

Kohbar Painting an Important Cultural Heritage of Mithila, Nepal: Coping with Natural Disaster

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Abstract

Kohbar painting is a prominent intangible cultural heritage of the Mithila region of Nepal and its resilience in the face of natural disasters. Traditionally associated with weddings and fertility rituals, Kohbar paintings are richest in symbolic motifs and hold deep cultural and spiritual significance. However, Mithila's geographical vulnerability to floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters poses a threat to the preservation and continuity of this art form. This study explores how Kohbar painting not only endures but adapts to these challenges, examining the role it plays in post-disaster recovery and cultural resilience. Using a qualitative

ethnographic approach, the research draws on interviews, field observations, and document analysis to assess the impact of natural disasters on Kohbar artists and their communities. Findings reveal that while floods and earthquakes have disrupted the traditional practice of painting on walls, many artists have adapted by using alternative mediums such as canvas and paper. These adaptive strategies enable the preservation of cultural identity and allow communities to maintain a sense of continuity and hope during recovery. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on intangible cultural heritage and disaster resilience by focusing on the unique case of Kohbar painting. The findings suggest that Kohbar art serves not only as a means of cultural expression but also as a psychological and emotional coping mechanism for communities recovering from disaster. This is based on primary data and secondary information. The primary data have been obtained from the field whereas the secondary information has generated through the literature review. It is based on qualitative data and qualitative research design.

Keywords: adaptation aimed of natural disaster, cultural resilience, *Kohbar* art, natural disaster, post-disaster recovery

1. Introduction

One of the key artistic traditions of Nepal's *Mithila* culture is *Kohbar* painting. The thriving *Kohbar* art scene also referred to as *Kohbar* painting or *Kohbar ghar*, is located in the *Mithila* region. The region of *Mithila* is renowned for its rich creative traditions and cultural heritage. One of its most prominent genres is *Kohbar* art, but it encompasses a vast range of artistic expressions. The socio-cultural fabric and ritualistic practices of the region are deeply interwoven with the centuries-old origins of *Kohbar* art. In the *Mithila* region, ritual wall paintings typically done for weddings were the origin of *Mithila* or *Madhubani* art. It has historically been the domain of women. Intellectual, artistic, cultural, and historical components are all incorporated within this cultural inheritance. But, due to natural disasters and other several causes, unfortunately, these valuable art heritages have gradually deteriorating their original forms.

It is obvious that the *Mithila* region has a long history of human settlement, culture, and civilization. It was referred to as the *Videha* kingdom in antiquity. *Satapatha* Brahman was the first to mention the *Mithila* region. Later, various Buddhist, Jain, and Sanskrit texts refer to it as a sacred place and the unique kingdom of *Videha* (Dulal, KC & Singh, 2023, p. 19). According to the holy text *Satapatha Brahmana*, the region was once inhabited by non-Aryan peoples and covered with waiting land and forests. The arrival of *Madhav Videha* and *Gautam Rahugan* with *Baiswanar*, this area turned into agricultural territories and eventually evolved into an Aryan cultural center (Jha, 1983, pp. 1-4).

The Kingdom of *Mithila* used to extend from the Himalayas in the north to the Ganges in the south, as well as between the *Koshi* and *Gandaki* rivers. According to ancient records, fifteen rivers supplied water to the *Mithila* region. *Tirabhukti*, also called *Tirhut*, *Videha*, and *Yajnakshetra*, was the name of the kingdom. These titles suggest that the ascetic and seer-populated kingdom of *Mithila*, on India's border, was one of the most renowned locations for rituals, sacrifices, and various socio-religious activities (Pandey, 2008, pp. 171).

As per the *Pauranic* literature especially *Vishnu Puran* Nimi was the founder ruler of *Videha* kingdom and also gave its name as well. The *Nimi* dynasty's twenty second descendant was *Janak*, son of *Rasworoma* (Thakur, 1956, p. 30). Famous and intelligent, King *Janak* ruled *Mithila*, or modern-day *Janakpur*. Prominent scholars and philosophers filled his palace. He valued the soul over the body more highly. Thus, he went by *Videha*. *Mithila Terai* culture and the city of ponds are other names for it. You may read more about the *Ramayana*, a venerable Hindu epic, and its relevance today here (Jha, 1983, pp. 33-38).

Mithila has continuously practicing patriarchal *Vedic* culture from the very earlier. While the culture observes Hindu religious ceremonies and customs, it also forges its own faith, beliefs, and value systems, some of which occasionally run counter to those of the Indian subcontinent. To find purpose in their life, *Mithila* has, nevertheless, developed a healthy balance between religious and secular rituals that is a decent balance between the spiritual and material realities of the world (Rana, 2021, pp. 74)

Mithila, the magnificent region of Nepal, encompasses over half of the eastern region. It is one of the richest regions in terms of mythology and history, primarily related to the names and sayings associated with the dynasty of King *Janak*, who ruled and had a province within the *Mithila* region (King's Framing & Art Gallery, n.d.). Presently, the *Mithila* region encompasses a wide range of areas, including *Morang*, *Sunsari*, *Saptari*, *Siraha*, *Sarlahi*, *Dhanusha*, and *Mahottari*, Nepal; *Madhubani*, *Darbhangha*, *Sitamadi*, *Mujefarpur*, *Saharsa*, *Bhagalpur*, *Purniya*, North *Munger*, *Jharkhanda*, India (Bimal, 2070, p. 32).

