



## Acculturation and Occupational Shift among the Badi Community of Surkhet

**Bhupendra Bahadur Shahi**

Lecturer Mid-West University and PhD Scholar TU

Email: shahibhupendra45@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jotmc.v9i9.90470>

### Abstract

This paper assesses the influence of acculturation practices on the occupational shift of Badi community in Surkhet having the major objective of exploring better social adjustment. The study employs exploratory sequential design based on mixed method (QUAN-QUAL). In essence to explore the livelihoods of Badi, they were found engaged in entertainment occupations singing and dancing, relying on upper caste patronage and living in their homes. Their socio-economic conditions were measurable marked by dependency and discrimination. However, after democracy in 1991, the Badi people are found be acculturated in terms of occupation freedom, pursue education, and occupations diversification. Despite facing challenges during the Maoist conflict (1995-2005), this period became pivotal in fostering their desire for independence; they realized “*Aba Magi Khane Hoina Gari Khane Ho*” (work independently for survival not to be dependent) and opportunities and rights have to grab against not to accept. Thus, the research explores that acculturation practices have contributed to their occupational shift towards agriculture and other. However, the Badi community still found facing socio-economic and cultural challenges; lagging behind other castes in terms of livelihood improvement in Surkhet.

**Keywords:** Acculturation practices, occupational change, livelihood transformation, Surkhet, Dalit studies

### Introduction

The Badi community in Nepal, a unique group within the Dalit caste that it has own traditions, language, and social structure. The word ‘Badi’ is derived from the Sanskrit word *Vadyabhadak*, means “one who plays musical instruments, reflecting their historical role as nomadic entertainers in the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (Bhandari, 2012).

The Badi people arrived in Nepal from India in the 14th century and initially lived in the western regions. Their livelihoods were similar to their Indian counterparts, as they sang songs, performed dances, and narrated stories from the Hindu epics of *Mahabharat* and *Ramayan* at festivals, weddings, and private gatherings. Their livelihood was sustained through patronage from affluent high caste landlords and rulers (Bhandari, 2012; Sharma, 2018).

Currently, there are approximately 40,000 Badi individuals in Nepal, mainly settled in Karnali and Far-Western provinces. Despite being part of the *Dalit* caste, the Badi community occupies the lowest position within the *Dalit* hierarchy, earning them the label of "untouchables of the untouchables" (Nepal, 2015).

Nepal is a diversified country in terms of socio-economic and cultural aspects. It is the home for multi-cultural, multi ethnic, multi-racial and multi-linguistic society where the caste system forms the foundation of the social structure that each caste has distinct socio-economic, cultural, and traditional skills, which play a key role in understanding their development status. Rural areas in Nepal are more challenging to live in compared to urban areas, with people in rural community often living in traditional ways and lacking basic facilities of transportation, combination, healthcare, and irrigation. Among the marginalized *Dalits*, Badi community people are considered as the most marginalized who are living below the poverty line (Nepal, 2015).

Acculturation the process of socialization that involves adopting aspects of another culture while maintaining elements of one's own, is a key factor in modernization. Modernization often begins with the process of acculturation in developing communities, leading to significant changes in the lives of the people. For the Badi people, acculturation has been crucial in shifting their traditional occupations and life styles, enabling them to adjust socio-economically by adapting to changing circumstances (Sharma, 2016).

In the mid-20th century, the *Badi Andolan* (Badi Movement) of 2007 resulted in several agreements with the interim government, which included pledges to stop using discriminatory language, provide citizenship to all Badi people, offer scholarships to Badi youth, and create community job initiatives. Additionally, two Badi representatives, including one female, were included in a government task force tasked with researching the concerns of the Badi community (Nepal, 2015). According to the 2011 Census, there were 38,603 Badi individuals in Nepal, making up 0.15% of the total population and 11770 according to CBS 2021. The majority of the Badi population resides in the provinces of Sudurpaschim, Karnali, and Lumbini. Over the past few decades, this nomadic group has settled permanently in these regions (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011; 2021).

