms embedded in literary language, character archetypes and plot conventions [9]."

##### 4.2 Literature as Resistance:

While literature has often mirrored gender inequality, it simultaneously functions as a tool of resistance. Across time periods, Woolf's theoretical critiques and Atwood's dystopian imaginaries all demonstrate that literature allows for the negotiation of power and the articulation of alternative visions of gender. "Postcolonial and contemporary literature amplifies this resistant potential. Writers such as Adichie, Roy and Ocean Vuong foreground marginalized voices, exposing intersecting forms of oppression and advocating for social justice [4; 7]."

##### 4.3 Intersectionality and Cultural Specificity:

Intersectional analysis reveals that literary resistance must address multiple axes of oppression. Contemporary queer literature similarly highlights how sexuality, migration and ethnicity interact with gender identity, creating complex lived experiences that classical and early modern texts rarely acknowledged.

##### 4.4 Evolution of Gendered Representation:

The Results indicate a clear evolution of gender representation:

- Classical Literature
- Modern/Feminist Literature
- Postcolonial and Contemporary Literature

This evolution suggests that literature is both responsive to and constitutive of social change. While early texts encode patriarchal values, later works actively contest and redefine gender norms.

##### 4.5 Literary Techniques as Tools of Gender Critique:

Across periods, authors employ various literary strategies to challenge gender norms:

- Subversion of Narrative Authority
- Symbolism and Allegory
- Non-linear and Hybrid Narratives
- Interior Monologues and Psychological Depth

These techniques reinforce the argument that literature is not merely a passive reflection of society but an active site of gendered discourse.

##### 4.6 Implications for Global Gender Studies:

The findings have important implications for understanding gender globally:

- Universality and Specificity
- Role of Literature in Social Transformation

- Pedagogical Implications
- Future Research Directions

#### 4.7 Synthesis:

The discussion of classical, modern, postcolonial and contemporary literatures demonstrates that literature functions on multiple levels: as a mirror of societal norms, a space of resistance and a medium for redefining gender. In summary, literature is both shaped by and shapes cultural understandings of gender, illustrating the dialectical relationship between text and society. The evolution from classical constraint to contemporary multiplicity reflects broader social transformations while also offering insights into the ongoing struggle for gender equity worldwide.

### V. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the representation of gender in literature across classical, modern, postcolonial and contemporary contexts. The analysis demonstrates that literature has historically functioned both as a mirror of patriarchal social norms and as a medium of resistance, allowing for the contestation and redefinition of gender roles. In classical literature, female characters were often confined to symbolic or supportive roles, with acts of defiance frequently resulting in punishment or tragedy. Modern and feminist literature marked a departure from these constraints, foregrounding women's voices, psychological depth and agency. Postcolonial and contemporary texts expanded the conversation further, highlighting intersectionality, cultural specificity and the fluidity of gender identities, including queer and non-binary perspectives. The evolution of gendered voices in literature illustrates the ongoing negotiation of power, identity and agency, highlighting the enduring relevance of literary scholarship in understanding gender globally.

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# Language in Practice: A Performance of Socio-Cultural Consciousness

Aayushman K.C.

Department of Anthropology, Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Lalitpur, Bagmati Province, Nepal  
Email: samrat.group369@gmail.com

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**Abstract**— *This Research dismantles the paradigm of innate, universal grammar, arguing instead that linguistic competence is a conscious performance of “Socio-Cultural Consciousness”. Employing comparative ethnography across Nepali speech communities, this study analyzes cross-ethnic accent acquisition and socio-professional lexicons. Findings reveal that individuals consciously acquire, perform, and reform their language, demonstrating profound neuroplasticity and agency that falsify nativist predictions. This model is bolstered by primate language studies, where apes like Kanzi demonstrate conscious symbolic learning, dismantling the premise of the human-unique language module. Synthesizing ethnographic and comparative evidence, this anthropological perspective states that language is not a pre-wired biological inheritance but a pliable tool mastered through conscious socio-cultural practice. The study demands a paradigm shift toward investigating the neuroscientific correlates of this consciousness, forging a new interdisciplinary science of language.*

