

Inclusivity, Indian Knowledge Systems, and NEP 2020: A Study of Student Perceptions at Duliajan College

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Abstract: This report examines the scope and status of inclusivity within Duliajan College, Assam, with reference to the principles of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). As higher educational institutions across India are increasingly called upon to foster equitable, diverse, and culturally rooted learning environments, this study cites Duliajan College as a ground-level case for understanding how national educational reforms translate into lived institutional realities. Inclusivity is approached broadly, encompassing equal academic participation, representation of diverse cultures and knowledge traditions, access to institutional resources, and students' sense of belonging. The relevance of IKS is explored in terms of its capacity to validate indigenous intellectual traditions, local histories, and community-based knowledge within the formal curriculum — thereby deepening cultural inclusivity. Primary data was collected from students of Duliajan College through a structured Google Form questionnaire, designed to assess their awareness of NEP 2020, familiarity with IKS, and personal experiences of inclusive practices within the college. The findings aim to offer a structured understanding of how the ideals of equity, cultural integration, and holistic learning, as envisioned by NEP 2020, are perceived and experienced at the student level, and to what extent IKS is emerging as a meaningful dimension of educational practice within the institution.

Keywords:- Inclusivity, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Equitable Education, Cultural Integration, Higher Education

Education has become a central concern in contemporary academic discourse, as institutions strive to create learning environments that respect diversity, promote equity, and ensure equal opportunities for all learners. In India, this vision has been strongly reinforced

by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable education as a cornerstone for national development. The policy recognizes the importance of addressing barriers related to socio-economic background, gender, language, disability, and cultural identity. Alongside this, the promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) forms a significant dimension of NEP 2020, encouraging the integration of indigenous knowledge, traditional wisdom, and local cultural practices into mainstream education. Together, inclusivity, NEP 2020, and IKS seek to reshape educational institutions into spaces that are not only academically enriching but also socially just and culturally rooted.

This report is prepared with Duliajan College as the central study area to examine the scope and status of inclusivity within the institution, particularly in relation to the principles of IKS and NEP 2020. As a higher educational institution catering to students from varied social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, Duliajan College represents an important context for understanding how national educational reforms are reflected at the ground level. The study views inclusivity in a broad sense—covering equal participation in academic activities, representation of diverse cultures and knowledge systems, access to institutional resources, and the overall sense of belonging experienced by students.

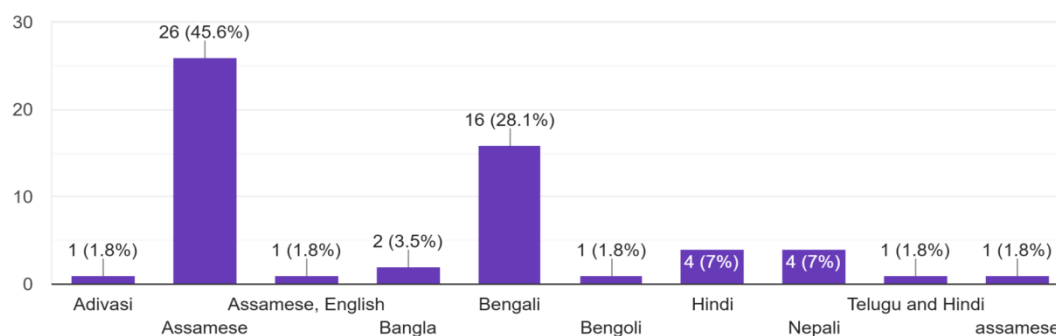
The relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in this context lies in their role in acknowledging and valuing traditional Indian intellectual traditions, local histories, arts, ecological knowledge, and community-based practices. Incorporating IKS into education supports cultural inclusivity by giving recognition to knowledge forms that have often remained outside the formal curriculum. NEP 2020 encourages such integration to make learning more holistic, context-based, and meaningful. Therefore, exploring students' awareness of and engagement with IKS, along with their understanding of inclusive practices, provides insight into how effectively these ideas are reaching learners at Duliajan College.

The report is based on primary data collected from students of Duliajan College through a Google Form questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about students' awareness of NEP 2020, familiarity with the concept of Indian Knowledge Systems, and their experiences and perceptions of inclusivity within the college environment. Questions focused on areas such as classroom practices, participation in cultural and academic activities, institutional support, and the presence of diverse perspectives in learning spaces. The use of an online survey method enabled systematic data collection from a larger group of respondents and ensured ease of participation.

Through this data-driven approach, the report aims to present a structured understanding of how inclusivity, as envisioned in NEP 2020 and supported by IKS, is perceived by students in Duliajan College.

1. What is your primary language at home?

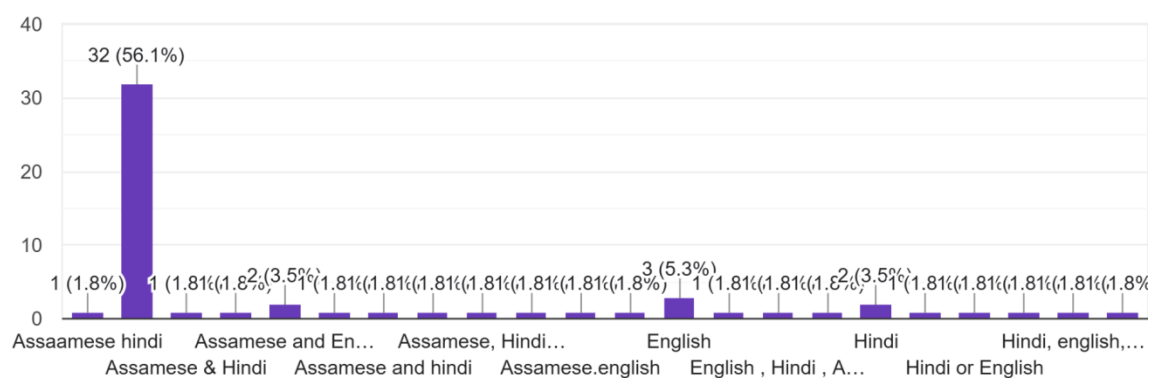
57 responses



The survey of 57 respondents shows that Assamese is the most widely used primary language at home, with 26 respondents (45.6%). Bengali is the second most common language, reported by 16 respondents (28.1%). Hindi and Nepali are each used by 4 respondents (7%). A small number of respondents reported other languages such as Adivasi, Bangla, Telugu, or mixed language use, each forming a minor proportion of the total.

2. Which language do you prefer to use with friends in college?

57 responses

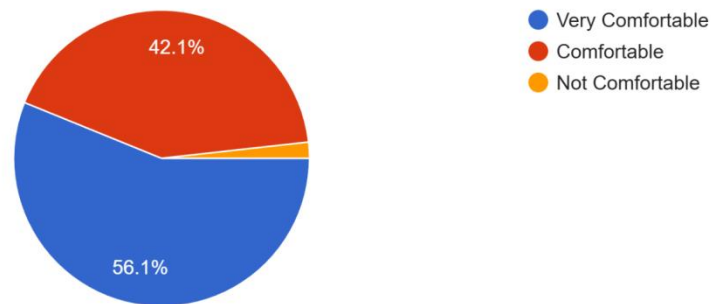


The findings indicate that Assamese is the most preferred language for communication with friends in college, chosen by 32 respondents (56.1%). Other respondents prefer English, Hindi, or a combination of languages such as Assamese and Hindi or Assamese and English. These preferences occur in much smaller numbers individually. Overall, the results highlight

the dominant role of Assamese in students' social interactions within the college environment.

3. How comfortable do you feel communicating in your primary language in your institution?

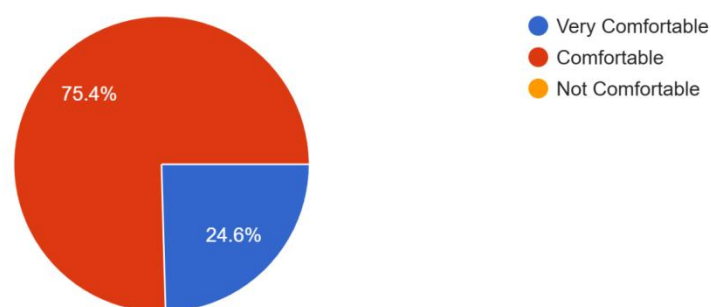
57 responses



The responses indicate a high level of comfort among students while communicating in their primary language within the institution. A majority of respondents, 56.1%, reported feeling very comfortable, while 42.1% stated that they are comfortable. Only a very small proportion reported that they are not comfortable. Overall, the findings suggest that most students experience ease and confidence when using their primary language in the institutional environment.

4. How comfortable are you communicating with teachers in the medium of instruction?

57 responses

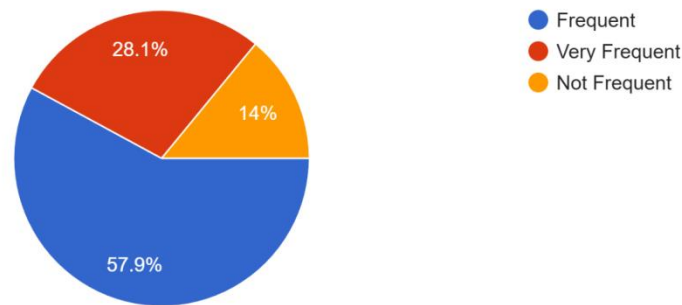


The data shows that most students feel comfortable communicating with teachers in the medium of instruction. About 75.4% of the respondents reported that they are comfortable, while 24.6% indicated that they are very comfortable. Notably, no respondents reported

feeling uncomfortable. This suggests a generally positive and supportive communication environment between students and teachers

5. How often do you switch between languages while speaking with classmates?

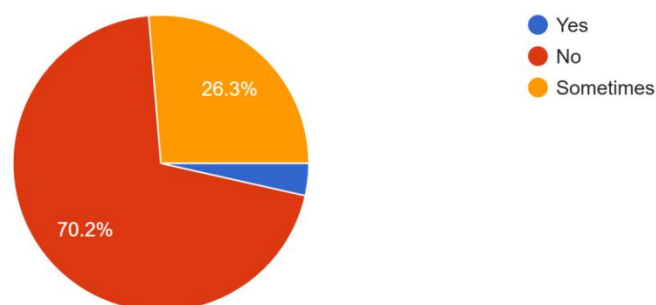
57 responses



The responses show that language switching is a common practice among students. A majority of respondents (57.9%) reported that they frequently switch between languages, while 28.1% stated that they do so very frequently. Only 14% indicated that they do not switch languages frequently. This suggests that multilingual communication is a regular feature of student interaction on campus.

6. Do you feel pressured to speak in a particular language on campus?

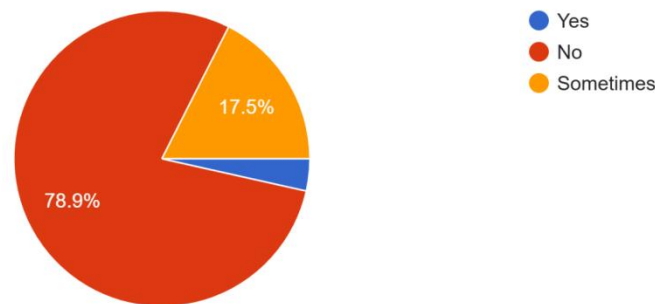
57 responses



The data indicates that most students do not feel pressured to speak in a particular language, with 70.2% responding negatively. However, 26.3% reported that they sometimes feel such pressure, and a small minority answered affirmatively. Overall, the findings suggest that while the campus environment is generally linguistically comfortable, some students still experience occasional language-related pressure.