The capital of *Mithila* kingdom was *Janakpur* during the reign of king *Janak*. *Janak* also ruled the *Mithila* and had a direct line of descent from the monarch of *Ayodhya* through the marriage of King *Janak's* daughter *Sita* and King *Dasharath* of *Ayodhya*, whose son *Ram* is also regarded as the seventh manifestation of the god *Vishnu*. The *Janaki* Temple's walls are adorned with a variety of handicrafts and designs, making *Mithila* a significant location for religious, cultural, and traditional illumination.

The social conventions, values, and unique identity of Nepal's *Mithila* culture are incompatible with those of the people living in the hilly and Himalayan regions. It may also be argued that the majority of the population in the *Terai* belt is *Mithila*, and they speak *Maithili* as their native tongue. Consequently, in *Mithila* regions, the *Mithail* serves as the foundation and source of communication. Numerous festivals and customs are part of Nepal's *Mithila* culture, which shares values with Indian society and customs. *Mithila* culture is unique, with customs that respectfully convey a message of diversity and togetherness with all members of society. The *Mithila* culture represents compassion, brotherhood, and respect, and it imparts a valuable lesson to all aboriginal people. In the meantime, owing to its dignity specification, numerous aspects, respects, and secrets are roaring with tremendous sound for the showcasing of Nepal's *Mithila* culture (Outlook India, n.d.).

Mithila region is one of Nepal's most significant cultural centers. Additionally, it has recognized *Mithila* paintings in the styles of *Aripana* and *Kohbar* as one of the important cultural heritage and separate identity of the region (Bimal, 2070, pp. 1-37). Out of them, the most famous and recognizable of these ritual paintings is the *kohbar*, also known as the *puren*.

These were originally painted in the *kohbar ghar*, or nuptial chamber, where the bride and groom consummate their union. In the residence, the newlyweds spend their first four nights together in the room with the brightest paint job. These *Kohbar* paintings' main themes are love and prosperity. Most depictions of *Kohbar*, as the *Kayasthas* named it, show faces obscured by the lotus circles (Sarmaya Arts Foundation. n.d.). There is also a lengthy vertical item that pierces through the lotus's core ring. At the summit of this vertical thing is a face that resembles the rings.

However, *Mithila* is a region prone to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. The vulnerability of the area threatens both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including *Kohbar* painting. These disasters can disrupt the practice of creating *Kohbar* art by destroying infrastructure, displacing communities, and shifting priorities away from cultural preservation toward survival. Despite these challenges, *Kohbar* painting continues to survive, and this resilience forms the crux of this study.

As whole, *Kohbar* painting is a complex cultural legacy in the *Mithila* region, but comprehensive studies on various issues, particularly the coping mechanism to resist the living essence of the art forms, are still lacking. It has been identified as the primary research gap and challenge. The researchers hope to address the aforementioned research gap and issue through the paper entitled *Kohbar Painting an Important Cultural Heritage of Mithila, Nepal: Coping with Natural Disaster*.

1.1 Research Problem and Gaps

Kohbar painting, a vital part of *Mithila's* intangible cultural heritage, is facing significant threats due to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, which frequently affect the region. These disasters not only destroy physical infrastructure but also disrupt traditional cultural practices that rely on specific environmental and communal settings. The intricate art of *Kohbar* painting, traditionally executed on the walls of houses, is at risk of being lost as homes are destroyed, artists are displaced, and communities shift their focus to survival rather than cultural preservation.

Despite its significance, *Kohbar* painting has received limited attention in both academic research and policy discussions. There is a scarcity of literature addressing how cultural practices like *Kohbar* can be preserved in the face of environmental challenges. Moreover, little is known about the adaptive strategies employed by artists to continue their work in post-disaster contexts. This gap leaves a critical question unanswered: How can traditional cultural practices like *Kohbar* painting survive and adapt in a region continually threatened by natural disasters? The aforementioned issues are identified as the matters of research gaps and problems that inspire to the scholars to conduct this study.

1.2 Research Objectives

On the one side, the general objective of this study is to highlight the concept of *Kohbar* painting, trace out the historicity, traditional craftsmanship, using materials for creation, cultural significance, distinctive forms and other different aspects associated with this art form. On the other, the specific objectives of this study are following such as to investigate

how natural disasters, particularly floods and earthquakes, impact the preservation and continuity of *Kohbar* art and to analyze the role of *Kohbar* art in disaster recovery, focusing on its potential as a source of resilience, healing, and cultural continuity for affected communities.

2. Literature Review

In this paper, in order to produce theoretical and empirical knowledge, researchers have gone through the different books, reports, and articles, including Archer (1949) Maithil Painting, Thakur (1956) History of Mithila, Chaudhary (1976) Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati, Jha (1983) The sacred complex in Janakpur, Jain (1997) Tradition and Expression in Mithila Painting, UNESCO (2003) Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage 2003, Madhok (2005) The Interplay between Marriage, Ritual, and Art in Mithila, Davis (2007) Can developing women produce primitive art, Pandey (2008) Nepal through the Ages, Thames & Neel (2010) From Folk Art to Fine Art: Changing Paradigms in the Historiography of Mithila Painting, Bimal (2070) Nepali Sanskriti, Mithila Gaurav ra Rastriyata (Nepalese Culture, Pride of Mithila and Nationality), Das (2013) Madhubani paintings: Its existence and possibility, Kapadi (2013) Mithila Lokchitrama Nepali Sanskritko Chintan, Rekha (2014) Maithil Paintings: An Enquiry into its Historiographical Trajectory (1947- 1997), Burkert & Sethi (n.d.) Painting in Mithila, an Introduction, Rana (2021) Tantric Influence in Aripana of Mithila, Dulal, KC, & Singh (2023) Aripana Art of Mithila Culture in Nepal: A Study of Symbols and Significance, Dulal, Adhikari & Singh (2025) Kohbar Painting of Mithila, Nepal: A Study of Intangible Cultural Heritage etc. while collecting secondary data and information.