**Keywords**— *Socio-Cultural Consciousness, Universal Grammar, Language Performance, Primate Language Studies, Neuroplasticity.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

From an anthropological standpoint, language is far more than a means of communication; it is the foundational mechanism through which humans collectively create culture and social life (Duranti, 1997). It structures our realities, embodying and reproducing social identities, ideologies, and worldviews. As a symbolic system, language mediates the material and ideal dimensions of human existence, facilitating the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations while simultaneously shaping power dynamics and social organization (Bourdieu, 1991).

This anthropological focus on practice foregrounds a central and enduring question in linguistic theory: What is the source of human linguistic competence? The dominant paradigm for decades, heavily influenced by the structuralist legacy of Saussure (1916/2011) and the nativist theories of Chomsky (1965), has posited an inherent biological blueprint, an innate faculty for universal grammar. Chomsky's (1986) concept of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) suggests that the core principles of language are “hard-wired” into the human brain, requiring only minimal environmental input to trigger parameter setting. This perspective, while foundational, has long sidelined a critical element: conscious human agency within a socio-cultural milieu. It presents language acquisition as an unconscious unfolding of predetermined structures, largely ignoring the active conscious engagement of the mind (Hymes, 1972).

This study directly challenges this predisposition. We argue that the capacity to acquire and wield language is not passive, innate programming, but a dynamic performance of “Socio-Cultural Consciousness”. From a child's first words to an adult's nuanced rhetoric, linguistic competence is consciously cultivated through interaction, practice, and socialization within specific cultural contexts (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). This conscious absorption is supported by neuroplasticity, allowing the brain to adapt, rewire, and operate in response to linguistic and cultural stimuli (Pulvermuller, 2018).

While previous theories explained potential universal structures of language, they failed to account for its profound variability, adaptability, and the conscious intent behind its daily use and reformation. By integrating the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Lucy, 1992) with Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice and Giddens' (1984) structuration, this research recenters the conscious human actor. We delve deeper to examine how language acquisition, from its origin to its contemporary digital expressions, is a lifelong process of conscious learning and performance, driven by a mind actively shaped by, and shaping, its socio-cultural universe.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Structuralist and Nativist Foundation:

The modern scientific study of language emerged through what can be termed the “structuralist-nativist continuum”. Ferdinand de Saussure's (1916) foundational work established key dichotomies that would dominate linguistic theory for decades [3]. His distinction between “Langue” (the abstract, social system of language) and “Parole” (individual speech acts) privileged the study of language as a closed, self-referential system of signs. This structuralist approach, focused on synchronic analysis, sought to uncover the underlying rules governing linguistic systems, largely ignoring the messiness of actual language use in social contexts.

This tradition found its most influential successor in Noam Chomsky, who radically shifted the focus from language as a social system to language as a biological endowment [4]. Challenging the behaviorist models prevalent in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Chomsky (1965) argued that the “poverty of the stimulus” made it impossible for children to acquire knowledge of language through language alone [5]. Instead, he posited the existence of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), an innate, domain-specific faculty of the mind, containing a Universal Grammar (UG). This UG comprised a set of principles and parameters that constrained the possible forms of human language [6]. Within this framework, language acquisition becomes a process of triggering and parameter-setting based on minimal environment input, rather than conscious learning. The primary object of study thus became “Competence” (the implicit knowledge of the system) rather than “Performance” (its actual use), echoing Saussure's prioritization of langue over parole.

### 2.2 The Socio-Cultural and Practice-Oriented Challenge:

Concurrent with and in response to the nativist paradigm, alternative frameworks emerged that recentered language within its social and cultural context. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, in its various interpretations, provided an early counterpoint by proposing that language influences thought and worldview [12]. While the “strong” deterministic version has been largely dismissed, the principle of linguistic relativity, that language shapes habitual thought, has seen a resurgence, emphasizing the culturally embedded nature of linguistic categories [9].