Socially, economically, and politically, the Badi community has been one of the most disadvantaged communities in history (NDC, 2060). They still endure prejudice, even within their own Dalit community, when it comes to basic amenities. Since the Badi community has gradually moved away from their original occupation as performers and their nomadic manner of life, their current circumstances have greatly improved in comparison to their past. They have, however, also made their permanent homes there, as is the situation in Karnali province, where access to essential services is already limited caused of different factors (UNDP, 2023). Skill generally refers to the ability, capacity, or efficiency to perform tasks within an individual's production system or machinery. It is the effort to carry out work and can be found in various forms such as machinery, equipment, documentation, or processes. Skill is often conceptualized with respect to its origin, purpose, and characteristics to avoid ambiguity (Sharma, 2015).

Occupations in Nepal were determined on the caste system by the birth of people not by their interest and capacity, which was designed to maintain social structure (Bista, 1990). Similarly, the Badi people as part of Sudra caste, were considered the lowest untouchable and impure. The

*Kshetri* used to serve as warriors and administrators received *Rakam* (money or land), *Vaishyas* used to engage in trade received money, and *Sudras* including the Badi, used to engage in skill based serving occupation relying on the patronage from upper caste people. Particularly in the case of Badi community people, they were entertainers who used to perform songs and dances (Bista, 1991; Caplan, 1970; Sharma, 2015).

Occupational structure and their socio-economic livelihood among and within *Dalits* were found to be discriminative as well because the *Kami* are black smiths and gold smiths. Despite the similarity in skill based traditional occupation, the *Kami* hold a higher position in the caste hierarchy compared to other untouchable castes (Subedi, 2021). The relationships between inter-caste *Dalits* were rigid, polluting, and prohibitive; and in the context of the Badi people, they were considered the lowest untouchable caste faced more social domination and discrimination during social adjustment and changing their livelihoods (Hofer, 1976; Rai, 2021).

Therefore, this study issue of the Badi in Panchapuri municipality is guided by empiricist thought of marginalization applying on Dalit issue (Guru, 2002). This approach explores the realities of caste-based exclusion, discrimination, and violence through the lens of right-based concept how the weaker section being shift in other main stream socio-cultural and occupational aspect (Thorat & Newman, 2010).

### **Objective of the Study**

This research aims to investigate the level of acculturation and shift in occupational change and, specific objective is to explore the level of acculturation practices among the Badi as they transition from patronage to new social adaptation.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach (QUAN-QUAL) using an exploratory sequential design that primarily focused on quantitative data supplemented by qualitative analysis. Initially, I gathered quantitative data through interviews, using a census method from total 15 households heads: eight from ward number six, three from ward number eight, and four from ward number four, all belonging to the Badi community in Panchapuri Municipality of Surkhet district during August 2024. In the second phase, I collected qualitative information through participant interviews with four key representatives (Jhilke Badi and Keshar Badi in 21<sup>st</sup> and Lure Badi and Jiban Badi in 22 October) from the Badi community, aligning with my research objectives, conducted on October 21 and 22, 2024, to complement the quantitative findings and analysis.

There were 92 total Badi populations in Panchapury (Municipality Profile, 2017). Additionally, I have examined relevant literature, including books, articles, and newspapers to gather necessary secondary data. Consequently, I have utilized a descriptive research to evaluate the data guided by pragmatist approach.

## Findings

### **Situation of Traditional Entertaining Skill based occupation of Badi in Surkhet District**

The Dalit Badi people, in general, are very hard working people, having specialization in one art and craft or other related on making their musical instruments tam-tam (Madal), *Tabala*, and *Sulpa* (mud made smoking instrument) (Action Aid Nepal, 2001). The Badi people living in Surkhet district have also the similar history in their specialization on traditional professional occupation constructed by social structural for social adjustment. In the response to know the changing occupational trend, Lure argues as

“I remember, my grand gather had engaged and used to do this entertaining singing and dancing traditional occupation in the past before 40 years however, this traditional profession has been changed and be shifted into agriculture and others because some of the members of our community are being teachers and some other are in India and Korea” (L. Badi, 22/10/2024[KI]).

In the essence of this changing spirit another key participant Keshar argues as

“I left my traditional entertaining occupation for being independent and having eager of adapting respectful occupation in the changing situation because I think, that patronage system based entertaining profession was the ruin for our community development that it had made us dependent to higher class people for survival and led us into poverty” (K. Badi, 21/10/2024[KI]).