7. Have you faced any challenges related to language differences in your institution?

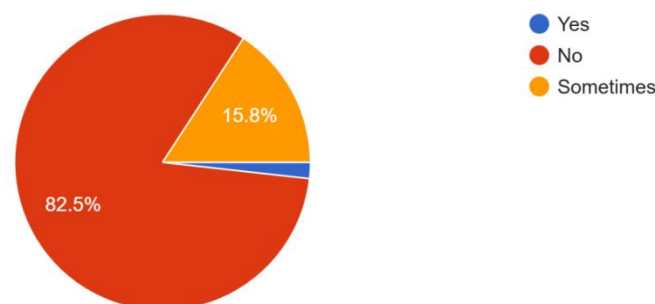
57 responses



The majority of respondents (78.9%) reported that they have not faced challenges related to language differences in their institution. However, 17.5% stated that they sometimes face such challenges, while only a small minority answered in the affirmative. This indicates that although most students do not experience serious language-related problems, a section of students still encounters occasional difficulties. Overall, language differences do not appear to be a major obstacle for most respondents.

8. Do you face difficulty understanding lectures due to language differences?

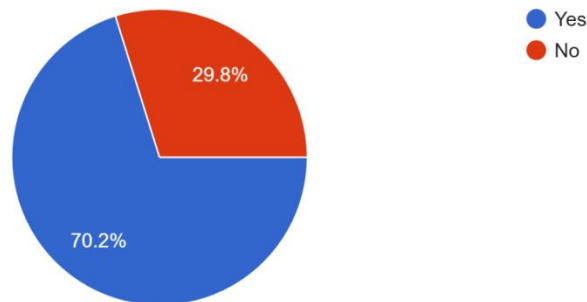
57 responses



The responses show that most students (82.5%) do not face difficulty in understanding lectures due to language differences. About 15.8% reported that they sometimes experience such difficulty, while only a very small proportion answered yes. This suggests that lectures are generally accessible to students despite linguistic diversity. However, a minority of students still face occasional comprehension challenges.

9. Does linguistic diversity among students make classroom discussions more engaging?

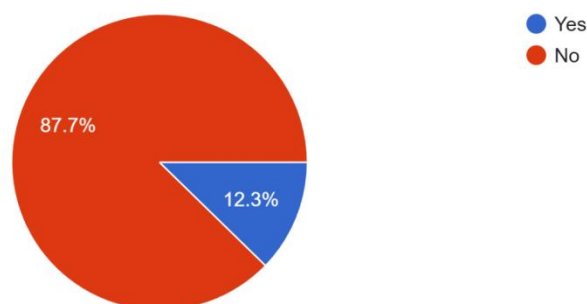
57 responses



The majority of respondents (70.2%) believe that linguistic diversity makes classroom discussions more engaging. However, 29.8% of the respondents do not share this view. This indicates that most students perceive linguistic diversity as a positive factor in classroom interaction. Overall, the findings suggest that diversity in language contributes to a more dynamic and participative learning environment.

10. Have you ever felt excluded or misunderstood due to language differences?

57 responses



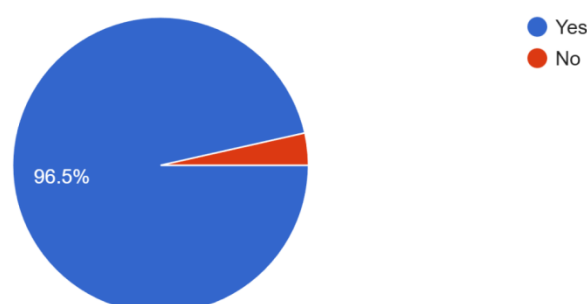
The responses reveal that a large majority of students (87.7%) have not felt excluded or misunderstood due to language differences. Only 12.3% reported experiencing such feelings. This suggests that the institutional environment is generally inclusive and supportive. Nevertheless, the presence of a small affected group indicates the need for continued attention to linguistic sensitivity and inclusion.

11. What strategies do you use to overcome language barriers in your institution?

The responses indicate that students use a variety of strategies to overcome language barriers. Many reported using a common language such as Assamese, Hindi, or English to communicate effectively. Some students mentioned listening carefully, trying to understand others, and responding slowly and thoughtfully. Others stated that they try to learn new languages or seek help from teachers, while a few reported not using any specific strategy. Overall, the findings show that students adopt both personal effort and collaborative approaches to manage linguistic challenges.

12. Do teachers provide adequate language support (translation, clarification, examples)?

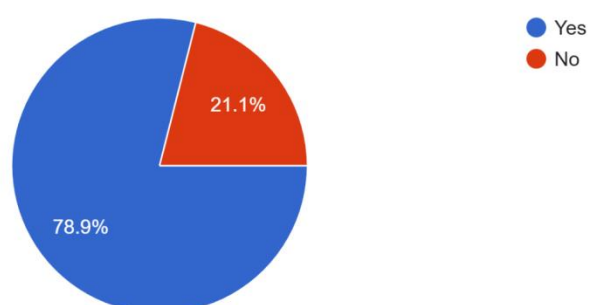
57 responses



The data clearly shows that the vast majority of respondents (96.5%) believe that teachers provide adequate language support. Only a very small proportion expressed a negative view. This suggests that teachers play a significant role in helping students overcome language-related difficulties. Overall, instructional support appears to be strong and effective in the institution.

13. Does linguistic diversity create cultural understanding among students?

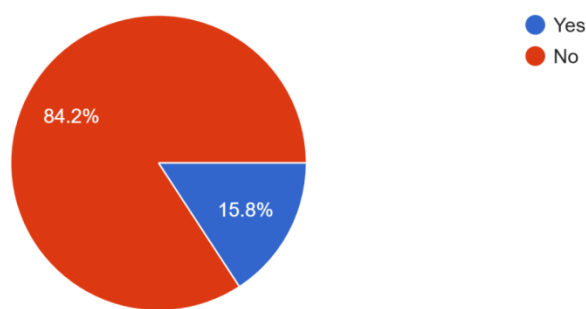
57 responses



A large majority of respondents (78.9%) agreed that linguistic diversity helps in creating cultural understanding among students. In contrast, 21.1% did not share this opinion. This indicates that most students perceive linguistic diversity as a positive factor in promoting mutual understanding and cultural awareness. Overall, the results highlight the constructive role of linguistic diversity in the academic environment.

14. Have you experienced any discrimination or bias based on your language at the college campus?

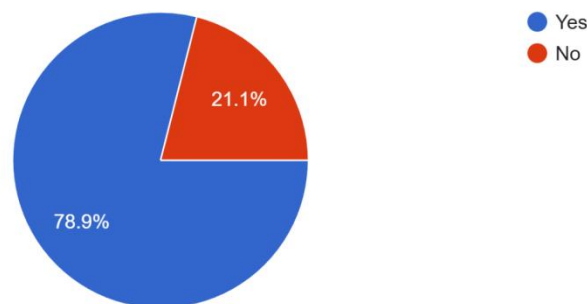
57 responses



The majority of respondents (84.2%) reported that they have not experienced discrimination or bias based on their language. However, 15.8% stated that they have faced such experiences. This indicates that while most students feel safe from language-based discrimination, a noticeable minority has encountered bias. Overall, the campus environment appears largely inclusive, though some concerns remain.

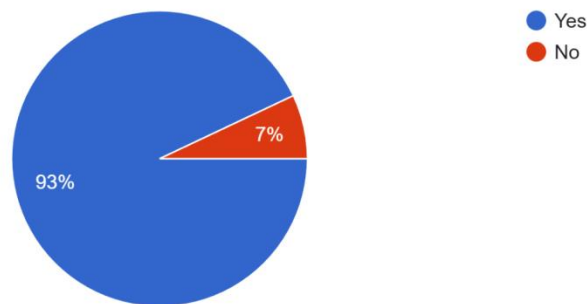
15. Does your college offer language-support programs (e.g., remedial English/Assamese classes)?

57 responses



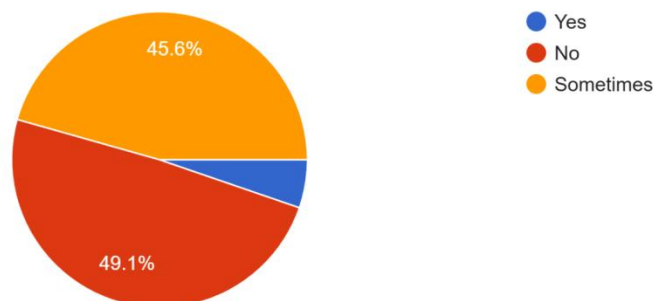
The responses show that most students (78.9%) believe that their college offers language-support programs. In contrast, 21.1% reported that such programs are not available. This suggests that institutional efforts are being made to support students with language difficulties. However, there is still a need to ensure that all students are aware of or have access to these programs.

16. Does sharing a common language help you build friendships more easily?
57 responses



An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) agreed that sharing a common language helps in building friendships more easily. Only 7% disagreed with this view. This clearly indicates that language plays a significant role in social bonding among students. Thus, a shared language appears to facilitate smoother and stronger interpersonal relationships on campus.

17. Have you ever felt left out in conversations because they were in a different language?
57 responses

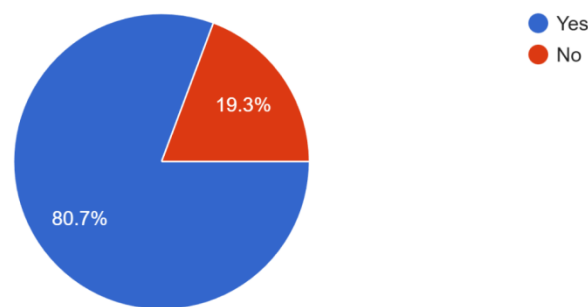


The responses reveal mixed experiences among students. About 49.1% reported that they have not felt left out, while 45.6% stated that they sometimes experience this situation, and a

small minority answered yes. This suggests that although many students feel included, a considerable number occasionally feel excluded due to language differences. Overall, language remains an important factor influencing students' sense of inclusion in social interactions.

18. Does the college encourage multilingual interactions or events (e.g., mother-tongue day, cultural programs)?

57 responses



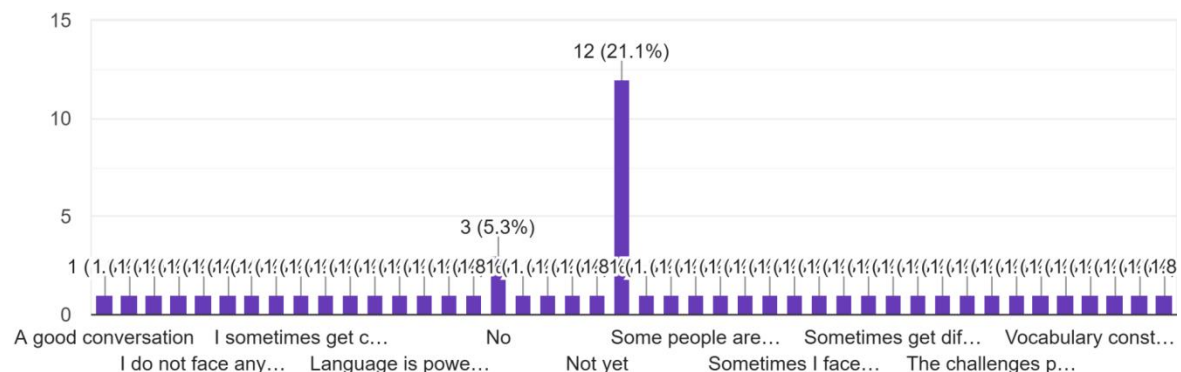
The responses show that a large majority of students (about 80.7%) believe that the college encourages multilingual interactions and cultural events. Only a small proportion (around 19.3%) reported otherwise. This indicates that the institution actively promotes linguistic and cultural diversity through various activities. Overall, the findings suggest a supportive environment for multilingual engagement on campus.