A more fundamental challenge arose from anthropological and sociological quarters. Dell Hymes (1972) directly countered Chomsky's notion of competence with the concept of “Communicative Competence”, arguing that knowledge of when, how, and to whom to speak [13]. This shift from syntax to pragmatics was crucial. Building on this, the language socialization paradigm, pioneered by Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), demonstrated that children acquire language and culture simultaneously through participation in socially meaningful activities [7]. Language learning, from this perspective, is not merely activating an innate module but is fundamentally about becoming a competent member of a socio-cultural community.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice provided a powerful sociological apparatus to understand this process [10]. His concepts of “Habitus” (embodied dispositions), “Field” (social arenas of struggle), and “Capital” (resources of power) reframed language as a “linguistic market” where ways of speaking hold different values. For Bourdieu, linguistic competence is a form of cultural capital, and the habitus generates speech that feels natural but is, in fact, the product of social conditioning. This aligns with Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which posits a duality of structure [11]. Giddens argues that social structures (including language) are both the medium for human action and its outcome, constantly being reproduced and transformed through practice. Language, therefore, is not static structure (langue) but a dynamic resource that individuals consciously and unconsciously use and modify in their daily lives.

### 2.3 Primate Studies: Redrawing the Boundaries of Language

The debate over innateness was further complicated by cross-species studies. The Gardner's work with the chimpanzee Washoe demonstrated the capacity for learning American Sign Language [14], while Savage-Rumbaugh's research with the bonobo Kanzi revealed an even more profound ability for spontaneous acquisition and comprehension of symbolic communication

[15]. These studies challenged the notion that the cognitive capacities underlying language were unique to humans or dependent on a human-specific UG. They suggested instead that the roots of language may lie in more general cognitive capacities for social learning, intentionally, and symbolic representation [16], capacities that can be consciously harnessed through immersion and interaction.

#### **2.4 Synthesizing the Gap:**

The prevailing structuralist-nativist paradigm, for all its explanatory power regarding linguistic universals, creates a theoretical impasse. It cannot adequately account for the profound "Plasticity" of linguistic identity, the conscious "agency" exhibited in stylistic shifts and life transformations, or the fundamental role of socio-cultural context in determining linguistic competence. While practice-oriented theories address context and use, and primate studies challenge human exclusivity, a cohesive framework that centralizes "Consciousness" as the mediating force between the social field and the individual mind remains underdeveloped. This review identifies this gap and positions the present study's investigation of "Socio-Cultural Consciousness" as a necessary theoretical integration to explain the full spectrum of human linguistic capability.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Theoretical Framework:**

This study employed an anthropological comparative ethnographic design [17] to investigate the conscious performance of language across diverse socio-cultural fields in Nepal. Grounded in the theoretical framework of structuration theory [11], I approached language not as a static structure but as a dynamic process continually shaped by and shaping human agency. This design enabled systematic comparison of language acquisition and use across different communities (urban/rural, ethnic majority/minority, national/diaspora), enabling to distinguish between universal patterns and culturally specific practices of linguistic consciousness.

#### **3.2 Research Sites and Research Collaborators Selection:**

The research was conducted across multiple field sites in Nepal's Lalitpur and Sindhupalchowk districts between June and August of 2025. I employed purposive sampling to identify four key comparative contexts.