In Nepal, 25.16 percent people of the total population are surviving under the economic poverty line (CBS, 2021). In the case of Badi people in Surkhet, mostly all the Badi people have first priority to join on service sector, business and agriculture. Thus, the Badi people agreed that they are highly interested giving priority to involve in other occupational sectors as making their major occupation although it was not their ancestral occupation because better livelihood requirements food, clothing, and shelter are also being the matter of challenge for them in Surkhet. Only few populations have satisfactory income however, this section of population is not found engaged on traditional skill related occupation. Therefore, the state shift in occupation from patronage to new social adjustment more in agricultural occupation can be the causes of acculturation practices.

### **Situation of Entertaining traditional Skill based occupation**

Traditional occupation is the specialization art or handed technology which is easily transferable to other generation. In the past before 1990s the Badi people have also found been engaging on entertaining singing and dance based indigenous profession as their main occupation which had sustainably supported in the economic status and livelihood of the Badi in the study area. They would sing the different songs, dance to entertain the rulers and elite feudal section of the people for accepting patronage and make various products of mud, metal and leather based entertaining instruments for their survival (Thapa & Khanal, 2019).

Whole the participant household heads argued that the Badi community people have the more or less traditional skill to make different entertaining instruments or products in the community. Still now, the 6 respondents 40 percent of the total have good knowledge and skill on this but they

are partially continuing this traditional entertaining skill of singing song, performing dance, and making the needy instruments for this as their alternative source of income or occupation as well. They also agreed that their whole past generation before 1990s were involved in that traditional entertaining occupation but now, nobody want to engage in this occupation caused by changing attitudes of new generation of Badi and the products cannot compete in the open market (Interaction Experience with the Fifteen Household Heads, 20-24/06/2024).

For wise understanding, some major items of traditional entertaining songs and dances and their relative traditional skill based products of Badi community are presented here by analyzing the data in this table.

**Table 1**  
Traditional Products and Types of Song and Dance of Badi

S. N.	Name of the traditional products	S. N.	Name of the Traditional Song and Dance
1	Madal (Nepali Folk Musical Instrument)	1	Jhyaure folk song and Dance
2	Tabala	2	Nepali Filmy song and Dance
3	Sulpa (traditional smoking item made by clay)	3	Hindi Filmy Song and Dance
4	Chilam/Hukka (Large size smoking item)	4	Cultural: Feast and Festival Based Dance
5	Traditional Fishing Net	5	Not Having their Indigenous Song and Dance However, Professional for Giving Entertainment

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The products made from partial involvement of Badi people living in Panchapuri municipality of Surkhetare based on traditional knowledge that the products have found to be played more important role in utilization and easy fulfillment of human needs in the society.

Badi people argued that now the situation of handmade Madal, Tabala, Chilam (Hukka), and fishing net made by them are gradually replaced by the machinery based industrial products. Similarly, the traditional singing and dancing entertaining profession is also in phase of extent because of the development of modern entertaining instruments radio, television, film/movie, and excessive use of digital devices instead of traditional entertaining songs and dance performed by the Badi in Nepal. The Badi people stated that their products made by using indigenous knowledge are more useful, easy available, use simple handed technology and locally available, use of local resources, and qualitative too than for securing the sustainable livelihood than modern machinery product.

**Table 2**

List of the Equipment for Entertaining-Based Traditional Products of Badi

S.N.	Name of using equipments /materials
1	- <i>Leather of Goat for two sides hitting materials on Madal (Modne Ra Talla Hallne)</i> - <i>Leather of ox or monkey for Making rope (Tana Hallne)</i>
2	<i>Kari (soft Iron stone)</i>
3	<i>Kit (Mixture of pods of rice, ash of Dry Babiyo grass or tyre)</i>
4	<i>Log (wood) of Khamari, Mallyato, Khiro, Piyari, Bhalayo, Bauni Sallo</i>
5	<i>Leather rope (vain of dead ox or monkey)</i>
6	<i>Jara (iron equipment for making cylindrical hole in the wooden log)</i>
7	<i>Mungra (hitting wooden equipment for making plain of sides of Madal and Tabala)</i>
8	<i>Hammer, harrow, and ankle</i>

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

These are the major equipments and materials used for working on traditional occupation of Badi people of Surkhet District. The Badi people argue that this traditional entertaining occupation had appropriate in the past for social structural adjustment and for the livelihood survival in the society however, it's situation through the lance of economic sustainability it is found inappropriate for them because of some constraints in the modern economy:

- They faced key challenge of shortage of raw materials due to changing situation of national political systems and policies related to forest and wild lives which needed them like mainly the leather of dead animals and wood.
- Traditional entertaining occupation couldn't compete with other means of entertainment in the modern market.
- Their products had not good finishing in the comparison of modern industrial machinery products and entertaining performance also could not compete to modern means of entertainment.
- They had lack of training and support to upgrade their skill change it in to the entrepreneurship concept in modern market.
- The Badi people were economically poor to set the live sing and dance platform and introduce machinery in their product in modern way.
- Patronage could not be the sufficient source of income to sustain their families in changed socio-economic, cultural and political situation after 1990s.