19. What advantages do you personally experience due to your multilingual abilities?

The qualitative responses reveal several perceived benefits of multilingualism among students. Most respondents reported that knowing multiple languages helps them communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, make friends more easily, and participate more confidently in academic and social situations. Many also mentioned improved understanding of different cultures, better communication skills, and increased learning opportunities. Overall, multilingual ability is viewed as a significant asset that enhances social interaction, academic confidence, and cultural awareness.

20. What disadvantages or challenges do you face because of language?

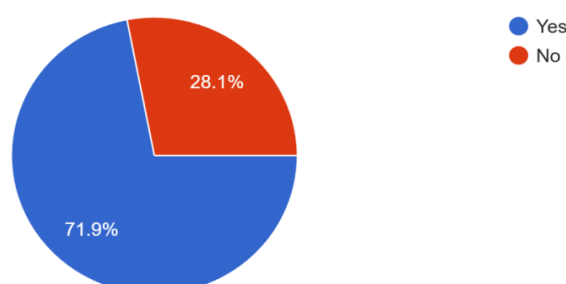
57 responses



The responses show a wide range of individual experiences. The most frequent response (21.1%) indicates that some students feel no major challenges due to language. A smaller group (5.3%) also reported not facing any significant difficulty. However, many students mentioned issues such as difficulty in understanding others, problems in expressing ideas clearly, limited vocabulary, hesitation in communication, and occasional misunderstandings. These varied responses suggest that while a section of students is comfortable linguistically, a considerable number still face practical challenges in day-to-day academic and social communication.

21. Do you feel that your cultural background is adequately represented in the curriculum and institutional co-curricular activities?

57 responses



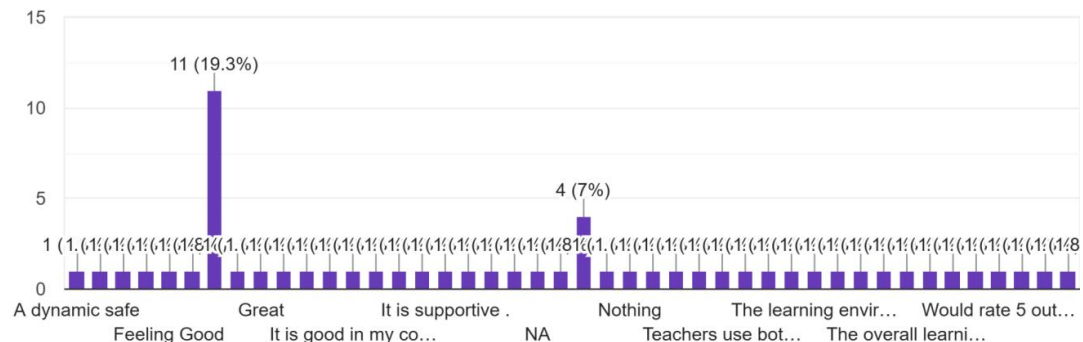
The pie chart shows that a large majority of respondents (71.9%) feel that their cultural background is adequately represented in the curriculum and co-curricular activities. On the other hand, 28.1% of students believe that their culture is not sufficiently represented. This indicates that while most students are satisfied with the level of cultural representation in the

institution, a notable minority still feels underrepresented, pointing to the need for more

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22. How would you describe the overall learning environment in terms of linguistic inclusivity?

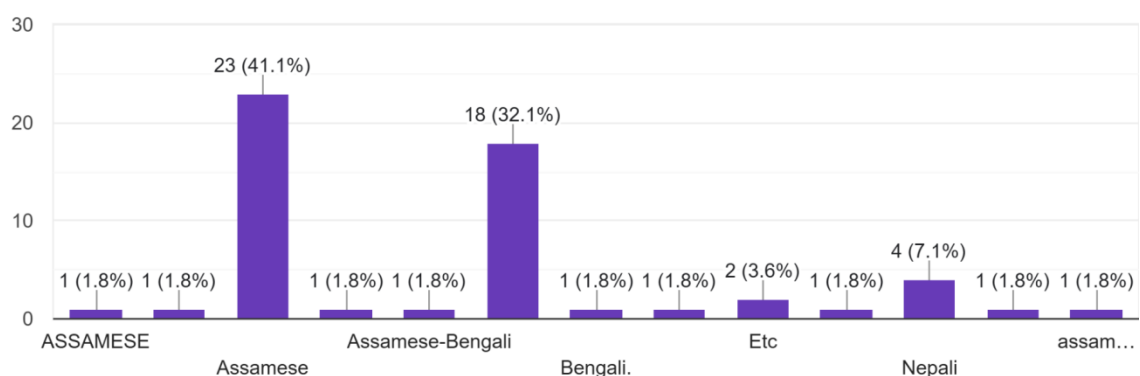
57 responses



The responses reflect generally positive perceptions of the learning environment. The most common description given by students was “Good” (19.3%), followed by other positive remarks such as “supportive,” “great,” “feeling good,” and similar expressions. A small number of respondents selected neutral options such as “NA” or “nothing,” and very few gave less descriptive responses. Overall, the data suggests that most students view the institution’s learning environment as supportive and linguistically inclusive, though there is still room for further improvement.

23. What is your ethnic/community background? (e.g., Assamese, Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Bengali, Nepali, etc.)

56 responses

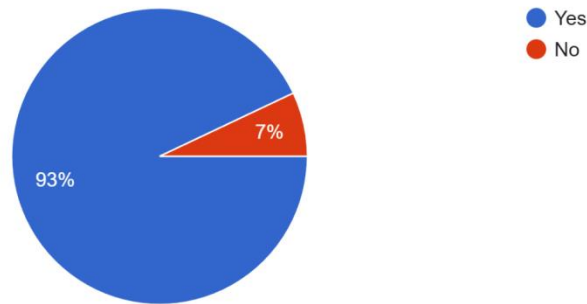


The responses indicate a culturally diverse student population. A majority of respondents identify as Assamese, followed by a significant proportion from Bengali backgrounds.

Smaller representations include Assamese-Bengali, Nepali, and other communities. This distribution reflects a multicultural composition within the college campus.

24. Are you aware of the different cultural groups present in your college?

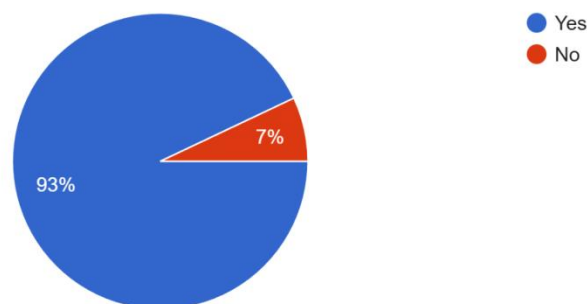
57 responses



An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) reported that they are aware of the different cultural groups present in their college. Only a small minority (7%) indicated a lack of awareness. This suggests a high level of cultural consciousness among students.

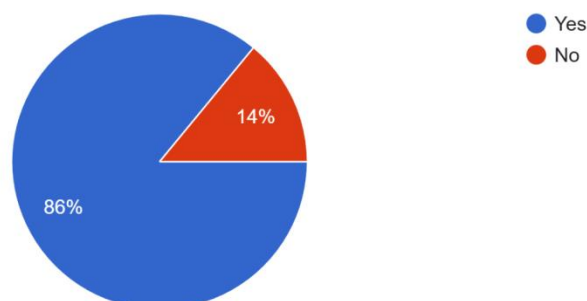
25. Have you interacted with students from cultures different from your own?

57 responses



Most respondents (93%) stated that they have interacted with students from cultural backgrounds different from their own. A minimal percentage (7%) reported no such interaction. This highlights active intercultural engagement and social integration within the college environment.

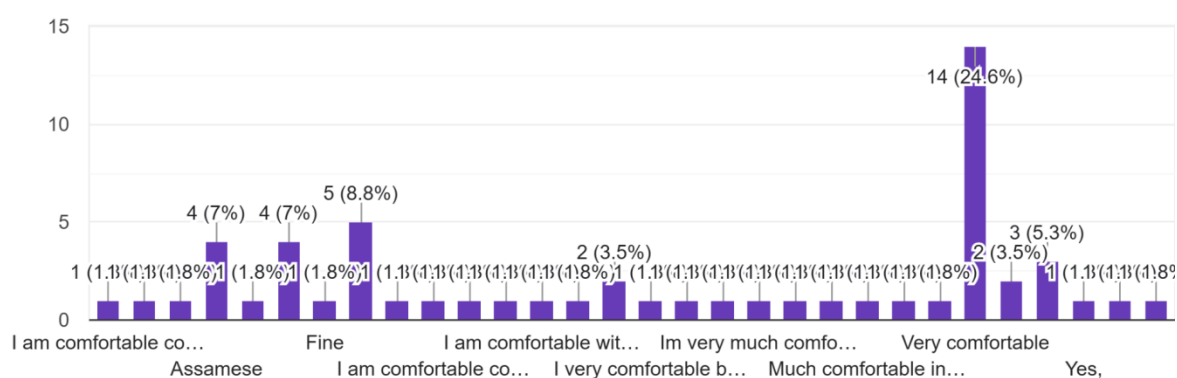
57 responses



A large majority of respondents (86%) expressed that the college promotes an inclusive and multicultural environment. Only 14% felt otherwise. This indicates that most students perceive the campus as welcoming and supportive of cultural diversity. Overall, the findings reflect a positive institutional atmosphere.

27. How comfortable are you communicating in Assamese/English/Hindi with peers from other communities?

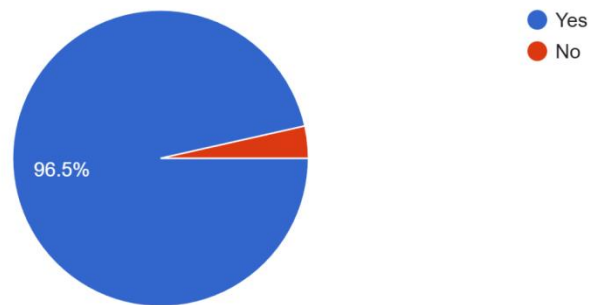
57 responses



The responses show that most students feel comfortable or very comfortable communicating in multiple languages with peers from different communities. Only a small number reported moderate or limited comfort. This suggests effective cross-cultural communication and linguistic adaptability among students. Language does not appear to be a major barrier on campus.

28. Have you made friends from different cultural backgrounds?

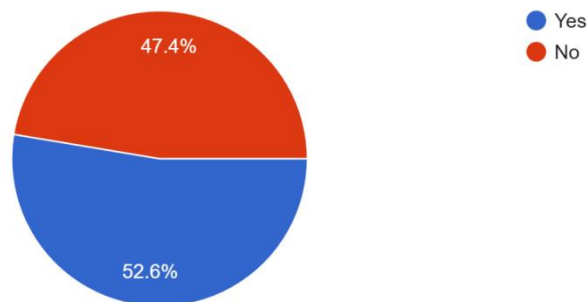
57 responses



An overwhelming majority of respondents (96.5%) reported having friends from different cultural backgrounds. A very small percentage indicated otherwise. This highlights strong intercultural friendships and social cohesion within the college. The data reflects a high level of mutual acceptance among students.

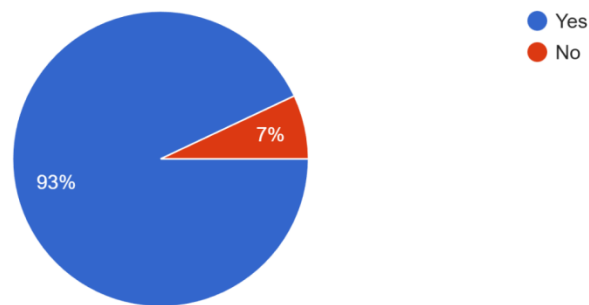
29. Do you participate in cultural exchange activities/events on campus?