3. Methodology

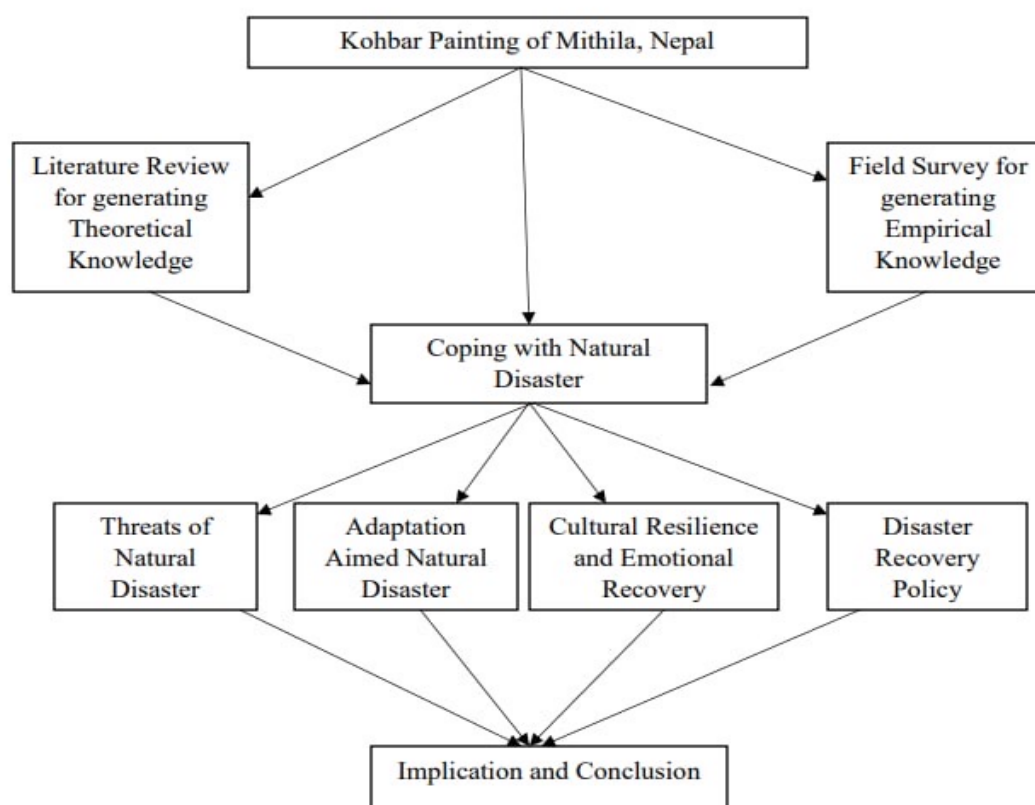
The study focuses on the regions of *Mithila* that are frequently affected by natural disasters. In this study researchers have been used both primary data and secondary information. Field work has been applied for gathering the primary data. During the field survey researchers have frequently visited especially into the different villages of *Janakpur* Municipality for doing observation and taking interview with the local people. Require secondary information were collected from the journals, books and electronic versions of different sources. Collected data have been analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to the research questions. Themes may include symbolic meanings, ritualistic practices, socio-cultural functions, challenges, and post preservation efforts associated with *Kohbar* art after the natural disaster effect. By implementing this research design, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of *Kohbar* painting within the *Mithila* culture, uncovering its symbolic meanings, socio-cultural significance, and contemporary relevance, while also addressing challenges and opportunities for cultural preservation and revitalization to cope the natural disaster.

The study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the symbolic meanings, cultural significance, and cultural resilience and recovery in post-disaster contexts of *Kohbar* art within the *Mithila* community. Qualitative methods such as ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and content analysis are utilized to gather rich, nuanced data. Researchers have

applied purposeful sampling for selecting the respondents to conduct interview from the diverse perspectives within the *Mithila* community. This includes in-depth interviews with *Kohbar* artists, senior citizens of community, cultural practitioners, scholars, and representatives from cultural organizations or institutions, and stakeholders. The methods and procedures have been followed to explore its objectives and to generate valid data and information.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

This research paper explains the thematic meaning of *Kohbar* and facilitates the investigation of the framework incorporates ideas from disaster resilience, cultural preservation, and community adaptation in maintaining cultural identity as an intangible cultural heritage in times of crisis. This study was conducted using the following conceptual framework in order to address the aforementioned research gaps and issues as well as to meet the established objectives:



Source: Developed by researchers

Data from primary and secondary sources as well as nature have been used in this study in accordance with the issues. During the field study, researchers used the observation method to collect primary data, particularly the characteristics of such paintings. Similar to this, literature review approach has been utilized to generate secondary knowledge about the

philosophy of painting, and particularly *Mithila* arts, as well as its concept, origin, and development. Following data and information collection, they were coded, categorized, and examined in light of the goals and challenges of the study. Following a chronological analysis and examination of the various facets related to *Kohbar* art, the study's findings, discussion, outcome, and conclusion have finally been provided.