Thus, in this changing process, Jhilke gives his reaction as

“our community is still facing problem of untouchability and caste based discrimination although it is abolished according to law. However, most of us we feel hesitation in the society to involve in that occupation due to hierarchical social structure that other caste people think us as inferior, un respected, and dominated. Therefore, I think it is the compulsion for us to acculturate for our independence and respectful existence” (Interview with J. Badi, 21/10/2024 [KI]).

### Changing Attitude on Traditional Occupation of Badi

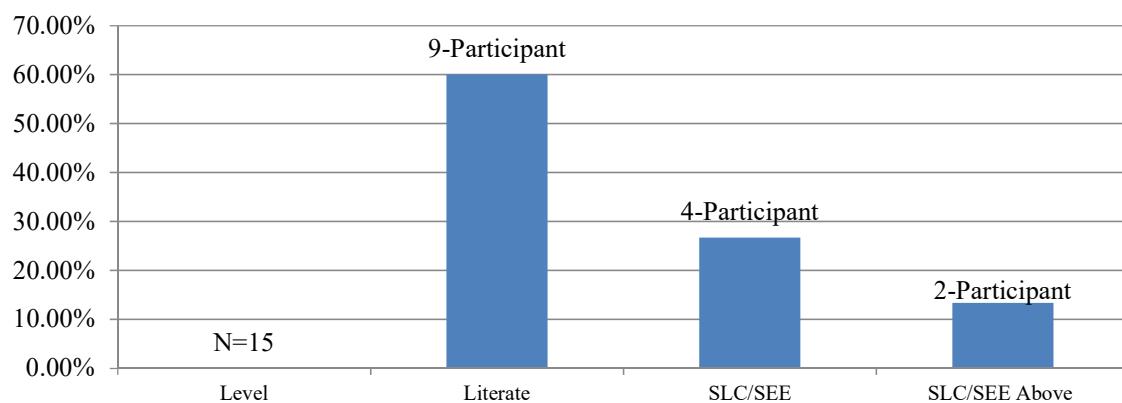
Kesher a youth from the Badi suggests, the people of present generation in our community do not want to adapt traditional entertaining occupation as main occupation because they feel domination and insulted involving in this occupation. Now the Badi people are aware on their rights and privilege thus the occupational status of Badi people have been found to involve on different sectors therefore, their position of traditional entertaining occupation is gradually decreasing. Similarly, the views of all the Badi people of this community found not to suggest their children to involve in this traditional entertaining occupation as well. Thus, the changing attitude of being eager to adopt new occupation was the key turning point for acculturation practices in their livelihood guided by empiricist view of grabbing new opportunities.

Acculturation practices of the Badi community on occupational change includes the components of family structure, marriage system, education, occupation, ownership of land, Land use pattern, income level, use of domestic energy consumption level, socio-cultural norms and values, feast and festivals, customs and lifestyle of community are important to know in the shifting occupational livelihood of Badi people in the study area.

### Education Factor for Shift in the Occupation and Livelihood of the Badi

Education is one of the major means of acculturation process in the community because it gives the knowledge of learning of others socio-economic and cultural aspects. Without education it is difficult to improve the life and get involve in decision making position. Therefore, it can be an important mean for acculturation practices in the livelihood of the Badi. The given figure 1, shows the level of education of the respondent's households given below.