57 responses



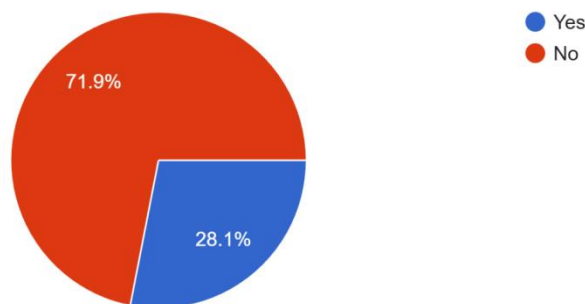
The responses show a nearly balanced participation in cultural exchange activities. About 52.6% of respondents reported active participation, while 47.4% indicated non-participation. This suggests moderate student involvement in cultural events. There remains scope to encourage wider participation across the campus.

30. Do you feel encouraged to share your cultural practices (festivals, food, language, traditions) with others?
57 responses



A significant majority of respondents (93%) stated that they feel encouraged to share their cultural practices with others. Only 7% reported not feeling encouraged. This reflects a supportive and open environment for cultural expression. The college appears to promote respect for cultural diversity.

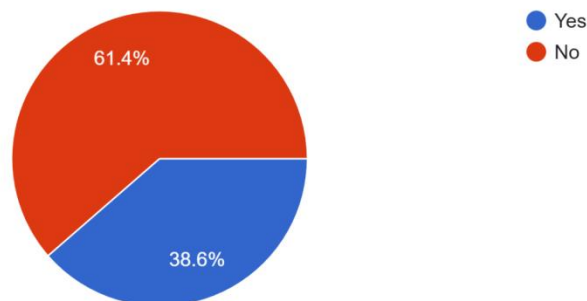
31. Have you ever faced language barriers while communicating with peers or teachers?
57 responses



Most respondents (71.9%) reported that they have not faced language barriers while communicating on campus. However, 28.1% indicated experiencing such difficulties. While overall communication appears smooth, the data highlights the need for inclusive language support measures. Addressing these challenges can further enhance academic interaction.

32. Have you experienced or witnessed cultural misunderstandings or conflicts?

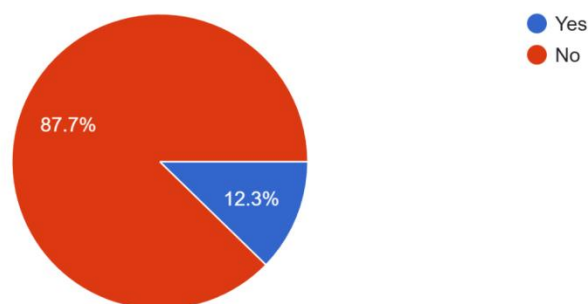
57 responses



The responses indicate that a majority of students (61.4%) have not experienced or witnessed cultural misunderstandings or conflicts. However, 38.6% reported such experiences. This suggests that while the overall campus environment is relatively harmonious, instances of cultural misunderstanding do exist. Addressing these issues can further promote mutual respect.

33. Do you ever feel excluded due to your cultural or linguistic background?

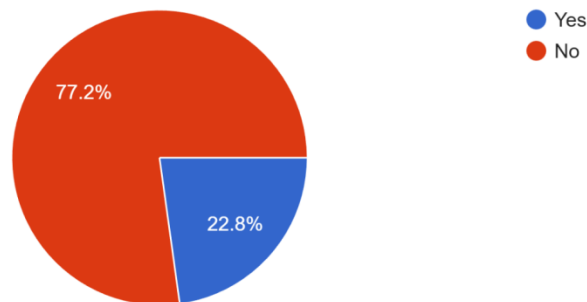
57 responses



A large majority of respondents (87.7%) stated that they do not feel excluded due to their cultural or linguistic background. Only 12.3% reported feelings of exclusion. This reflects a

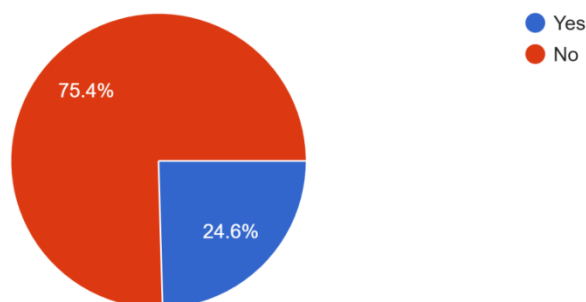
generally inclusive campus climate. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to support those who experience marginalization.

34. Do you face difficulties adjusting to food habits or hostel culture due to your cultural diversity?
57 responses



Most respondents (77.2%) indicated that they do not face difficulties adjusting to food habits or hostel culture. However, 22.8% reported facing such challenges. While adaptation appears manageable for most students, providing flexible and inclusive facilities could further ease cultural adjustment.

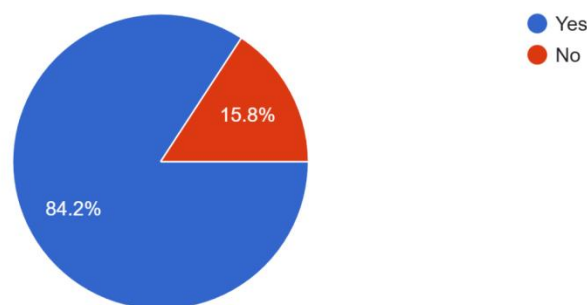
35. Have you faced discrimination or stereotypes based on your community, religion, language, or identity?
57 responses



The findings show that a majority of respondents (75.4%) reported not facing discrimination or stereotypes. However, 24.6% indicated that they have experienced such issues. While the overall environment appears largely respectful, the presence of discrimination among a

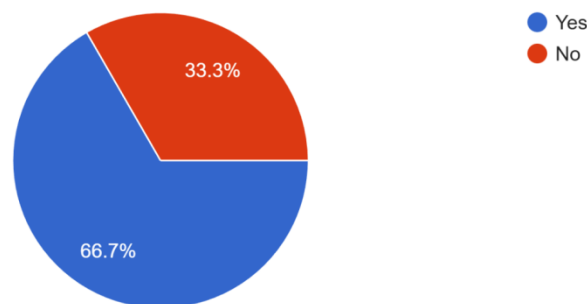
section of students cannot be overlooked. Preventive and awareness measures remain important.

36. Does the college organize multicultural events to encourage interaction among diverse groups?
57 responses



A significant majority of respondents (84.2%) agreed that the college organizes multicultural events to promote interaction among diverse groups. Only 15.8% disagreed with this view. This indicates institutional efforts toward fostering cultural exchange. Such initiatives contribute positively to inclusiveness on campus.

37. Are there any support systems (clubs, counselors, mentors) to help students adapt to a diverse environment?
57 responses



Most respondents (66.7%) acknowledged the presence of support systems to help students adjust to a diverse campus environment. However, 33.3% were unaware of or felt the absence of such systems. This suggests that while support mechanisms exist, greater visibility and accessibility may be required. Strengthening these services can enhance student well-being.

38. What steps do you think the college should take to promote cultural harmony?

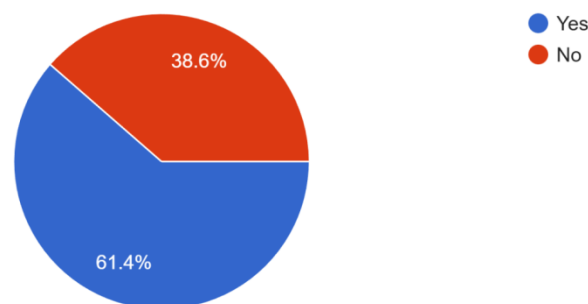
Students suggested organizing more cultural programs, cultural dance celebrations, and inclusive events to promote harmony. Many emphasized the need for inclusive curriculum activities and cultural exchange workshops. Respondents also highlighted promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring equal representation of all cultures. Overall, the suggestions reflect a desire for a respectful, inclusive, and participatory campus environment.

39. How can students contribute to improving cultural understanding within the campus?

The responses indicate that students believe communication plays a key role in improving cultural understanding. Many suggested learning about different cultures, respecting one another, and actively participating in cultural programs. Sharing cultural and traditional practices was also emphasized. These views highlight the importance of mutual respect and student-led engagement.

40. Do you feel that your community is well represented in the Students' Union group present in the institution.

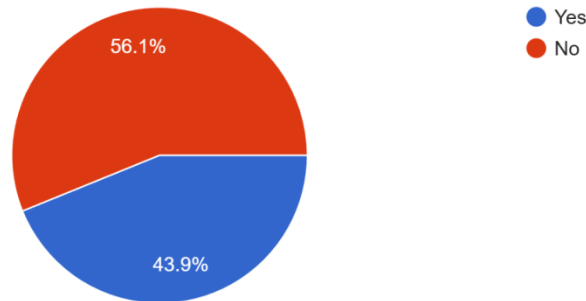
57 responses



A majority of respondents (61.4%) felt that their community is well represented in the Students' Union. However, 38.6% expressed dissatisfaction regarding representation. This suggests that while representation exists for many students, concerns remain among a significant section. Ensuring balanced representation may strengthen trust and inclusiveness.

41. Do you think your community requires a special reservation in the Students Union Body?

57 responses



The responses show mixed opinions among students regarding special reservation in the Students' Union Body. A majority of respondents (56.1%) felt that special reservation is not required, while 43.9% supported the need for such measures. This indicates differing perspectives on representation and equity. The findings suggest the need for balanced and inclusive decision-making.

42. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience in a culturally diverse college environment?

57 responses



The responses indicate a generally positive level of satisfaction among students regarding their experience in a culturally diverse college environment. Many respondents reported being satisfied, very satisfied, or having a good experience. Only a small number expressed neutral or unclear opinions. Overall, the data reflects a favorable perception of cultural diversity on campus.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that Duliajan College largely reflects the spirit of inclusivity envisioned under the National Education Policy 2020 and aligns with the broader objectives of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). The survey responses reveal a campus environment that is linguistically diverse, culturally rich, and generally supportive of students from varied social and cultural backgrounds. Assamese emerges as the dominant language of communication; however, the widespread use of multiple languages and frequent code-switching highlight a healthy multilingual culture that facilitates interaction, friendship, and academic engagement.

Most students reported feeling comfortable communicating in their primary language, both with peers and teachers, and acknowledged strong language support from faculty. Linguistic diversity is largely perceived as a positive influence that enhances classroom discussions, cultural understanding, and social bonding. The high levels of intercultural interaction, friendships across communities, and awareness of different cultural groups further underline the inclusive nature of the college environment. These aspects resonate closely with NEP 2020's emphasis on equity, respect for diversity, and holistic learning.

At the same time, the data also draws attention to certain challenges. A notable minority of students occasionally experience language-related pressure, feelings of exclusion, cultural misunderstandings, or limited representation of their cultural background. While such experiences are not dominant, they indicate areas where inclusivity can be strengthened. Similarly, although many students acknowledge the presence of language-support programs and institutional support systems, a section of respondents remains unaware of or unable to fully access these resources, suggesting the need for greater visibility and outreach.

Overall, the study concludes that Duliajan College provides a largely inclusive and multicultural academic environment that supports linguistic diversity, cultural exchange, and student participation. The integration of inclusive practices, along with greater engagement with Indian Knowledge Systems through curriculum and co-curricular activities, can further enhance students' sense of belonging and cultural representation. By expanding multicultural initiatives, improving awareness of support mechanisms, and ensuring balanced representation, the institution can move closer to realizing the transformative goals of NEP 2020 and fostering a truly inclusive, equitable, and culturally rooted educational space.

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THE NOBELIST

2025

The Nobelist 2025: László Krasznahorkai

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Introduction: László Krasznahorkai

László Krasznahorkai is one of the most influential and intellectually demanding writers in contemporary world literature. Known for his dense prose, long and flowing sentences, and deeply philosophical themes, he has created a distinctive literary style that challenges traditional storytelling. His works are not simply narratives for entertainment; rather, they are profound explorations of human existence, uncertainty, and the fragile nature of reality. Readers often find his writing complex, but at the same time deeply rewarding, as it invites careful thought and reflection.