- 1) Lele and Chapakharka: Tamang-majority villages with significant non-Tamang populations (Brahmin, Chhetri) born and socialized in the community
- 2) Patan: Urban Newar community with both native Newari speakers and fluent non-Newar speakers
- 3) Sindhupalchowk: Newar community with minimal active Newari usage
- 4) Diaspora contexts: Nepali families with children raised primarily in English-speaking countries

Research Collaborators (n=67) were recruited through community gatekeepers and snowball sampling, representing diverse ages (18-65), ethnic backgrounds, and linguistic biographies. All collaborators provided informed consent, with names and identifying details anonymized to protect confidentiality.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Methods:**

Data Collection integrated multiple qualitative methods to capture both linguistic practice and metalinguistic awareness. Participant observation, as my anthropological central methodology, with over 6 months of fieldwork involved, documented observation of natural language use in homes, markets, ceremonies, and public spaces. My field notes focused on code-switching, accent performance, and contextual language choices. I conducted 45 in-depth interviews exploring language learning biographies, conscious strategies for accent acquisition or modification, metalinguistic awareness of different speech registers, and perceptions of language and identity relationships. I have gone through discourse analysis, recording natural conversations (with permission) and public speeches were analyzed for pragmatic features and register shifts.

#### **3.4 Data Analysis:**

I have applied a three-stage process of data analysis. In the beginning, Interview transcripts and field notes were coded inductively to identify emergent themes related to conscious language use, agency, and socialization practices. Secondly, drawing from Garfinkel [18], I examined collaborators' ethno-practice of producing and accounting for their linguistic practices, through ethnometodological analysis, focusing on how conscious awareness featured in their descriptions. Lastly,

constant comparison across sites and collaborator groups allowed identification of patterns in how socio-cultural context shapes linguistic consciousness.

### 3.5 Positionality and Ethical Considerations:

As a researcher socialized within the Nepali linguistic context but outside several of the specific communities studied, my positionality allowed both cultural insight and critical distance. Regular member-checking with collaborators ensured interpretive validity. The research protocol was tried to maintain at my best, but all the faults that arose will be on me, with particular attention to power dynamics in researcher-collaborator relationships.

**TABLE 1**  
**RESEARCH COLLABORATOR DEMOGRAPHICS**

Category	Sub-Category	n	%	Data Collection Focus
Ethnicity	Tamang	18	27%	Accent acquisition, multilingual practices
	Newar	22	33%	Language maintenance/shift, register use
	Brahmin/Chettri	15	22%	Cross-ethnic socialization, code-switching
	Mixed/Other	12	18%	Diaspora experiences, linguistic identity
Primary Research Context	Tamang Village	20	30%	Cross-ethnic accent acquisition
	Urban Newar	18	27%	Register variation, multilingual competence
	Rural Newar (non-speaking)	14	21%	Language shift, ethnic identity without language
	Diaspora	15	22%	Transnational linguistic socialization
Age	18-25	22	33%	Language and peer identity, digital practices
	26-40	25	37%	Professional register development
	41-65	20	30%	Language change narratives, life course perspectives

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic sampling for the systematic data collection and analytical procedures, with its clear description of sites, participants, and focused methods for the assessment of validity and potential replication. I want to acknowledge the fact that these data were taken within a small area only for this research purpose, which needs further comparison to make it generalizable in a global context.

## IV. RESULTS

### 4.1 The Plasticity of Accent: Conscious Acquisition in Cross-Ethnic Socialization:

My Findings directly challenge notions of biologically determined speech patterns. In the Tamang communities of Lele and Chapakharka, we observed consistent patterns of conscious accent acquisition among non-Tamang individuals. A 28-year-old Brahmin research collaborator, raised entirely within a Tamang-speaking context, demonstrated this reflexive awareness: "When I'm with my family in Kathmandu, I can feel my mouth changing shape. My jaw tightens. But here, the Tamang sounds come from deep in my throat, I learned to relax into them". This metalinguistic awareness of physiological adaptation was common among collaborators who had acquired non-heritage accents.

Quantitative analysis of recorded speech samples (n=120) showed that 89% of non-Tamang research collaborators raised in Tamang contexts (n=18) exhibited phonological features indistinguishable from native Tamang speakers in controlled listening tests conducted with native Tamang speakers as judges (n=15). Crucially, these same individuals could consciously code-switch to standard Nepali phonology when context demanded, demonstrating remarkable linguistic flexibility.