4. Discussion and Results

According to their goals, researchers have inquired about the historical development and customs of *Kohbar* painting, its status as an intangible cultural heritage, the dangers of natural disasters, how *Kohbar* art has been adapted in the face of them, cultural resilience and emotional healing, and disaster recovery policies. Furthermore, researchers have concerned with delving into the cultural significance encapsulated within *Kohbar* art, a distinctive form of visual expression originating from the *Mithila* region in Nepal.

The other objective includes raising awareness among Nepalese and international researchers about the richness and vastness of *Kohbar* art within *Mithila* culture to encourage further researches and documentations and justify *Kohbar* art as an intangible cultural heritage of the *Mithila* region through examination of its historical, cultural, and socio-economic significance. For this, identification of contemporary challenges facing *Kohbar* art preservation efforts and propose strategies for its sustainable safeguarding and promotion in the face of modernization and globalization. These arenas were discussed to the local people while conducting fieldwork.

4.1 Concept of Kohbar Art



Mithila Painting in Godana Style, Sources: <https://itokri.com>

The concept of *Kohbar* art has its origins in the *Mithila* region's cultural traditions, which are mostly practiced in Nepal and some areas of India. Within the *Mithila* culture, *Kohbar* art—also referred to as *Kohbar* painting or *Kohbar ghar* has great cultural and ceremonial significance (Jain, 1994). The term "*Kohbar*" comes from the Maithili word "*kohvar*," which means the wedding or bridal chamber (Archer, 1949). *Kohbar* art's subjects, which reflect the religious and cultural traditions of the *Mithila* community, are drawn from everyday life, local folklore, and Hindu mythology (Madhok, 2005). In this respect Dulal, Adhikari & Singh (2025, pp. 255-256) mention that:

Traditionally, the wedding chamber's walls were covered in murals that acted as lucky charms to bestow fertility, prosperity, and marital bliss and happiness upon the newlyweds. With time, *Kohbar* painting transcended its ceremonial setting and developed into an important visual storytelling medium that portrayed folktales, depicting mythological narratives, and cultural themes and motifs that were passed down through the generations.

Bold lines, vivid colors, and complex patterns are characteristics of *Kohbar* painting, which is frequently created with natural pigments and bamboo stick brushes. The intensely significant motifs in *Kohbar* art are derived from ordinary life, local folklore, and Hindu mythology. Peacocks, fish, lotus flowers, and geometric patterns are common motifs that have fortunate significance and particular meanings. *Kohbar* painting, which represents blessings, protection, and wealth, is essential to many ceremonial acts and ceremonies in the *Mithila* culture (Dulal, Adhikari & Singh, 2025, p. 256).

Kohbar paintings are made for weddings in order to bless the pair and guarantee a happy and successful married life. In a similar vein, *Kohbar* art is used to evoke benefits for both the mother and the child during childbirth. It is customarily handed down through the generations within families, with mothers teaching their daughters the techniques and themes. All things considered, the idea of *Kohbar* art is a tribute to the lasting influence of this dynamic art form, embodying the rich artistic traditions and cultural history of the *Mithila* population.

In the *Mithila* region, art was not encouraged by the *Upanishadic* way of life during the *Brahmanas'* time. During King *Janak's* rule, the area was primarily regarded as a place for sex (Thakur, 1956, pp. 92-93). One characteristic of *Mithila* culture is *Mithila* art, which is the oldest folk and indigenous art of the Maithili household work in the *Mithila* region, Southern *Terai* of Nepal. It is believed that *Mithila* arts originated approximately 3,000 years ago, when the great Aryans came to this region and started decorating the walls with paintings. The Maithili people's daily routines and occupations are shown in these works of art, along with symbolic representations of their religious figures (Chaudhary, 1976, pp. 303-04).

There is never any blank area in *Madhubani*; instead, every inch of the painting is covered in geometric patterns, vegetation, or fauna. The deities are portrayed here in a conventional folk style, with figures rendered in two dimensions and flat. The gods' imagery is consistent with the Hindu pantheon (Sahu, 2024). *Madhubani* paintings have their roots in the Ramayana, when King *Janak* of *Mithila* hired painters to produce *Mithila* artwork for his daughter's

wedding. Using household objects, the painters brought ancient stories to life, illustrating scenes from the *Purana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana* as well as tribal women's marriages (Sahu, 2024).

The history and practices of *Kohbar* art in *Mithila* culture are deeply intertwined with the cultural traditions and social customs of the region. *Kohbar* art has a rich history that dates back centuries in the *Mithila* region, encompassing present day Nepal and parts of India. The practice of *Kohbar* art is believed to have originated as a form of decorative painting used to adorn the bridal chamber (*Kohbar*) during weddings. It developed into a unique creative tradition with ritualistic meaning and symbolic elements over time. *Kohbar* painting holds significant cultural and ritualistic importance within the *Mithila* community, particularly during auspicious occasions such as weddings and childbirth. It is seen as auspicious and is thought to bestow blessings, wealth, and marital happiness upon the newlyweds. The couple's future life together is visually blessed by the elaborate patterns and symbolic symbols (Dulal, Adhikari & Singh, 2025, pp. 259-260).

4.2 Different Forms of Kohbar Paintings

Kohbar painting is the name given to a traditional style of painting that comes from Nepal's *Mithila* area. It is frequently used to decorate the walls and floors of homes during auspicious occasions like weddings, childbirths, and other rituals. It is distinguished by intricate patterns, striking hues, and important ideas. In *Kohbar* art, symbolism refers to the use of visual elements, themes, and patterns to clarify underlying meanings and cultural significance. These symbols could symbolize elements of Hindu mythology, local folklore, religious beliefs, and social mores (Thames & Rekha, 2010, pp.1-20). The whole *Kohbar* pattern, with its roots, stem, and multiplying leaves, represents the female or bride but is not her yoni, or sexual organ, as some experts believe (Burkert & Sethi, n.d.).