Born on January 5, 1954, in Gyula, Hungary, Krasznahorkai grew up in a socio-political environment marked by control and restriction. This background played an important role in shaping his worldview and later influenced his writing. His novels frequently depict societies that appear stable on the surface but are actually filled with tension, decay, and hidden chaos. Through his works, he reflects on the instability of human systems and the difficulty of finding meaning in a constantly changing world.

Krasznahorkai began his literary career in the 1980s and quickly gained recognition with his debut novel *Satantango*. This work established him as a bold and original voice, known for his unconventional narrative structure and philosophical depth. He later wrote *The Melancholy of Resistance*, another major work that further strengthened his reputation. These

novels are characterized by their slow pace, detailed descriptions, and intense atmosphere, which together create a powerful reading experience.

One of the most remarkable features of Krasznahorkai's writing is his unique style. His sentences often extend over long passages, creating a continuous flow that mirrors human thought and perception. This style requires patience but allows readers to become fully immersed in the narrative. It also reflects the complexity of the ideas he explores, including themes such as chaos, order, illusion, power, and human vulnerability.

Another significant aspect of his literary journey is his collaboration with the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr. Together, they adapted some of his works into films, bringing his dark and atmospheric storytelling to a wider audience. This collaboration highlights the visual and cinematic quality of his writing, which often creates vivid and lasting impressions.

An important recognition of his contribution to literature is that László Krasznahorkai was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2025. This prestigious honor reflects his global impact and the significance of his work in modern literary studies. It acknowledges his ability to present complex philosophical ideas through innovative narrative techniques and to challenge readers across cultures.

Childhood and Early Life of László Krasznahorkai

László Krasznahorkai was born on January 5, 1954, in the small town of Gyula, located in southeastern Hungary. His early life unfolded in a setting that was both culturally rich and politically complex. Growing up in post-war Hungary, Krasznahorkai experienced a society shaped by strict political systems, limited freedom of expression, and a controlled intellectual environment. This atmosphere had a deep and lasting impact on his thinking and later became an important influence on his literary work.

Gyula, though small, offered a quiet and somewhat isolated environment, which played a significant role in shaping his personality. Unlike the fast-paced life of big cities, his surroundings were calm and reflective, allowing him time to observe people, nature, and everyday life closely. This habit of observation later became one of the defining features of his writing. His works often include detailed descriptions and a strong sense of atmosphere, which can be traced back to these early experiences of watching and reflecting on the world around him.

From a young age, Krasznahorkai showed a deep interest in reading and intellectual exploration. He was not limited to a single field of interest but was drawn to literature,

history, and philosophy. These subjects helped him develop a broad and thoughtful perspective on life. His curiosity about human nature and the structure of society began early, and he often questioned the systems and ideas that shaped the world around him. This questioning attitude later became central to his writing, where he frequently explores themes of uncertainty, instability, and the search for meaning.

His family background also played an important role in his development. Although not widely publicized in detail, it is known that his upbringing encouraged education and intellectual engagement. He was exposed to books and ideas that helped nurture his analytical thinking. At a time when access to diverse perspectives was limited due to political restrictions, such exposure was especially valuable. It allowed him to develop an independent way of thinking, which later distinguished him as a writer.

During his school years, Krasznahorkai was known to be a serious and thoughtful student. He was particularly interested in subjects that required deep thinking and analysis. Literature became a space where he could explore ideas more freely, even within a restricted environment. The contrast between official narratives and personal observations likely influenced his understanding of truth and reality, themes that appear repeatedly in his later works.

The political climate of Hungary during his childhood cannot be ignored when discussing his early life. Living under a socialist regime meant that there were clear limitations on freedom of speech and expression. This environment created a sense of tension and unease, which is often reflected in the dark and uncertain worlds of his novels. His awareness of these limitations helped shape his critical view of authority and systems of control.

Education and Development as a Writer

László Krasznahorkai's journey from a curious student to one of the most respected voices in world literature is closely connected to his education and intellectual growth. His academic path was not limited to one discipline; instead, it reflected a wide range of interests that later shaped the depth and complexity of his writing. Through formal education as well as personal exploration, he developed a strong foundation in literature, philosophy, and social thought, all of which became central to his identity as a writer.

After completing his early schooling in Hungary, Krasznahorkai pursued higher education in Budapest, the cultural and intellectual center of the country. There, he studied subjects such as law and later literature and Hungarian language. Although he did not follow

a strictly traditional academic path, his time at university exposed him to a wide range of ideas and intellectual traditions. He became deeply interested in philosophy, particularly questions related to existence, order, chaos, and human understanding. These philosophical concerns would later become key themes in his literary works.

During his years of study, Krasznahorkai was not only influenced by academic texts but also by his own observations of society. Living in Hungary during a period of political control and cultural restriction, he became aware of the gap between official narratives and lived reality. This awareness sharpened his critical thinking and encouraged him to question accepted truths. Such questioning later became a defining feature of his writing, where he often explores uncertainty, instability, and the limits of human knowledge.

His development as a writer began alongside his intellectual growth. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he started writing seriously, experimenting with style, structure, and narrative voice. From the beginning, he showed a preference for unconventional forms of storytelling. Instead of following simple, linear plots, he created complex and layered narratives that reflected the fragmented nature of reality. His writing style, characterized by long and flowing sentences, developed during this period as he sought to capture the continuous movement of thought and perception.

A major turning point in his career came with the publication of his first novel, *Satantango*, in 1985. This work immediately established him as a unique and powerful literary voice. The novel's slow pacing, detailed descriptions, and philosophical depth set it apart from more conventional works of fiction. It explored themes such as decay, illusion, and the search for meaning in a collapsing world. The success of *Satantango* marked the beginning of his recognition both within Hungary and internationally.

Another important aspect of his development as a writer was his collaboration with the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr. This partnership brought a new dimension to his work, as his narratives were adapted into visually striking films. The collaboration influenced his sense of structure and atmosphere, as both artists shared a similar vision of slow, detailed, and immersive storytelling. This connection between literature and cinema further enriched his creative approach.

Over time, Krasznahorkai continued to refine his style and expand his thematic concerns. His later works maintained the intensity and complexity of his early writing while exploring broader philosophical and cultural questions. He became known for his ability to create powerful atmospheres and to examine the deeper layers of human experience. His

writing does not offer easy answers but instead invites readers to engage actively with the text and reflect on its meanings.

***Satantango* by László Krasznahorkai**

Satantango, written by László Krasznahorkai and published in 1985, is widely regarded as one of the most important and challenging works of contemporary literature. The novel presents a dark, slow-moving, and deeply philosophical portrayal of life in a decaying rural community in Hungary. Rather than following a simple storyline, *Satantango* unfolds as a complex and layered narrative that explores themes of hopelessness, illusion, manipulation, and the cyclical nature of human existence.

The novel is set in a small, isolated village inhabited by a group of struggling and morally uncertain characters. These villagers live in extreme poverty and boredom, waiting for something to change their lives. Their routine existence is marked by decay, both physical and moral. Buildings are falling apart, relationships are weak, and there is a general sense of stagnation. This setting reflects a world where hope is almost absent, and survival itself becomes a daily struggle.

The central figure in the novel is Irimiás, a mysterious and manipulative character who was believed to be dead but suddenly returns to the village. His arrival creates a sense of excitement and expectation among the villagers. They begin to see him as a kind of savior who can lead them to a better future. However, Irimiás is not a hero; instead, he represents deception and control. He uses his intelligence and persuasive speech to influence the villagers, ultimately exploiting their desperation for his own purposes. Through this character, Krasznahorkai explores how easily people can be misled when they are searching for hope.

One of the most unique aspects of *Satantango* is its structure. The novel is divided into twelve chapters that move forward and then backward, similar to the steps of a tango dance. This circular structure emphasizes the idea that life is repetitive and that people often remain trapped in cycles they cannot escape. Events seem to progress, but in reality, they return to their starting point, reinforcing a sense of futility and stagnation.

Krasznahorkai's writing style plays a crucial role in shaping the novel's atmosphere. His use of long, flowing sentences creates a slow and immersive reading experience. The detailed descriptions and continuous narrative flow mirror the monotony and heaviness of the villagers' lives. This style may be challenging, but it effectively captures the psychological and emotional depth of the story.

Another important theme in *Satantango* is the idea of illusion versus reality. The villagers place their trust in Irimiás, believing in the possibility of change, but this hope is based on illusion rather than truth. The novel suggests that people often create false beliefs to escape the harshness of reality, even if those beliefs ultimately lead to disappointment.

***The Melancholy of Resistance* by László Krasznahorkai**

The Melancholy of Resistance, written by László Krasznahorkai and published in 1989, is one of the most powerful and philosophically rich novels in contemporary literature. The work presents a dark and unsettling vision of society, focusing on the fragile nature of order and the constant threat of chaos. Through a slow and intense narrative, Krasznahorkai explores how easily human civilization can collapse when faced with fear, manipulation, and uncertainty.

The story is set in a small Hungarian town where life appears ordinary at first but gradually becomes tense and unstable. The turning point comes with the arrival of a mysterious traveling circus that brings with it a giant stuffed whale and rumors of a strange figure known as “the Prince.” Although the whale is lifeless, it becomes a powerful symbol that draws the attention of the townspeople. Its presence creates curiosity, fear, and confusion, disrupting the normal rhythm of life. The Prince, though never clearly seen, represents a hidden force that influences the crowd and spreads unrest.

At the center of the novel is János Valuska, a simple and innocent young man who sees the world in a unique and almost philosophical way. He is fascinated by the order of the universe and often reflects on cosmic harmony. His character represents purity and a belief in structure and meaning. In contrast, other characters such as Mrs. Eszter represent authority and control, while Mr. Eszter reflects withdrawal and intellectual isolation. These contrasting characters highlight different human responses to disorder and uncertainty.

As the story progresses, tension builds within the town. The presence of the circus and the influence of the Prince lead to growing fear and instability among the people. Eventually, this tension erupts into violence, as the crowd loses control and chaos spreads. This moment is central to the novel, showing how quickly order can break down when people are driven by fear and influenced by powerful forces.

One of the main themes of the novel is the conflict between order and chaos. Krasznahorkai suggests that order is not permanent but fragile and easily destroyed. The characters’ attempts to maintain stability ultimately fail, revealing the limits of human

control. Another important theme is manipulation, as the Prince symbolizes how individuals or groups can influence masses without being directly visible.

The novel also explores the idea of resistance, but in a melancholic and uncertain way. The characters struggle to resist chaos, yet their efforts are weak and ineffective. This creates a sense of sadness and inevitability, as if disorder is unavoidable.

Krasznahorkai's writing style, with its long and continuous sentences, adds to the intensity of the novel. It creates a feeling of immersion and reflects the overwhelming nature of events.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the literary contribution of László Krasznahorkai stands as one of the most significant and intellectually profound achievements in contemporary world literature. Through his unique narrative style, deep philosophical concerns, and powerful exploration of human existence, he has created a body of work that challenges readers to move beyond conventional ways of thinking. His writing is not meant to be read casually; rather, it demands patience, attention, and reflection, offering in return a deeper understanding of life and reality.

Krasznahorkai's works consistently explore the fragile relationship between order and chaos. In novels like *Satantango* and *The Melancholy of Resistance*, he presents worlds that appear stable on the surface but are slowly collapsing from within. These settings are not just fictional but symbolic of real societies, where structures of control and stability can easily break down under pressure. Through such portrayals, he reminds readers that certainty is often an illusion and that chaos is always present beneath the surface of human life.

Another important aspect of his writing is his portrayal of human vulnerability. His characters are often ordinary individuals who find themselves in confusing and uncertain situations. They struggle to make sense of their surroundings, searching for meaning in a world that offers no clear answers. This makes his work deeply relatable, as it reflects the universal human experience of doubt, fear, and hope. At the same time, he highlights how easily people can be influenced or misled, especially when they are desperate for change or direction.