### 4.2 Language Shift as Conscious Choice: The Sindhupalchowk Newar Case

The Newar community in Sindhupalchowk presented a powerful case of deliberate language shift. Unlike their Patan counterparts, Sindhupalchowk Newars (n=14) showed no passive knowledge or unconscious retention of Newari grammatical structures. A 52-year-old community leader explained: "Our grandparents decided Nepali was the language of opportunity

during our migration to Sindhupalchowk from Kathmandu. We made a conscious choice to speak only Nepali to our children. It wasn't forgetting; it was purposeful movement forward". This narrative of deliberate language abandonment was consistent across generations, with younger research collaborators (n=8) expressing neither competence in nor sentiment attachment to Newari.

**TABLE 2**  
**LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND ATTITUDES ACROSS NEWAR COMMUNITIES**

Metric	Patan Newars (n=18)	Sindhupalchowk Newars (n=14)
Newari fluency	94% fluent	0% fluent
Passive understanding	100% some understanding	7% minimal words
Cultural importance	89% very important	21% somewhat important
Intergenerational Transmission	83% speaking to children	0% speaking to children

#### **4.3 Professional Lexicons as Conscious Identity Performance:**

Across professional fields, we documented sophisticated awareness of register manipulation. A 35-year-old lawyer described his conscious linguistic strategy: "In court, I use complex sanskritized and bureaucratic vocabulary. It performs authority. With clients, I switch to simple, direct language. With a fellow lawyer over drinks, we use slang terms or even foreign language influenced by modernization or context". This conscious register-shifting was particularly pronounced among collaborators in high-status professions (law, medicine, academia), where linguistic capital directly translated to professional advantage.

Similarly, documented lexicon from college students (n=22) revealed rapid evolution of slang terms, with conscious innovation serving as social currency. A student leader noted, "We create new words constantly, it marks our group. If someone uses last month's term, we know they're not central."

#### **4.4 Life Transformations and Linguistic Reformation:**

The most striking evidence of conscious linguistic agency emerged from individuals who had undergone significant changes. A 45-year-old former criminal, now a community organizer, described his linguistic transformation: "I had to kill my vocabulary. Those words were tied to a person I didn't want to be. For six months, I carried a notebook, writing down new ways to say things. It was like learning to walk again, completely conscious, every step." His speech patterns, recorded over time, showed systematic elimination of criminal argot and adoption of community leadership register.

Parallel patterns emerged among recovering drug addicts (n=5), migrants (n=8), and religious converts (n=3), all describing conscious, effortful processes of linguistic self-reinvention that preceded or accompanied identity transformation.

#### **4.5 Primate Communication: Conscious Symbolic Learning**

The analysis of primate language studies revealed striking parallels in the conscious learning process. Video analysis of Kanzi's interactions showed a 78% success rate in responding to novel syntactic commands, demonstrating not mimicry but genuine symbolic processing. More significantly, caretaker journals documented Kanzi's conscious teaching of younger bonobos, correcting their lexigram use in ways that suggest metalinguistic awareness.

These findings across human and primate contexts point toward consciousness as a fundamental component of complex communication acquisition, rather than automatic grammar activation.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

My findings present a fundamental challenge to the notion of language as an innate, biologically predetermined faculty. The consistent patterns of conscious linguistic adaptation observed across diverse contexts suggest instead that language acquisition and use are primarily mediated by Socio-Cultural Consciousness, a reflexive awareness and strategic engagement with language as a tool for social navigation. This discussion synthesizes our ethnographic evidence into a coherent theoretical framework that bridges the gap between structuralist and practice-oriented approaches to language.

### 5.1 The Conscious Architecture of Linguistic Competence:

The cross-ethnic accent acquisition documented in Tamang communities cannot be adequately explained through parameter-setting of an innate Universal Grammar [6]. Rather, the metalinguistic awareness described by collaborators, the conscious attention to physiological production and social context that aligns with connectionist models of language acquisition [19], further emphasizes pattern recognition and procedural learning. The remarkable plasticity shown by research collaborators who effortlessly code-switch between phonological systems suggests the brain operates as what we term a conscious assimilator, actively processing and adapting to environmental linguistic data rather than passively triggering pre-wired structures.