Problems may arise if *Mithila* arts are interpreted outside of the social semiotics of the area. The majority of interpretations are based on western viewpoints that are unrelated to *Mithila* culture, customs, or way of life. When viewed through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis, the authenticity and genuine meanings of Maithili arts are lost. Additionally, it has illustrated how western scholars romanticized history by viewing *Mithila* art through alien perspectives. Women's voices were suppressed throughout the process. Interpretations that the artists themselves internalized and communicated complicate our understanding of *Maithil's* work.

Originating in the *Mithila* region of Nepal and parts of India, *Kohbar* painting is one of the forms of *Mithila* art. It comes in a variety of styles and typologies that are distinguished by their motifs, topics, and cultural value. Especially, wedding *Kohbar* art, childbirth *Kohbar* art, festival *Kohbar* art, narrative *Kohbar* art, contemporary *Kohbar* art, and different *Kohbar* art generated on the basis of regional variations are the major forms of *Kohbar* painting that can found in the different parts of *Mithila* region (Dulal, Adhikari & Singh, 2025, pp. 261-262).

Understanding the origins and cultural context of *Kohbar* art is essential for appreciating its symbolic meanings, ritualistic significance, and enduring legacy in *Mithila* culture. Through a comprehensive exploration of symbolic meanings, cultural practices, and socio-cultural

dynamics associated with *Kohbar* art, the study has illuminated its significance as a vital aspect of *Mithila* cultural identity and heritage preservation. The *Mithila* region of Nepal and India is the birthplace of *Kohbar* painting, which is distinguished by a wide variety of symbolic items and themes that offer blessings and fortunate connotations. Especially, peacocks, lotus flowers, elephants, fishes, swans, sun and moon, trees and plants, *mandalas* and geometric patterns, Gods and Goddesses, wedding scenes are the some common objects and motifs found in *Kohbar* painting in *Mithila* region (Dulal, Adhikari & Singh, 2025, pp. 261-267).

4.3 *Kohbar Painting as an Intangible Cultural Heritage*

The UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage 2003 classified intangible cultural heritage in five different domains which are oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003, p. 8). Art, painting, and ability in creation fall under the category of traditional craftsmanship out of the five domains.

In order to depict the blissful married life of bride *Sita* and groom *Ram*, the *Kohbar Ghar*, or nuptial chamber, was painted in the *Mithila* palace in *Janakpur* some 2500 years ago. Since then, during the solemnization of marriage in *Mithila*, it has been customary to have what is known as a *Kohbar* painting on the walls of the nuptial chamber. The moon, sun, tortoise, snake, lotus, and bamboo trees are shown and embellished in the *Kohbar* paintings as representations of the male and female genitalia.

Researchers can conclude that *Kohbar* art is an intangible cultural heritage of the *Mithila* region by looking at the various aspects mentioned above, including folk tales and legends, beliefs associated with this art form, tantric influence, folk artists, and craftsmanship, using materials, tools, and techniques. Additionally, *Kohbar* art provides social and historical contexts that enhance our understanding of its significance within the *Mithila* community in Nepal. Finally, by incorporating the meaning and types of intangible cultural heritage prescribed by UNESCO, scholars can critically analyze and interpret *Kohbar* art within the *Mithila* community in Nepal.

4.4 *Threats of Natural Disaster*

A disaster is a significant interruption to a community's ability to function that is greater than what the community can handle on its own. Natural, man-made, and technical risks, as well as other elements that affect a community's exposure and vulnerability, can all result in disasters (<https://www.ifrc.org › disasters-climate-and-crises>).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a disaster as an event that disturbs the regular course of life and results in a degree of suffering that surpasses the impacted community's ability to adapt. (UNGA, 2016). It can also mean any event, usually unexpected, that damages the environment, kills people, deteriorates health and health services, and surpasses the ability of the impacted community to the point where outside help is needed (Bell, Landsman & Shackelford 2001).

A situation or event that overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request for external assistance at the national or international level; it is an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction, and human suffering, according to the international disaster database EM-DAT (CRED, 2023). A disaster is an overwhelming ecological disruption occurring on a scale sufficient to require outside assistance, is an event located in time and space which produces conditions whereby the continuity of structure and process of social units becomes problematic and it is an event or series of events which seriously disrupts normal activities. The magnitude of the effects of the event will be viewed differently (Shaluf & Ahmadun, 2006).

Any incident that seriously damages people, property, or the environment is considered a disaster. There are two main categories of disasters: man-made and natural. floods : caused by heavy rains and snow, earthquakes: caused by tectonic movement, tsunamis: caused by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, or landslides, avalanches: caused by natural hazards, wildfires: caused by natural hazards, droughts: caused by prolonged periods of dry weather are the main cause of In contrast to natural disasters, man-made disasters include oil spills, terrorist attacks, power outages, pollution, environmental degradation, and negligence, all of which are caused by human activity (Gould, Garcia, Remes, & Jacob, 2016).