His distinctive writing style also plays a crucial role in shaping his literary identity. The long, flowing sentences and detailed descriptions create a continuous and immersive reading experience. This style mirrors the complexity of human thought and the

overwhelming nature of reality. While it may be challenging for some readers, it is precisely this complexity that gives his work its depth and power.

Krasznahorkai's collaboration with Béla Tarr further demonstrates the richness of his artistic vision. The adaptation of his works into films shows how his ideas can transcend literature and find expression in other forms of art. This connection between literature and cinema highlights the visual and atmospheric quality of his writing.

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SEMINAR PAPERS

Women, Power, and Patriarchal Control in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*

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Abstract

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster is a significant Jacobean tragedy that critically examines the status and representation of women within a deeply patriarchal society. This study explores how the play portrays the oppression, control, and surveillance imposed upon women in the early modern period, where female identity was largely shaped by obedience, chastity, and dependence on male authority. Focusing primarily on the character of the Duchess, the paper analyses how Webster presents a female protagonist who challenges social conventions through her assertion of personal choice, emotional independence, and resistance to patriarchal control. The study further examines the conflict between individual freedom and rigid social structures, particularly in relation to marriage, sexuality, and class hierarchy. Through textual analysis and thematic interpretation, the paper investigates the mechanisms of patriarchal power represented by Ferdinand, the Cardinal, and Bosola, while also highlighting the Duchess's dignity, courage, and moral resilience in the face of suffering and death. The discussion demonstrates that although the play reflects the harsh realities of Jacobean society, it simultaneously critiques the oppressive structures that seek to silence and punish women. Ultimately, the study argues that *The Duchess of Malfi* transcends its historical context by presenting the Duchess as a timeless symbol of female agency, selfhood, and resistance. The play not only exposes the vulnerabilities of women within patriarchal systems but also celebrates the enduring strength of female identity and human dignity.

Introduction

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster is one of the most significant Jacobean tragedies that critically explores the condition and status of women within a deeply patriarchal society. Written during the early seventeenth century, the play reflects the rigid social, political, and gender hierarchies of the Jacobean age, where women were expected to remain obedient, silent, and dependent upon male authority. Their identities were largely shaped by social expectations of chastity, loyalty, and submission to fathers, brothers, or

husbands. Female autonomy, especially in matters of love and marriage, was often viewed as dangerous because it threatened family honour, inheritance, and social order.

The Jacobean social structure was fundamentally patriarchal, granting men control over women's lives and decisions. Marriage during this period was not simply considered a personal relationship but a political and economic institution intended to preserve family status, property, and lineage. Women were denied freedom in choosing their partners, and widows, despite possessing a certain degree of social independence, were still expected to remain modest and obedient. Any attempt by women to assert individuality or emotional independence was treated as rebellion against established authority.

Against this oppressive background, Webster creates the character of the Duchess as a remarkably bold and unconventional woman. Although she is a widow and expected to live a life of restraint, she chooses to remarry according to her own desires. Her marriage to Antonio, a man socially beneath her rank, directly challenges both patriarchal authority and rigid class hierarchy. Through this decision, the Duchess asserts her emotional freedom, individuality, and right to self-determination in a society that seeks to control female identity and sexuality.

The play therefore functions on two important levels. On one level, it realistically portrays the suffering of women within patriarchal systems characterised by surveillance, control, and violence. On another level, it critiques these oppressive structures by presenting a female protagonist who possesses courage, dignity, intelligence, and resistance. The Duchess's tragic struggle becomes symbolic of the larger conflict between individual freedom and social oppression.

Thus, the study of women's status in *The Duchess of Malfi* is important not only for understanding the condition of women in Jacobean society but also for examining how literature questions and exposes systems of inequality and oppression. Through the tragic yet inspiring figure of the Duchess, Webster highlights both the vulnerability of women under patriarchal authority and the enduring strength of female identity and agency.

Objectives

The primary aim of this seminar is to examine the status and representation of women within the social and political framework depicted in *The Duchess of Malfi*. The study seeks

to analyse the ways in which patriarchal authority shapes the lives, identities, and choices of women in the play. It also aims to explore the character of the Duchess as a symbol of resistance, autonomy, courage, and unconventional womanhood within a restrictive social order.

Another objective is to investigate the mechanisms of surveillance, control, and punishment imposed upon women by patriarchal society. The seminar further attempts to understand how the play critiques gender inequality and exposes the moral corruption underlying male authority in early modern society. Finally, the study evaluates the symbolic and moral significance of female dignity, self-respect, and resilience in the face of oppression and violence.

Methodology

This study is primarily based on textual analysis of *The Duchess of Malfi*, focusing on characterisation, dialogue, dramatic action, and thematic development related to gender and power. Particular attention is given to scenes that reveal the operation of patriarchal authority and the resistance offered by female characters, especially the Duchess.

The analysis is supported by an understanding of Jacobean social and historical conditions, particularly the status of women within patriarchal family systems. A critical and interpretative approach is adopted to examine how power functions through the regulation of female sexuality, identity, and social position. Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring ideas of oppression, surveillance, resistance, suffering, and moral conflict.

The study also incorporates modern critical perspectives concerning gender and power in order to understand how Webster's tragedy simultaneously reflects and critiques the social realities of early modern England.

Discussion

The play presents a patriarchal society in which women are expected to remain subordinate to male authority. Female identity is defined through obedience, chastity, silence, and dependence upon male guardianship. Women are denied the freedom to shape their own destinies, and their social worth is measured largely through their ability to preserve family honour and maintain moral purity according to patriarchal standards.

Marriage within this society functions less as a matter of personal affection and more as a political and social institution intended to protect lineage, wealth, and social reputation. Female sexuality is therefore treated as something that must be strictly regulated by male authority. The brothers of the Duchess, Ferdinand and the Cardinal, seek to control her private life because they believe her remarriage would threaten their family honour and political status.

Within this restrictive environment, the Duchess emerges as a remarkably independent and self-aware woman. Her assertion of personal agency first appears in Act I, Scene I, when she decides to remarry despite the severe warnings and threats of her brothers. Refusing to conform to the image of the silent and obedient widow, she boldly declares:

“This is flesh and blood, sir;
'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb.”

(Act I, Scene I)

Through these lines, the Duchess rejects the expectation that she should remain emotionally lifeless after her husband's death. The image of the “figure cut in alabaster” symbolises a cold, lifeless statue placed upon a tomb. By contrasting herself with such an image, the Duchess emphasises that she is a living human being with natural emotions, desires, and physical needs. Webster therefore challenges the unrealistic ideals imposed upon widowed women in patriarchal society.

The Duchess further challenges traditional gender expectations through her initiative in proposing marriage to Antonio. In Jacobean society, women were expected to remain passive in matters of love and marriage, while men traditionally initiated courtship. However, the Duchess reverses this convention, asserting control over her personal and emotional life. Reflecting upon the restrictions imposed upon women of noble birth, she states:

“The misery of us that are born great!
We are forced to woo, because none dare woo us.”

(Act I, Scene I)

Here, the Duchess expresses the loneliness and restrictions attached to aristocratic women. Because of her high social position, ordinary men fear approaching her romantically. The statement reveals the paradox of noble status: although powerful in appearance, women of high rank remain imprisoned by social expectations and limitations. Webster thereby exposes the lack of genuine freedom available even to privileged women.

Her determination becomes even more evident when she openly challenges the authority of her family by declaring:

“If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I’d make them my low footsteps.”
(Act I, Scene I)

This bold declaration symbolises her willingness to overcome every obstacle placed before her, even if those obstacles include her own royal relatives. The metaphor of making them her “low footsteps” reflects her defiance of patriarchal authority and rigid social hierarchy. The Duchess prioritises personal happiness and emotional truth over social expectations and family control.

The reactions of Ferdinand and the Cardinal reveal the deep anxiety that female independence produces within patriarchal systems. Ferdinand, in particular, becomes obsessively concerned with controlling his sister’s sexuality and behaviour. His violent anger demonstrates how patriarchal societies often perceive female autonomy as a threat to male honour and authority.

To maintain control over the Duchess, Ferdinand employs Bosola as a spy, turning her private life into an object of constant surveillance. Through Bosola’s role, Webster demonstrates how patriarchal power operates not only through physical violence but also through psychological control, suspicion, and invasion of privacy. The Duchess is denied the right to personal freedom because her life is constantly monitored by male authority.

Despite these oppressive forces, the Duchess continues to display extraordinary courage and resilience. Even when faced with danger and uncertainty, she asserts her inner strength by declaring:

“Whether I am doomed to live or die,
I can do both like a prince.”
(*Act III, Scene II*)

This statement is highly significant because the Duchess compares herself to a “prince,” a traditionally masculine symbol of courage, authority, and leadership. By doing so, she challenges the assumption that strength and bravery belong exclusively to men. Webster presents the Duchess as morally and emotionally equal, or even superior, to the male characters who attempt to dominate her.

Her dignity becomes most powerful during her imprisonment in Act IV, Scene II, when she declares:

“I am Duchess of Malfi still.”
(*Act IV, Scene II*)

This simple yet powerful statement represents one of the greatest acts of resistance in the play. Although Ferdinand has stripped her of political power, freedom, and physical security, he cannot destroy her sense of identity and self-worth. The Duchess continues to affirm her dignity even while facing death. Her declaration symbolises the triumph of inner strength over external oppression.

Even at the moment of execution, the Duchess demonstrates fearless acceptance and remarkable spiritual courage:

“Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.”
(*Act IV, Scene II*)

These lines reveal her calm acceptance of death and her refusal to surrender emotionally to fear or despair. The image of “pulling down heaven” suggests that death cannot destroy her moral purity or spiritual dignity. Instead of appearing weak or defeated, the Duchess faces death with composure and nobility, transforming herself into a tragic symbol of resistance and integrity.

Although patriarchal violence ultimately destroys the Duchess physically, it cannot destroy her moral strength or individuality. Through her courage, emotional honesty, and refusal to submit completely to oppression, the Duchess emerges as a powerful representation of female agency, dignity, and resilience within a deeply unjust society.

Conclusion

The Duchess of Malfi offers a profound and critical exploration of the condition of women within a rigidly patriarchal society. The play vividly portrays a social order in which female identity is controlled and restricted by male authority, and where women are expected to conform to ideals of obedience, chastity, silence, and dependence. Through its depiction of surveillance, domination, psychological cruelty, and violence, the play exposes the oppressive mechanisms through which patriarchal systems attempt to regulate women's lives and choices.

At the same time, Webster presents a powerful image of resistance through the character of the Duchess. Unlike the conventional expectations imposed upon women of her time, the Duchess asserts her autonomy by choosing to remarry according to her own desires. Her decision challenges both familial authority and broader social norms concerning female sexuality and independence. In doing so, she becomes a symbol of individuality, courage, and emotional freedom.

The suffering endured by the Duchess further reveals the cruelty and injustice embedded within patriarchal structures. Her imprisonment, humiliation, psychological torment, and eventual execution demonstrate the extreme measures society takes to punish women who resist traditional authority. However, rather than reducing her to a passive victim, Webster transforms the Duchess into a figure of moral resilience and spiritual strength.

Even in the face of death, she maintains her dignity and self-respect, refusing to surrender her identity or inner freedom. In contrast, the male figures who exercise authority through violence and manipulation are shown to be morally corrupt, unstable, and destructive. The tragedy therefore critiques the very system of oppression that it portrays.

In conclusion, *The Duchess of Malfi* serves both as a reflection of the historical realities of women's subordination in Jacobean society and as a timeless commentary on the struggle for female autonomy, dignity, and selfhood. Through the tragic yet inspiring figure of the Duchess, Webster affirms that although patriarchal systems may attempt to silence and destroy women, they cannot completely extinguish the human spirit or the desire for freedom, identity, and self-determination.