**Figure 1**  
Educational Status



Source: Participant Interview, 2024

Data shows that majority 9 participants (60 percent) of Badi people were literate where as 4 participants (26.67 percent) were found having SLC Passed and 2 participants (13.33 percent) of respondents have above the level of SLC. The data about education of 40 years ago of the Badi were not available in the area however; they agreed most of them were illiterate. The satisfactory

data of educational status among the Badi community shows the better result of understanding guided by empiricist view for their right among the communities in the modern world to gain the better opportunities through competition. Nowadays, many Badi of study area have been aware on their changing needs, opportunities and techniques to grab. One of the participants from Badi community (J. Badi)a teacher of Sree Samuha primary school Panchapuri 6, Surkhet, in the community suggested as

“I have passed Bachelor in Nepal subject thus, I am able to afford the basic requirements of my family, I can understand my rights and duty than other members in the community which is the part of gaining knowledge that helps to acculturate us to be aware than our previous generation” (J. Badi, 22/10/2024[KII]).

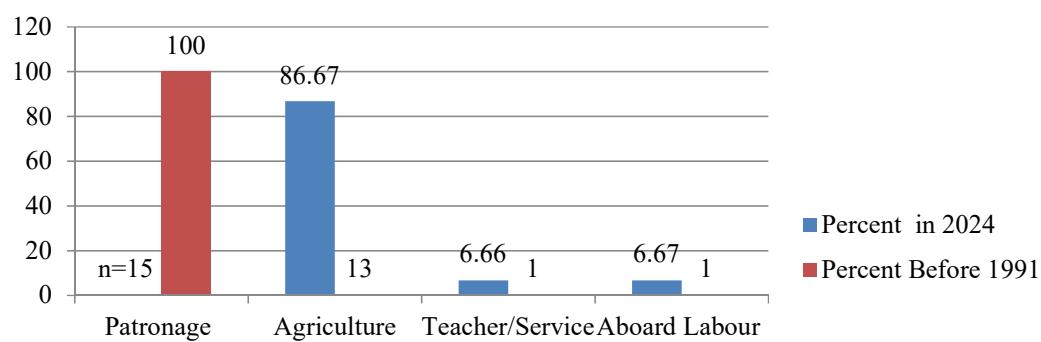
### Change in Occupation of the Badi through Process of Acculturation

Change in the occupation is the result of acculturation. Acculturation practices in the occupational aspect of the Badi have been found greatly influenced in the study area.

“In my opinion after establishment of democracy in 1990s, we Badi community people became aware and independent for adopting our interest of occupation. Democracy resulted us about awareness of freedom on education and occupational choices; thus awareness made us and our children able to think and know the level of discrimination, insult, domination and exploitation from upper caste people in the name of patronage thus our generation changed our occupation”(Jh. Badi, 21/10/2024).

**Figure 2**

Occupational Shift of the Badi Over the Last 40 Years as Their Main Occupation



Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The study in the figure 2, shows sent percent people of Badi were adapted patronage system from the elite central and local level ruling class (King. Ministers, administrative head, Jimuwal, Mukhiya, Pradhan, Thalu , Pancha-Bhaladmi and other upper caste Ista-Mahajan; and as in some case of BaligharePratha) before 1991 in Nepal but contradictory in the case of change in their

occupation it is shifted and changed dramatically that they mostly dependent on agriculture occupation and others. Now the ratio of involvement in agriculture has been increased at 86.67 percent and some of them also have involved in other occupations eg. teacher and aboard working labour that 6.66 percent engaged on service sector as a primary teacher, and 6.67 percent found to be gone for foreign employment as for doing labour but nobody respondent are found adopted their traditional entertaining occupation as their main occupation at the time of study. In this view, Lure has given supportive argument as

“I think in the Maoist conflict period in Nepal 1995-2005, we all faced many problem on patronage and complexity in our livelihood survival in one hand and in the other hand the period of Maoist insurgency created the feeling empiricist view in to our mind that we started to think Aba Magikhane Hoina Gari Khane Ho (work independently for survival not to be dependent) and opportunities and rights have to be grabbed against not to be accepted. Therefore it was the most key influencing factor for shifting our occupation from entertainment performer occupation to agriculture occupation and other” (L.Badi 22/10/2024[KII]).

### **State of Ownership on Land and change in Traditional Occupation**

The Badi of Panchapuri municipality of Surkhet has specially the families dependent on agriculture production. Thus, land ownership is taken as an indicator of occupational and economic change through acculturation practices. At present they have been highly affected by other higher caste community people, their occupation, economy and livelihood. The situation is happening because of changing political system after establishing democracy after 1990s and after period of Maoist insurgency from 1995 to 2005 was the landmark turning period to be aware the Badi people for shifting them in the agricultural occupation.