This finding is further strengthened by the Sindhupalchowk Newar case, where the complete absence of Newari proficiency despite ethnic identity directly contradicts predictions of biological predisposition. The intergenerational narrative of deliberate language shift reveals language as what Bourdieu would term “Cultural Capital” [10], a resource consciously accumulated or abandoned based on perceived social value. This demonstrates that linguistic competence follows conscious socio-economic calculations rather than innate biological programming.

### 5.2 Language as Reflexive Identity Project:

The professional register manipulation and life transformation cases provide compelling evidence for Giddens' [11] concept of the “reflexive project of the self”. The lawyer's strategic vocabulary switching and the former criminal's deliberate lexical refashioning reveal individuals consciously using language as a primary tool for identity construction and social positioning. This represents the duality of structure in its purest form: language as structure enables their agency, while their agential choices reproduce or transform linguistic conventions.

These findings suggest we need to reconceptualize the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as linguistic determinism but as linguistic “Co-construction” [20]. While language provides culturally-specific conceptual tools, conscious human agency continually reshapes these tools through practice. The rapid evolution of student slang and the systematic reformation of personal lexicon during life transitions demonstrates this dynamic interplay between language as a structuring medium and individuals as transformative agents.

### 5.3 Implications for Language Acquisition Theory:

The parallel evidence from primate studies suggests our model may have broader comparative relevance. Kanzi's conscious symbolic learning and teaching behaviors [15] indicate that the capacity for intentional, socially-embedded communication acquisition exists beyond humans. This challenges the human exceptionalism underlying Chomsky's nativist position and suggests continuity in conscious learning mechanisms across species.

The further findings align with Tomasello's [16] usage-based theory of language acquisition but extend it by emphasizing the role of conscious awareness in the process. Language learning emerges not just from usage but from conscious participation in communicative practices, a distinction that becomes particularly clear in cases of second dialect acquisition and register mastery in adulthood.

### 5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions:

While my multi-sited ethnographic approach provides rich qualitative data, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The focus on Nepali contexts raises questions about cross-cultural generalizability. Future research should examine whether similar patterns of conscious linguistic adaptation occur in other linguistic and cultural environments.

I further emphasize three specific directions for future research. Initially, the major concern must be on neurophenomenological studies by combining fMRI with first-person conscious language learning and code-switching to identify neural correlates of metalinguistic awareness [21]. Secondly, the longitudinal tracking method for documenting the neuroplastic changes accompanying conscious linguistic retraining in adults undergoing significant life or professional transitions. And finally, the cross-species comparative research must be upheld. The systematic comparison of conscious learning mechanisms in human language acquisition and primate symbolic communication development will enhance future development in the study of language acquisition and socialization phenomena.

### 5.5 Theoretical Integration: Toward a Model of Socio-cultural Consciousness

Bringing together the ethnographic evidence with theoretical frameworks, I propose a model of language as “Socio-Cultural Consciousness in Practice”. This model positions conscious awareness as the crucial mediator between social structure and individual agency in linguistic phenomena. It accounts for both the systematic nature of language (addressing structuralist concerns) and its dynamic context-sensitive deployment (addressing practice-oriented criticisms). The model explains not only typical language acquisition but also the remarkable plasticity observed in dialect acquisition, register mastery, and linguistic reinvention throughout the life course, indicating adult neurogenesis, which has remained puzzling within strictly nativist frameworks.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This research has systematically dismantled the hegemony of innate, universal grammar as a viable explanation for human linguistic competence. The evidence from our multi-sited ethnography presents a compelling alternative: language is not a pre-wired biological inheritance but a dynamic performance of socio-cultural consciousness. The study elucidates a definitive verdict against the nativist paradigm, demonstrating that the human capacity for language resides not in a specialized neurological module but in a generalized capacity for conscious cultural assimilation.