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John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* as a Satire Prompted by Personal and Impersonal Motives

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Abstract: *Mac Flecknoe* by John Dryden is one of the finest examples of Restoration satire and mock-heroic poetry. The poem primarily targets Thomas Shadwell, a contemporary dramatist, whom Dryden presents as the “King of Nonsense” and the rightful heir to dullness. While the poem appears at first to be a personal attack arising from literary rivalry, it also reflects broader literary, cultural, and political concerns of the Restoration period. Through the use of irony, exaggeration, parody, and elevated epic style, Dryden transforms a private quarrel into a wider critique of declining literary standards and intellectual mediocrity. The poem also carries political undertones connected to the conflict between Tory and Whig ideologies during the Exclusion Crisis. This paper examines how both personal motives and impersonal motives shape the satire of *Mac Flecknoe*, making it not merely a work of ridicule but a lasting commentary on literature, politics, and society. The study further explores Dryden’s masterful use of the mock-heroic technique, which contributes significantly to the enduring importance of the poem in the history of English satire.

Keywords: Satire, Mock-Heroic, Personal Motives, Irony, Exaggeration, Political Conflict, Restoration Literature

Introduction

John Dryden occupies a central position in Restoration literature as a poet, dramatist, critic, and satirist. Often regarded as the leading literary figure of the Restoration age, Dryden significantly influenced the literary standards and critical principles of seventeenth-century England. His works reflect the intellectual, political, and cultural concerns of his age, especially through his use of satire as a means of social and literary criticism.

Among his major satirical works, *Mac Flecknoe* stands out as one of the greatest examples of mock-heroic poetry in English literature. Written around 1678 and published in 1682, the poem is primarily directed against Thomas Shadwell, a rival dramatist and literary critic. On the surface, the poem appears to be a personal attack motivated by literary hostility and ideological disagreement. Dryden presents Shadwell as the legitimate successor to

Richard Flecknoe, an obscure and mediocre poet symbolising dullness and incompetence. Through this satirical succession, Dryden humiliates his rival by portraying him as the natural heir to stupidity and artistic failure.

However, *Mac Flecknoe* is far more than a simple personal quarrel expressed through poetry. Beneath the personal attack lies a broader critique of declining literary standards, artistic mediocrity, and the cultural degeneration Dryden perceived in Restoration drama. The poem reflects Dryden's concern for classical literary values such as order, wit, discipline, and artistic refinement. Through satire, he condemns writers whom he believed encouraged vulgarity, carelessness, and superficiality in literature.

The poem also contains political implications connected to the ideological divisions of the Restoration period. Dryden, who supported the Tory and royalist cause, subtly associates Shadwell with Whig politics and political disorder. Thus, the satire operates simultaneously on personal, literary, and political levels.

Therefore, *Mac Flecknoe* should be understood as a satire shaped by both personal motives and impersonal motives. The personal rivalry provides emotional intensity and sharpness, while the impersonal critique of literature and society gives the poem broader significance and lasting value.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this paper is to analyse *Mac Flecknoe* as a satirical work shaped by both personal rivalry and broader literary and political concerns. The study seeks to examine how Dryden transforms individual hostility into universal literary criticism through the use of satire and mock-heroic techniques.

The objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the literary rivalry between Dryden and Thomas Shadwell.
- To examine the literary and political background of the Restoration age.
- To understand the function of satire in the poem.
- To explore Dryden's use of the mock-heroic technique.
- To identify the impersonal motives related to literary criticism and cultural decline.
- To examine the political undercurrents present in the satire.

- To evaluate the significance of *Mac Flecknoe* in the development of English satire.

Methodology

The methodology applied in this paper is qualitative and interpretative in nature. The study is primarily based on close textual analysis of Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*, with particular emphasis on imagery, irony, diction, exaggeration, and mock-heroic elements.

Secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles, literary criticism, and historical studies related to Restoration literature and satire have also been consulted to support the analysis. The paper adopts a critical approach in examining the relationship between personal rivalry, literary criticism, and political ideology within the poem.

Discussion

Personal Motives: Dryden's Rivalry with Shadwell

The immediate inspiration behind *Mac Flecknoe* was the personal conflict between Dryden and Thomas Shadwell. Both writers belonged to the Restoration literary world, but their artistic principles and political loyalties differed significantly. Shadwell criticised Dryden's dramatic style and literary theories, while Dryden regarded Shadwell as an inferior writer lacking wit, refinement, and artistic discipline. This hostility forms the emotional foundation of the poem.

Dryden begins the poem in an elevated epic style:

“All human things are subject to decay,
And, when fate summons, monarchs must obey.”

These lines imitate the grand opening style of classical epics. The solemn tone creates an expectation of heroic action and noble succession. However, Dryden immediately undercuts this seriousness by introducing Richard Flecknoe, an insignificant poet, as the “king” of dullness. The contrast between epic style and trivial subject creates humour and irony, establishing the mock-heroic nature of the poem.

Flecknoe decides to appoint a successor to his kingdom of nonsense and declares:

“Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dullness from his tender years.”

This statement contains sharp irony disguised as praise. Flecknoe describes Shadwell as his “perfect image,” suggesting that Shadwell has inherited and perfected the qualities of stupidity and incompetence. The phrase “mature in dullness” sarcastically implies that dullness is Shadwell’s greatest talent and lifelong achievement. Dryden therefore humiliates his rival by portraying him as naturally and permanently foolish.

Dryden intensifies the attack through another famous line:

“The rest to some faint meaning makepretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.”

This couplet is one of the sharpest examples of Restoration satire. Dryden sarcastically claims that while other bad poets occasionally produce meaningful writing by accident, Shadwell is so consistently dull that he never unintentionally writes anything sensible. The humour arises from the inversion of normal expectations: consistency, usually considered a virtue, becomes evidence of complete stupidity.

The poet further ridicules Shadwell through imagery associated with darkness and intellectual emptiness:

“His brows thick fogs instead of glories grace,
And lambent dullness played around his face.”

Traditional epic heroes are surrounded by divine light and glory. In contrast, Shadwell is surrounded by “thick fogs,” symbolising confusion, ignorance, and mental darkness. The phrase “lambent dullness” ironically imitates descriptions of sacred or heroic radiance, but instead of brilliance, Shadwell possesses only stupidity. Dryden thus strips his rival of dignity and heroic stature.

At the mock coronation ceremony, Flecknoe advises his successor:

“My son, advance still in new impudence,
Success let other teach, learn thou from me.”

The speech parodies the wise advice traditionally given by kings to their heirs in epic and classical literature. Instead of encouraging wisdom, honour, or achievement, Flecknoe advises Shadwell to continue in arrogance and foolishness. The irony lies in presenting failure and stupidity as noble qualities worthy of inheritance. This scene reveals Dryden’s personal contempt for Shadwell’s literary and intellectual character.

Impersonal Motives: Critique of Literary Degeneration

Although *Mac Flecknoe* originates in personal rivalry, Dryden’s satire extends beyond individual hostility. The poem also reflects his concern about the decline of literary standards during the Restoration period. Through the symbolic “kingdom of dullness,” Dryden criticises writers and dramatists whom he believed encouraged superficiality, vulgarity, and poor artistic craftsmanship.

The setting of Shadwell’s coronation is significant because it is associated with decaying theatres and inferior dramatic productions. Dryden symbolically places the kingdom of nonsense within neglected cultural spaces, suggesting that bad literature flourishes in environments lacking intellectual discipline and artistic refinement.

Dryden writes:

“Near these a nursery erects its head,
Where queens are formed, and future heroes bred.”

The “nursery” symbolises immature and artificial drama. Dryden mocks Restoration theatrical culture by suggesting that it produces shallow entertainment rather than meaningful literature. The ironic reference to “future heroes” implies that the theatre creates false greatness rather than genuine artistic achievement.

Dryden further criticises Shadwell’s inability to master either tragedy or comedy:

“Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.”

This line represents a devastating literary judgment. Tragedy is supposed to evoke seriousness and emotional depth, yet Shadwell's tragedy produces laughter. Comedy should entertain audiences, yet his comedy causes boredom and sleep. Through this concise statement, Dryden condemns Shadwell's artistic incompetence and, more broadly, the decline of literary quality in Restoration drama.

Thus, the satire becomes impersonal because it addresses broader literary concerns rather than remaining limited to personal insult. Dryden uses Shadwell as a symbol of artistic mediocrity and cultural decline.

Political Motives in the Satire

The poem also reflects the political tensions of the Restoration age, particularly the conflict between the Tory and Whig parties during the Exclusion Crisis. Dryden supported the monarchy and the Tory position, while Shadwell sympathised with Whig politics.

By portraying Shadwell as the "king of nonsense," Dryden indirectly attacks not only his literary rival but also the political ideology associated with him. Shadwell becomes a symbolic figure representing disorder, poor judgment, and cultural instability.

The political dimension adds another layer to the satire. Dryden suggests that intellectual and artistic corruption are connected to political disorder. Thus, *Mac Flecknoe* functions simultaneously as literary criticism and political commentary.

Mock-Heroic Technique

One of Dryden's greatest achievements in *Mac Flecknoe* is his masterful use of the mock-heroic technique. The poem imitates the style and structure of classical epic poetry while applying them to trivial and ridiculous subjects. This contrast between elevated style and insignificant content creates humour and sharpens the satire.

Dryden borrows epic conventions such as royal succession, ceremonial speeches, prophetic declarations, and heroic imagery. However, instead of glorifying a noble warrior or national hero, he presents the coronation of a dull and incompetent poet.

The final scene of succession is particularly significant:

“The mantle fell to the young prophet’s part,
With double portion of his father’s art.”

The “mantle” symbolises inheritance and succession in biblical and epic traditions. However, the “double portion” ironically refers not to wisdom or greatness but to double stupidity and dullness. Dryden parodies heroic succession by transforming it into the inheritance of nonsense.

The mock-heroic style allows Dryden to elevate trivial literary rivalry into a grand comic spectacle. By applying epic grandeur to mediocrity and foolishness, he exposes the absurdity of bad literature and false artistic claims.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Mac Flecknoe* is a masterful satire shaped by both personal and impersonal motives. The immediate cause of the poem lies in the literary rivalry between John Dryden and Thomas Shadwell. The sharp insults, ironic praise, and humiliating imagery clearly reveal Dryden’s personal hostility toward his rival.

However, the poem transcends individual quarrel and becomes a broader critique of literary degeneration, artistic mediocrity, and political disorder in Restoration society. Through satire, Dryden defends classical literary values such as wit, discipline, clarity, and artistic excellence. He condemns the decline of serious literature and exposes the dangers of cultural superficiality.

The political undertones of the poem further strengthen its significance, connecting literary criticism with ideological conflict during the Restoration period. At the same time, Dryden’s brilliant use of mock-heroic technique transforms personal resentment into enduring literary art.

Therefore, *Mac Flecknoe* remains important not merely as a personal attack but as one of the greatest achievements in English satire. Its combination of personal intensity, literary criticism, political commentary, irony, and mock-epic style secures Dryden’s place as one of the finest satirists in English literature.

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Exploring the Theme of Creation and Responsibility in *Frankenstein*

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Abstract: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley explores the theme of creation as both a scientific ambition and a profound moral responsibility. Through the character of Victor Frankenstein, Shelley presents the dangers of uncontrolled curiosity and the consequences of attempting to assume a god-like role without considering ethical obligations. The novel demonstrates how the act of creating life leads not only to scientific achievement but also to isolation, guilt, suffering, and destruction. Victor's ambition drives him to challenge the natural order, yet his failure to accept responsibility for his creation ultimately results in tragedy for both himself and the Creature. The paper further analyses the Creature's development from innocence to violence, showing how rejection, loneliness, and neglect shape his identity. In addition, the study examines Shelley's critique of scientific advancement during the early nineteenth century and her concern about the misuse of knowledge without moral reflection. The novel raises enduring questions about parental responsibility, accountability, human ambition, and the limits of scientific power. Through the theme of creation, *Frankenstein* remains a timeless warning about the ethical responsibilities that accompany innovation, discovery, and human progress.