**Table 3**

Change in Ownership of Land

Area	Present Time (in 2024)		Before 1991	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Below 2 Ropani Land	1	6.67	0	0
3-4 Ropani Land	6	40	0	0
5-8 Ropani Land	8	53,33	0	0
Landless	0	0	15	100
Total	15	100	15	100

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The study indicates the result of the land ownership situation of Badi people living where they argued their ancestors had no ownership of land for cultivation before 1991 or forty years ago. They did not have permanent settlement and had not their own house; they used to live in the Goth of Thula-bada (ground floor of the elite and feudal house) and survive on patronage offered by them. The situation has found to be changed after establishing democracy in 1991 and started to live and occupy on public land managed by the upper caste villagers for the Badi. The majority of the

Badi have 5-8 Ropani land holding size but it is still not registered in their name. Thus, the land holding size of the Badi can be very small below as real cultivators engaging on agricultural occupation for their sustainable livelihood.

#### **Change in Income Level through the Process of Acculturation**

Income level of the Badi in the study area found changed over 40 years because the majority of respondents are engaging on agriculture as their main occupation where, their past generation had adopted entertaining profession based on patronage. The income gained from patronage was not fix, the income range used to depend on the ability of giving entertaining satisfaction to the elites ruling class upper caste people king, minister, administrative officials, Pancha-Bhaladdmi and others in different functions feast and festivals. The Badi people used to divide the villages and households of upper caste people for the purpose of collecting patronage following as Balighare Pratha (rights of collection different food grains in different seasons). Now, this patronage traditional occupational system is found to be completely changed and it is shifted in to agriculture and other occupation. The Badi people are independent to choose their own occupation by themselves for maintaining respectful social adjustment in the society however, socio-economically they cannot be able to adjust their livelihood because of the problem of small land holding size for production and occupied land by them is still remained Ailani (officially unregistered). This Ailani land of the Badi has been a problematic issue in the case of collateral evaluation and taking loan from different financial institutions for doing other economic activities.

**Table 4**  
Change in Income level

<b>Income level in RS.</b>	<b>Present in 2024</b>		<b>Before 1991</b>	
	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Not Fix and unknown	0	0	15	100
Up to 50,000	2	13.33	0	0
51,000-100,000	11	73.33	0	0
Above100,000	2	13.33	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The above table Shows the data of income level of the people of Badi that sent percent 15 households had the annual income was not fix that they are unknown about their income, only they are agree they used to perform song and dance for their survival based on patronage before 40 years but now their occupational situation and income has been changed and found to be shifted in other sectors where the 13.33 percent households have Rs 50,000 annual incomes. Similarly, 73.33 percent households have been Rs.50,000 to 100000, and only 13.33 percent have been found above the Rs. 100000. Therefore, the data of income source of the Badi has found being gradually changed in Surkhet.

### Change in the energy consumption trend through the Process of Acculturation

Acculturation practice in the livelihood of the Badi has found bringing lots of changes in the energy consumption trend in Surkhet. Cooking, lighting and heating are fundamental activities for livelihood survival; the energy consumption level also found been changed. The given table shows the changes in the change in use of domestic energy consumption level during the last 40years.

**Table 5**

Changes in the Domestic Energy Consumption Level of Badi

Types of Energy and Consumption Purpose	Present in 2024		Before 1991 (40 Years)	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Cooking Purpose	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Firewood	8	53.33	15	100
LPG gas	7	46.67	0	-
Total	15	100	15	100
Purpose for Lighting	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Using Pine Firewood for Lighting	0	0	14	93.33
<i>Tuki</i> (Lighting pot using kerosene)	0	0	1	6.67
Solar Panel	2	13.33	0	0
Electricity	13	86.67	0	0
Total	15	100	15	100

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The above table 5, Shows almost sent percent Badi respondents were dependent upon firewood for cooking and however, in lighting purposes one respondent 6.67 percent viewed they used to use *Tuki* before the last 40 years, but now the trend has been changed because 46.67 percent are dependent on LPG gas instead of firewood for cooking, and 86.67 percent has used the electricity for their purpose of lighting. It shows the impact of acculturation practice in the use of domestic energy change trend during 40 years.