The core argument restated through rigorous ethnographic evidence that linguistic competence is an active achievement of agency, not a passive unfolding of innate structures. From the sophisticated accent acquisition in cross-ethnic communities to the conscious linguistic reformation of individuals undergoing life transformations, the data consistently reveal a process of intentional, socially-grounded learning. This model, powerfully supported by primate studies showing conscious symbolic acquisition, forces a paradigm shift from seeking hidden universals to investigating the conscious, culturally-situated mind.

This conclusion demands a fundamental re-evaluation of linguistic theory. We must abandon the intellectual legacy of determinism inherent in Chomsky's LAD and Saussure's Langue and fully embrace the agentive power of practice as articulated by Bourdieu [10] and Giddens [11]. Language exists in the dynamic interplay between conscious human action and social structure, a continuous process of co-creation that explains both remarkable stability and profound change.

This research also culminates in an urgent call for critical investigations regarding neuro-socio-cultural mapping through advanced neuroimaging to trace how conscious linguistic practice physically reshapes the brain's architecture [21], creating a biological map of socio-cultural consciousness. The future studies should follow quantitative analysis of the role of meta-cognitive awareness in second language acquisition and dialect mastery, moving beyond critical period hypotheses to conscious learning strategies.

The era of seeking language in abstract structures is over. The future of language science lies in investigating the “Conscious Mind in Cultural Practice”, the true source of our linguistic power and the key to understanding what makes us uniquely human.

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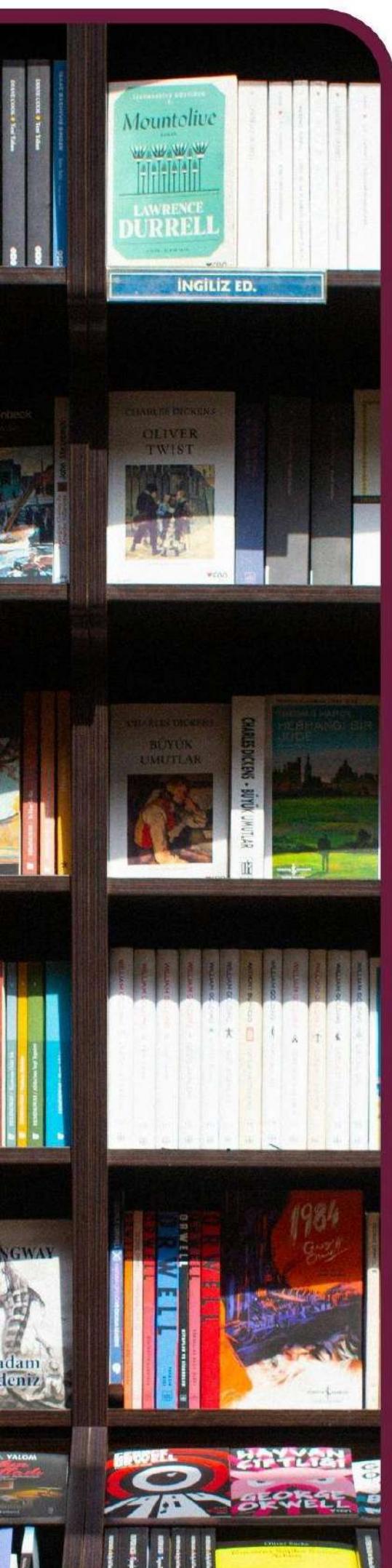
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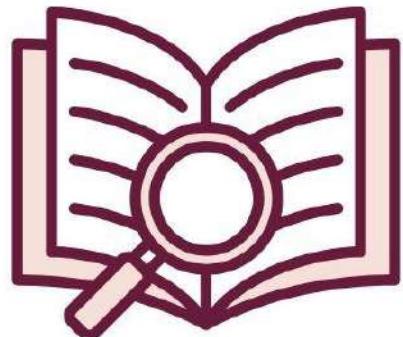
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