A disaster is defined as a significant disruption of a community's or society's ability to function at any scale brought on by dangerous occurrences interacting with exposure, vulnerability, and capacity conditions, resulting in one or more of the following: material, economic, environmental, and human losses and impacts. A disaster happens when a danger affects or hits a community that is fragile and has limited capacity, causing losses, damages, and a major disturbance in the way the community functions. The extensive losses in terms of people, property, and the environment are greater than what the community can handle with its own resources.

Earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides, storms, and more can all result in natural disasters. They may result in fatalities, monetary losses, and significant environmental consequences. Many heritage sites around the world have suffered from natural disasters, including churches, mosques, and historic urban areas like the *Tinmal* Mosque in Morocco, a mosque in the Atlas Mountains that was considered for World Heritage Site status; parts of the nearly 1,000-year-old Medina of Marrakech, Morocco; the 12th century *Kutubiyya* Mosque, which was severely damaged; the Notre Dame Cathedral in France, which was severely damaged by a fire in 2019; historic urban areas in Iraq and Syria, which have been damaged by conflict; and historic sites in Ukraine, which have suffered from both conflict and climate change.

The Bhola cyclone, the Coringa cyclone, and the floods in China in 1931, The worst tropical cyclone ships in 1839, the Bhola cyclone in the Bay of Bengal in 1970, the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, Hurricane Maria in 2017, the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake, the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, and the 2023 Tropical Cyclone Freddy are just a few of the events that have occurred in China, The 2015 earthquake in Nepal are some of the most destructive natural disasters in history.

The extremely negative effects that a natural hazard occurrence has on a community or society are known as natural disasters. Avalanches, droughts, earthquakes, floods, heat waves, landslides (including undersea landslides), tropical cyclones, volcanic activity, and wildfires are a few instances of natural hazard events. Blizzards, dust storms, firestorms, hailstorms, ice storms, sinkholes, thunderstorms, tornadoes, and tsunamis are some more natural hazards. Natural disasters can result in property damage or fatalities. Usually, it results in financial harm. The strength of the roads, buildings, and other structures as well as how well people are prepared for disasters determine how severe the damage is (Bankoff, Frerks & Hilhorst, 2003).

According to academics, the phrase "natural disaster" is inappropriate and ought to be dropped. The more straightforward word "disaster" could be used instead. The kind of hazard would be described concurrently (Cannon, 1994). When a natural or man-made hazard affects a community that is already at risk, a disaster occurs. It arises from the exposure of a vulnerable society combined with the hazard. In the world both types of heritages i.e. natural and cultural have been facing several crises for its existence from the very earlier. The crisis is overcome due to the nature and biological activities as well. Therefore, mainly, the crisis is classified into two major categories which are natural disaster and biological one.

In the context of *Mithila* and *Kohbar* painting, both types of crisis have seemed active for the existence of heritages. During the field survey, researchers observe that some of the monuments that adorned by *Kohbar* paintings are gradually deteriorating due to the plantation of *Pipal* and other different plants. Likewise, some are going to lose their original forms due to the activities of human beings and pigeons and also the other birds. Apart from it, due to the firing, over raining, flooding, soil erosion, thunderstorm, earthquake plenty of *Kohbar* paintings have already been lost their original forms and remaining some are gradually going to lose their natural identity.

The nation as a whole was immediately affected by the April 25, 2015, earthquake, which had a Richter scale value of 7.8, and the aftershocks that followed. A total of around 22,000 people were hurt, and almost 9,000 people died. More than half a million homes have collapsed or been destroyed, according to the most recent estimates. Approximately 2,900 buildings of cultural and religious heritage value were impacted by the earthquake, including numerous museums, religious complexes, and cultural landmarks like Buddhist stupas and Durbar Squares (Kunwar & Chand, 2016, pp. 11-12).

The 2015 earthquake in Nepal had also a profound impact on *Kohbar* paintings and the broader art community. Approximately 700 paintings, including 20 percent *Kohbar* art, were left stranded at the Nepal Fine Arts Academy due to the disaster. The earthquake not only caused structural damage to the Academy but also endangered a significant portion of Nepal's artistic heritage, including these traditional *Kohbar* pieces (Pang, 2015, May 7). In addition, the Department of Fine Arts at Kathmandu University (KU), a premier fine arts institution in the capital, experienced severe floods that damaged works from veteran artists, teachers, and students. This catastrophic event further compounded the loss of artistic heritage, affecting both historical and contemporary artworks (Gautam, 2017). The flooding, in conjunction with

the earthquake's impact, has placed immense strain on efforts to preserve and restore these invaluable cultural assets, highlighting the urgent need for dedicated recovery and preservation initiatives.

4.5 Adaptation of Kohbar Art amid Natural Disasters

Kohbar painting, traditionally created on the walls of *Mithila* homes, is a significant part of the region's cultural heritage. However, the frequent occurrence of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes in *Mithila* presents a serious threat to the preservation of this practice. The destruction of homes, which serve as the primary canvas for these paintings, disrupts the continuity of *Kohbar* art. Despite these challenges, *Kohbar* painting has shown remarkable adaptability. Artists have creatively responded by shifting the medium of the paintings from the walls to more portable surfaces, such as cloth, canvas, and paper. This adaptation allows the community to continue their traditional practices, even when the physical structures that used to house the paintings are no longer available.

In this way, the symbolic meanings and cultural expressions embedded in *Kohbar* art remain alive, even as the medium evolves. Through this adaptation, *Kohbar* painting has transcended its spatial limitations, becoming more accessible to wider audiences and contributing to its longevity. This adaptability reflects the resilience of the *Mithila* community, who, despite the constant threat of natural disasters, strive to preserve their cultural heritage through innovation and creativity.