### Development Infrastructure Changes

Development infrastructure is one of the most important elements of change in the livelihood strategies of people. While comparing the present with past study area Panchapuri municipality has undergone drastic change in terms of development infrastructure, Twenty years ago there was no sufficient facility of health, electricity, telephone, motorway, graveled road, education etc. related to modernization process of the Badi. But now with modern technological change all kinds of facilities like graveled wide road, nine secondary schools and a campus, one health center, electricity, telephone, mobile and modem irrigation canal have been available there. So, all these development infrastructures have contributed to change in the livelihood strategies for Badi Thapa & Subedi, 2017; Adhikari, 2020).

Thus, the change in the types of family, the structure of houses, marriage practices, feasts and festivals, languages, dress and ornaments, dances and songs of a community represent the level of

acculturation practices in the context of developing communities.

#### House Structure (Types)

The study consists of similar type of house structure supported and made by *Bipanna Barga Lai Aawas* (Habitat for Marginalized Community).

**Table 6**

Change in House Structure of Badi

Type of House Structure	Number of Household Heads in 2024	Percent in 2024	Number of Household heads Before 1991	Percent Before 1991
Not Having House	0	0	15	100
Having House (Mini Ghar)	15	100	0	0
Total	15	100	15	100

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The Badi people are found to be completely changed in their settlement pattern and structure of houses from traditional homeless condition to new permanent because all the Badi have their own homes to live. In the past before 1991, they used to live in the Goth of other upper caste people but now. They have permanent settlement found to start living in their own homes. Thus, having permanent settlement in their own homes is a key indicator for changing livelihood of the Badi due to the influence of acculturation practices among them in Surkhet.

#### Types of Family

In the past Badi people had found to live in a joint and extended family. But nowadays, they prefer to live in nuclear families. On the basis of the study, the family type has been changed from joint to nuclear.

**Table 7**

Family Type of Badi

Family Type	In 2024	Percent	Before 1991	Percent
Nuclear	15	100	0	100
Joint and Extended	0	0	15	0
Total	15	100	15	100

Source: Participant Interview, 2024

The study shows the impact of acculturation in the structure of the Badi family during the period of forty years in the study area because it is found that their family structure has been changed in the area. Sent percent people of the Badi have been found being agree that they lived in joint family structure before 1991, but now contradictly, all of the 100 percent they live in the nuclear family structure in the study area.

## **Change in Socio-Cultural Aspect: Marriage Practice, Feast and Festivals, Language, Dress, through Acculturation Practices**

The Badi have their own language Badi *Kham Bhasa* ‘Khamsi’ however, they use to speak Nepali well to communicate other people in the society and also found similarity in dress and tradition with Khas Aarya community (Shrestha, 2015). Thus, they had the traditional own Dancing and singing profession however, it has been changed disappearing during the period of forty years (Pandey, 2018). In this sense of understanding the issue Jiban spoke as

“In our community, the common age for marriage to girl ranges from 16-19 years and for boys ranges from 18-22 years. I think, this changing situation in marriage practice can be the result of increasing awareness and socializing practices among us particularly in new generation. Similarly in the context of the celebration feasts and festivals, we have similarity to other non-Badi people” (J. Badi, 22/10/2024).

From this view of Jiban the socio-cultural aspects and marriage practice of the Badi is also found gradually shifting from community restricted arranged marriage to love marriage. Thus, the Badi in the study area have the well unity and they have gradually changed their life style; mixed up with other communities and trying to shift from traditional occupational livelihood to agriculture and other sector occupations (Thapa, 2020).

### **Discussion**

The key findings shows that there is a decline in skill-based jobs related to traditional entertaining occupation among the Badi in Surkhet, accompanied by substantial occupation change through the process of acculturation. In the past, the Badi community earned their livelihood through singing, dancing, and crafting traditional musical and cultural instruments through a patronage system. They had enough food/meals for survival, which assured continuity in dependency and caste-based hierarchy (Action Aid Nepal, 2001; Thapa & Khanal, 2019). After the 1990s, political transformations, increased awareness among the community about their rights, and lack of access to equal opportunities through the patronage system motivated the community to leave this occupation. They shifted exclusively to agriculture, services, and foreign employment. Other similar research shows that modernization and advancements in modern technologies related to entertaining have also marginalizes skills and make them economically ineffective (Pandey, 2018). Education has been quite effective in this regard as it has improved community awareness and empowered the community to make occupations as per choice, challenging traditional caste-based occupations and the need for dignity and independence (Shrestha, 2015).