Keywords: Ambition, Creation, Science Fiction, Power, Responsibility, Isolation, Scientific Advancement

Introduction

Creation has always been one of the most powerful and fascinating abilities associated with human beings. From ancient myths and religious stories to modern scientific discoveries, humanity has continuously imagined what it would mean to create life, bring something entirely new into existence, and assume the role of a creator. However, the idea of creation is never simple or entirely positive. It is connected not only with curiosity, ambition, and achievement but also with fear, uncertainty, and moral responsibility. The question of what happens after something is created — and who remains responsible for it — has troubled philosophers, scientists, and writers for centuries. These concerns form the central theme of *Frankenstein*.

When the novel was first published in 1818, Europe was experiencing rapid scientific and intellectual progress. Scientific experiments involving electricity, anatomy, chemistry, and the human body were beginning to transform people's understanding of life and nature. There was a growing belief that science could reveal secrets once considered beyond human reach. In this atmosphere of discovery and ambition, Mary Shelley imagined Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist whose desire to create life gradually develops into obsession. He becomes determined to uncover the principle of life itself and to animate lifeless matter.

At first, Victor's act of creation appears heroic and extraordinary. His ambition reflects humanity's powerful desire to explore the unknown and transcend natural limits. However, the moment his experiment succeeds changes the emotional tone of the novel completely. Instead of feeling pride and triumph, Victor experiences shock, horror, and disgust. The being he has created does not resemble the ideal image he had imagined during his scientific pursuit. This contrast between expectation and reality immediately gives the theme of creation a darker and more complex meaning. Shelley presents creation not as a glorious achievement alone, but as an act filled with uncertainty, danger, and moral consequences.

The theme of creation in the novel also extends beyond the scientific laboratory. It becomes closely connected with ideas of parenthood, responsibility, identity, rejection, and social acceptance. Victor succeeds in giving life to the Creature, but he completely fails to fulfil the responsibilities of a creator. The Creature enters the world innocent, sensitive, and eager for affection, gradually learning about language, society, and human behaviour through observation and experience. Thus, creation in the novel is not merely biological; it is also psychological and social. Shelley suggests that identity is shaped not only by physical creation but also by love, education, guidance, and human interaction.

Ambition forms another important aspect of the theme of creation. Victor's obsessive desire to achieve something extraordinary isolates him from his family, friends, and society. His scientific studies consume his mind and emotions, transforming creation into a pursuit of personal glory and intellectual pride. At the same time, the narrative presents moments of anxiety, guilt, and inner conflict, suggesting that the desire to create life involves serious moral tension. The boundaries between human power and the natural order appear uncertain and fragile throughout the novel.

Through these elements, *Frankenstein* presents creation as a deeply human yet dangerous act, filled with ambition, hope, fear, and moral complexity. Shelley's novel continues to remain relevant because it raises timeless questions about scientific advancement, ethical responsibility, and the consequences of human ambition.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this paper is to examine the theme of creation in *Frankenstein* and analyse how Mary Shelley connects scientific ambition with moral responsibility.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the theme of creation in *Frankenstein*.
2. To analyse Victor Frankenstein's role as a creator.
3. To explore the relationship between creation and responsibility.
4. To understand how the novel reflects fears regarding scientific advancement and uncontrolled human ambition.

Methodology

This study is based primarily on textual analysis of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. The research adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach, focusing on close reading of important passages related to creation, responsibility, ambition, isolation, and scientific experimentation.

Secondary sources such as literary criticism, historical studies, and scholarly interpretations of the novel have also been consulted in order to understand the intellectual and scientific background of the early nineteenth century. The analysis mainly focuses on thematic interpretation and character analysis to examine Shelley's treatment of creation and moral accountability.

Analysis

The Theme of Creation in *Frankenstein*

The theme of creation in *Frankenstein* is presented as powerful, ambitious, and deeply troubling. Victor Frankenstein becomes consumed by his desire to discover the secret of life.

He believes that creating a new being will bring him admiration, glory, and scientific greatness. At one point, Victor imagines:

“A new species would bless me as its creator and source.”

This statement reveals that Victor’s desire for creation is strongly connected with pride and ambition. He imagines himself as a figure who will be worshipped and honoured by future generations. Creation, for him, initially appears heroic and magnificent.

However, the reality of creation proves entirely different from his expectations. The moment the Creature comes to life, Victor is overwhelmed not by joy but by fear and disgust. He confesses:

“The beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.”

This sudden emotional transformation gives the theme of creation a darker meaning. Victor realises that the act of creating life cannot be separated from responsibility and consequence. The contrast between his dream and reality demonstrates Shelley’s warning against uncontrolled ambition and unrealistic expectations.

Creation in the novel is also associated with isolation and secrecy. Victor separates himself from his family and society while conducting his experiment. His work takes place in loneliness, without emotional support, moral guidance, or human connection. As a result, the Creature enters the world without love, care, or protection. The absence of compassion during the act of creation directly contributes to the tragedy that follows.

Another important aspect of creation appears through the Creature’s self-education. While hiding near the De Lacey family, the Creature learns language, human emotions, and social behaviour. Among the books he reads, *Paradise Lost* has a profound impact on his understanding of existence and identity. Through the story of Adam and Satan, the Creature begins to compare his own relationship with Victor to that between creation and creator.

At first, he hopes to be treated like Adam, who was created and cared for lovingly by God. Therefore, he tells Victor:

“I ought to be thy Adam.”

This statement expresses the Creature's longing for affection, guidance, and acceptance. However, unlike Adam, the Creature experiences only rejection and abandonment. Gradually, he begins to identify more closely with Satan, the outcast figure rejected by his creator. His loneliness and suffering eventually transform his innocence into anger and revenge.

Through this transformation, Shelley demonstrates that creation does not end with the act of giving life. A creator remains responsible for the emotional and moral development of what has been created. Thus, creation in the novel becomes inseparable from responsibility.

Victor Frankenstein as a Creator

Victor Frankenstein's role as a creator lies at the centre of the novel's tragedy. Initially, he appears as an intelligent and ambitious young scientist determined to achieve greatness through scientific discovery. He dreams of transcending human limitations and unlocking the secret of life itself.

Victor proudly imagines that:

“A new species would bless me as its creator and source.”

This statement clearly reveals that Victor's ambition is motivated not only by curiosity but also by pride and the desire for recognition. He seeks personal glory and imagines himself as a powerful creator admired by future generations.

However, Victor's weakness becomes apparent immediately after the Creature is brought to life. Instead of accepting responsibility for his creation, he reacts with fear and revulsion:

“Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room.”

This reaction exposes Victor's emotional immaturity and moral failure. Although he possesses scientific intelligence, he lacks the compassion and responsibility necessary to guide and care for his creation. His first response as a creator is not protection but abandonment.

Victor continues to avoid responsibility throughout the novel. Even after understanding that the Creature is responsible for several deaths, he remains silent because he fears public shame and disbelief. His refusal to confess the truth results in the suffering of innocent individuals. Thus, his failure is not merely scientific but deeply moral.

Victor's relationship with the Creature also resembles the relationship between parent and child. The Creature himself reminds Victor of this responsibility by declaring:

“I ought to be thy Adam.”

The statement emphasises Victor's parental duty toward his creation. Yet Victor completely rejects this role. Through Victor's character, Shelley presents a creator driven by ambition and intellectual pride but lacking emotional maturity, empathy, and accountability.

Creation and Responsibility

One of the central ideas in *Frankenstein* is the inseparable connection between creation and responsibility. Shelley strongly suggests that creating something is only the beginning; the true challenge lies in accepting responsibility for what has been created.

The Creature enters the world innocent and emotionally sensitive. He initially seeks companionship, affection, and understanding rather than violence. While secretly observing the De Lacey family, he develops sympathy, kindness, and moral awareness. He even assists the family by gathering firewood and helping them without revealing himself.

However, when he finally attempts to approach human society, he is violently rejected because of his appearance. These experiences of cruelty, loneliness, and exclusion gradually transform his character. Shelley therefore suggests that evil is not inherent but developed through suffering and rejection.

Victor's refusal to accept responsibility directly contributes to this transformation. Had he cared for the Creature, educated him, and shown compassion, the tragedy might have been avoided. Instead, his neglect allows suffering and violence to grow.

Through this relationship, Shelley emphasises that creation involves continuous moral responsibility. A creator must remain connected to what he creates and accept the

consequences of his actions. The novel therefore warns against the dangers of ambition without accountability.

Fear of Scientific Advancement

Frankenstein reflects both fascination with and fear of scientific advancement during the early nineteenth century. The period witnessed important discoveries related to electricity, anatomy, and chemistry, leading many people to believe that science could unlock the mysteries of life itself.

Victor Frankenstein symbolises the possibilities of modern scientific ambition. However, Shelley does not entirely condemn science or knowledge. Instead, she questions the misuse of scientific power when it is pursued without ethical reflection and human compassion.

Victor isolates himself completely from society in pursuit of scientific success. His obsession blinds him to the moral consequences of his actions. Shelley therefore suggests that scientific advancement without ethical responsibility becomes dangerous.

The novel also reflects anxiety about humans attempting to assume powers traditionally associated with God or nature. By creating life artificially, Victor challenges the natural order. The disastrous consequences imply that human beings must recognise the limits of their power and knowledge.

Thus, Shelley presents science as a powerful force that must be balanced by wisdom, morality, and compassion.

Findings

This study finds that creation in *Frankenstein* is presented as both an extraordinary human achievement and a profound moral burden. Shelley portrays creation not simply as a scientific experiment but as a deeply complex act involving ambition, curiosity, emotional responsibility, and ethical consequence.

The paper further finds that Victor Frankenstein's tragedy arises not merely because he creates life, but because he refuses to accept responsibility for his creation. His ambition

leads him to achieve scientific success, yet his emotional weakness and moral failure ultimately result in suffering and destruction.

The Creature's transformation from innocence to revenge demonstrates the powerful impact of rejection, neglect, and loneliness on identity and behaviour. Shelley suggests that compassion, guidance, and acceptance are essential for healthy human development. The study also finds that the novel reflects early nineteenth-century anxieties concerning scientific advancement. While knowledge and discovery are portrayed as powerful and admirable, Shelley warns that science pursued without ethical awareness and human responsibility can become destructive.

Ultimately, *Frankenstein* presents creation as inseparable from responsibility. Through Victor's failure and the Creature's suffering, Mary Shelley emphasises that the greatest danger lies not in the act of creation itself, but in abandoning responsibility for what one creates.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley presents creation as a complex and morally significant act that combines ambition, scientific curiosity, emotional responsibility, and ethical consequence. Through Victor Frankenstein's desire to transcend human limitations, Shelley explores humanity's fascination with knowledge and power. However, the novel also demonstrates the dangers of uncontrolled ambition and the tragic results of refusing responsibility.

Victor's failure as a creator lies not in his scientific achievement itself but in his inability to care for and guide the life he creates. His rejection of the Creature transforms innocence into suffering, loneliness, and revenge. Through this relationship, Shelley highlights the deep connection between creation and accountability.

The novel further reflects social anxieties regarding scientific progress and humanity's attempt to challenge natural boundaries. Shelley warns that scientific advancement without morality, compassion, and ethical awareness can lead to destruction and isolation.

Therefore, *Frankenstein* remains a timeless and relevant work because it raises enduring questions about human ambition, scientific responsibility, parental duty, and the limits of human knowledge. Through its powerful exploration of creation and consequence, the novel continues to serve as an important warning about the responsibilities that accompany innovation and discovery.

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