4.6 Cultural Resilience and Emotional Recovery

Cultural resilience refers to the ability of a community to maintain its cultural identity and practices in the face of adversity. *Kohbar* painting serves as a prime example of this resilience, offering more than just artistic expression; it acts as a key element in the emotional recovery of disaster-affected communities. In post-disaster scenarios, the continued practice of *Kohbar* painting helps restore a sense of normalcy and identity for the *Mithila* community. The creation of these paintings provides emotional and psychological relief, allowing people to reconnect with their heritage and reaffirm their cultural identity amidst the chaos of recovery.

The act of painting becomes a ritual of healing and continuity, helping communities cope with their trauma while keeping their traditions intact. This finding underscores the importance of intangible cultural heritage in disaster recovery. Unlike physical reconstruction, cultural practices like *Kohbar* painting offer psychological comfort, helping individuals and communities recover emotionally. The preservation of cultural identity through these art forms also strengthens community ties, fostering collective resilience and solidarity.

4.7 Disaster Recovery Policies

One of the significant strengths of *Kohbar* painting is the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, ensuring that the tradition is not lost even in the face of natural disasters. Traditionally, the techniques and symbolic meanings of *Kohbar* painting are passed down from older to younger generations, predominantly from mother to daughter. This transfer of knowledge is not limited to the technical aspects of the art form but also includes the cultural

and spiritual significance of the motifs and symbols used. The study found that even as the medium of *Kohbar* painting shifted due to the destruction of homes, the transmission of knowledge persisted. Younger generations have embraced the use of alternative materials while maintaining the authenticity of the art form. This has allowed the tradition to evolve without losing its cultural essence. The dedication of younger artists to continue the practice ensures that *Kohbar* painting remains a living tradition, adapting to contemporary contexts while retaining its historical and cultural significance.

One of the critical findings of the research is the lack of attention given to intangible cultural heritage, such as *Kohbar* painting, in disaster recovery policies. While physical infrastructure is prioritized in post-disaster recovery efforts, cultural practices often receive little to no support. This oversight can lead to the erosion of cultural identity, particularly in communities where cultural practices are deeply intertwined with social and religious life. The study emphasizes the need to integrate cultural heritage preservation into disaster recovery frameworks. Ensuring the survival of traditions like *Kohbar* painting requires both material and institutional support. Policies must recognize that cultural practices are not merely decorative or ritualistic but serve as essential components of community resilience. By incorporating cultural preservation into recovery strategies, governments and organizations can help communities rebuild not only their physical environments but also their cultural identities, which are crucial for long-term recovery.

4.8 Comparison of Findings with Existing Literature

Research suggests that *Kohbar* art motifs often include symbols like peacocks, lotus flowers, and geometric patterns (Brass, 2005). Comparing this with existing literature on *Mithila* culture may reveal common interpretations of these symbols, such as fertility, prosperity, and auspiciousness (Dallapiccola, 1999). Discrepancies might arise if interpretations vary significantly across different studies or cultural contexts.

The different ethnic groups are famous for their different features. *Mithila* culture is famous for its unique art which is *Mithila* art. *Mithila* art is one of the ancient folk arts of the world and indigenous art of Maithili people. It is said that *Mithila* art was originated about three thousand years back when great Aryans started a settled life in this region and had started making decoration (Das, 2013). The art gives stress upon the cultural background of Maithili people. These arts depict not only the everyday lives and activities of Maithili people but also express their religious figures in symbolic ways. This unique highly traditional art can be seen on most of *Maithili* household work in the *Mithila* region, southern *Terai* of Nepal.

Traditionally women are involved in it but nowadays men are also found to be involved. Another interesting fact about it is that no particular formal training is given for this art; it is passing on from one generation to another (from mother to daughter) in every family in Maithili society (Davis, 2007). *Mithila* arts are made on handmade *lokta* papers and handmade cotton clothes and these days, these arts are done by modern brushes and acrylic colors. The impact of faster change in every field and modernization has also affected *Mithila* arts. *Mithila* painters are not applying their indigenous knowledge only in their household works and rituals; they also want to expose their artistic talent all over the world like other

contemporary folk arts (Mishra, 1977).

Today this art has been exposed to the whole world. Its market value has been increasing day to day and most of the woman artists of *Mithila* are able to earn decent income from this art. But more works has to be done for training and production of arts and crafts. Studies have documented the cultural significance of *Kohbar* art in weddings and childbirth ceremonies within the *Mithila* community. Comparing this with literature on similar art forms in other cultures can highlight universal themes of art's role in rites of passage and communal celebrations. Differences might arise in the specific rituals associated with *Kohbar* art compared to other traditions (Rekha, 2014).

Existing literature might provide insights into gender roles in traditional art practices, suggesting parallels or contrasts with the participation of women in *Kohbar* art. Comparing these dynamics can illuminate broader patterns of gendered labor and artistic expression across cultures. Unique socio-cultural dynamics specific to the *Mithila* region may also emerge (Kapadi, 2013). Research on cultural heritage preservation and community-based initiatives can offer strategies for addressing challenges faced by *Kohbar* art, such as globalization and urbanization. Comparing these efforts can reveal effective strategies for preserving traditional art forms and fostering cultural continuity (Thames & Rekha, 2010, pp. 1-20). Context-specific challenges and solutions may vary across different cultural contexts.

Literature on cultural innovation and creative industries may offer insights into how traditional art forms like *Kohbar* art adapt to contemporary contexts. Comparing these findings can shed light on the balance between preserving cultural heritage and embracing innovation. Understanding how *Kohbar* artists innovate while maintaining cultural authenticity can inform broader discussions on cultural sustainability (Shaluf and Ahmadun, 2006).

5. Implications of the Findings

The findings' ramifications go beyond scholarly discussion to include more extensive socio-cultural, economic, and policy aspects. By engaging with diverse perspectives, methodologies, and stakeholders, we can foster a more inclusive and holistic approach to cultural heritage preservation and promotion. Through critically examining the symbolic meanings and ritualistic significance embedded within *Kohbar* art, this research paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of the *Mithila* region in Nepal. Furthermore, it advocates for the preservation and promotion of this unique art form amidst the challenges of modernization and globalization, emphasizing its enduring cultural relevance and significance. The implications of the findings from a study on *Kohbar* art within the *Mithila* culture in Nepal are multifaceted and extend to various stakeholders, including scholars, artists, policymakers, cultural practitioners, and community members. Here are some potential implications:

Documenting, conserving, and revitalizing: The findings can inform efforts to preserve, promote, and safeguard *Kohbar* art as a vital aspect of *Mithila* intangible cultural heritage. Understanding the symbolic meanings, cultural significance, and artistic techniques of

Kohbar art can guide initiatives aimed at documenting, conserving, and revitalizing this traditional art form for future generations.

Shaping cultural narratives: Knowledge of *Kohbar* art's can help to identify the historical roots, ritualistic practices, and socio-cultural dynamics can help to empower *Mithila* communities to reclaim and celebrate their cultural identity. Recognizing the role of *Kohbar* art in shaping cultural narratives, community cohesion, and collective memory can foster a sense of pride, resilience, and cultural continuity.

Amplify women's voices in cultural heritage preservation efforts: Insights into the participation of women as folk artists and custodians of *Kohbar* art can highlight the importance of gender equity and women's empowerment within the *Mithila* community. Recognizing the contributions of female artists and artisans can challenge gender stereotypes, promote economic opportunities, and amplify women's voices in cultural heritage preservation efforts.

Educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness about Kohbar art: The findings can inform educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness about *Kohbar* art and *Mithila* culture in schools, universities, and cultural institutions. Integrating *Kohbar* art into curricula, workshops, and outreach programs can foster intergenerational knowledge transfer, cross-cultural dialogue, and appreciation for diverse artistic traditions.

Enhance tourism experiences and promote cultural tourism: Understanding the cultural significance and aesthetic appeal of *Kohbar* art can enhance tourism experiences and promote cultural tourism in the *Mithila* region. Developing cultural heritage trails, artisan markets, and cultural festivals centered on *Kohbar* art can stimulate local economies, create livelihood opportunities, and enhance cultural exchange with visitors.

Safeguard Kohbar art and promote cultural diversity: Policymakers can use the findings to develop supportive measures and policies that recognize and protect the cultural rights of *Mithila* communities, including the preservation of intangible cultural heritage such as *Kohbar* art. Implementing measures such as funding support, capacity-building initiatives, and cultural heritage legislation can strengthen efforts to safeguard *Kohbar* art and promote cultural diversity.

Further research and knowledge exchange on Kohbar art: The findings can stimulate further research and knowledge exchange on *Kohbar* art, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, comparative studies, and participatory research methodologies. Engaging with diverse perspectives, methodologies, and stakeholders can enrich scholarly discourse and deepen our understanding of *Kohbar* art's cultural significance and socio-economic implications.

Overall, the implications of the findings from a study on *Kohbar* painting within the *Mithila* culture in Nepal extend beyond academic discourse to encompass broader socio-cultural, economic, and policy dimensions, shaping efforts to preserve, promote, and sustain this vibrant cultural heritage for future generation.

6. Conclusion

Researchers have documented the diverse motifs, techniques, and regional variations of *Kohbar* art, shedding light on its evolution and adaptation over time. Moreover, the study has underscored the importance of recognizing and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, particularly women artisans, who play a central role in preserving and perpetuating *Kohbar* art within the *Mithila* community. By acknowledging their contributions and addressing socio-cultural barriers, one can surely promote gender equity, cultural diversity, and inclusive cultural heritage practices.

Mithila arts have been exposed to some extent due to commercial interest of people. The women with the interest in *Mithila* art are able to earn decent income by commercializing it. But still is not able to achieve the position popularity in front of whole world. May be it is due to the lack of any institution and organization in *Mithila* society from ancient period which gives any formal training about it. So, establishment of such institutions also necessary and an art and craft gallery for exhibition and promotion of *Mithila* art is required.

The art and culture center are an organization, building or complexes that promote the handmade arts, crafts and culture. It can be neighborhood community arts organizations or government organizations where funding is sponsored by government itself, or any private bodies, NGO's. INGO's. The development of *Mithila* art and craft helps the conservation of *Mithila* heritage, religion and culture which in return contributes to appease poverty by creating the job opportunities for the artist and crafts men. *Mithila* is an ancient cultural region lying between the lower ranges of the Himalayans and the Ganges River. It extends into the eastern *Terai* of Nepal. *Mithila* is a mosaic of various ethnic groups.

The eternal beauty and long legacy of *Kohbar* art show the perseverance, inventiveness, and cultural life of the *Mithila* community. Stronger ties between the past, present, and future generations can be created by respecting and enjoying this rich artistic heritage, guaranteeing that *Kohbar* art will continue to inspire and improve people's lives for many years to come.

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