Along with occupational transformation, the data also shows that there are other livelihood and socio-cultural changes that indicate substantial processes of acculturation. The change in landlessness to partial land access, homelessness to long-term housing, and joint family to nuclear family shows structural changes in livelihood practices. Although land-related economic vulnerabilities is still exist having not registered officially (Thapa and Subedi, 2017; Adhikari, 2020). The change in the pattern of earnings, energy use, marriage, and life habits further reflects their integration into the mainstream socio-economic order. However, caste-based discrimination affects occupation, as Badi people deliberately try to not be engaged in entertainment occupations to save themselves from humiliation and disrespected derogatory stigma of their traditional

occupation. Findings indicate that although acculturation has enhanced social status and independence, land support and capacity-building and favorable economic incorporation are the need of the hour for secure livelihood security of the Badi people.

### Conclusion

Acculturation practice in shifting traditional occupational livelihood of the Badi is the “first micro-level acculturation study of Badi in Surkhet”. Acculturation brought lots of changes to the Badi in socialization and modernization during over the period of forty years in Surkhet. The satisfactory level of data on educational status among the Participants shows the better result of socialization for new and sustainable socio-economic adjustment in the society. Acculturation practices in the occupational aspect of the Badi people has been found greatly influenced that it is completely shifted their previous traditional entertaining profession mostly into agriculture as their main occupation. All the informants argued, they have found completely leave to sing and dance however, six participants 40 percent of the Badi people are found to be involved partially in making entertaining professional products using traditional skill for generating their alternative source of income in the family. Mostly they make Madal to sell on the basis of community demand. Income level, settlement, family structure, level of energy consumption trend, structure of house, language, culture, customs, feast and festivals, marriage system, and other livelihood components. Therefore, the Badi in Surkhet have been found acculturated and modernized. However, different institutional supports are found insufficient because the supports mostly emphasizing on securing their basic needs and rights not in promoting and modernize the traditional skill of the Badi community in Nepal. Thus, this research will be beneficial to understand the influence of acculturation practices on the occupational shift of Badi community in Surkhet for further researchers and in the aspects of related policy formulation.

### References

Action Aid Nepal. (2001). *A marginalised group: Listening to Badi community.* [https://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc\\_lib/117\\_1\\_marginalised\\_badi.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/117_1_marginalised_badi.pdf)

Adhikari, K. (2020). *Infrastructure development and its impact on rural livelihoods: A case study of Panchapuri Municipality, Nepal.* *Journal of Rural Development*, 25(3), 45-60.

Bhandari, P. (2012). *The Badi community: History, culture, and transformation in Nepal.* Kathmandu: Social Science Research Council.

Bista, D. B. (1990). *Fatalism and development.* Orient Longman.

Bista, D. B. (1991). *People of Nepal* (2nd ed.). Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

Caplan, A. P. (1970). *Priest and cobbler: A study of social change in a Hindu village in Western Nepal.* Chandler Publishing Company.

Caplan, A. P. (1972). *Priest and cobbler: A study of social change in a Hindu village in Western Nepal.* Chandler Publishing Company.

Caplan, L. (1970). *The social structure of Nepal.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Central Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *National population and housing census 2011 (National Report).* Government of Nepal.

Central Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *National population and housing census 2021 (National Report)*. Government of Nepal.

Government of Nepal, National Dalit Commission (N.NDC). (2003). *An introduction*. National Dalit Commission.

Guru, G. (2002). How egalitarian are the social sciences in India? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(50), 5003-500.

HMG/N.NDC (2060), *An Introduction, National Dalit's Commission*, Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Hofer, A. (1976). *The caste system and the state in Nepal: A study of the Muluki Ain of 1854*. Innsbruck University Press.

Hofer, A. (1976). *The Badi and their social status: A study of caste and occupational structure in Nepal*. *Journal of Nepalese Studies*, 3(1), 110-120.

Municipality Profile (2017). *Profile of Panchapuri Municipality, Surkhet*.

Nepal, S. (2015). *Caste and socio-economic transformation in Nepal*. Nepal Publishing House.

Pandey, S. (2018). Transformations in traditional occupations: A case study of the Badi community in Nepal. *Asian Cultural Review*, 15(2), 45-56.

Rai, P. R. (2021). Social exclusion of Badi: A study of Krishnapur municipality, far-western province of Nepal. *IAR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(2), 1-16.

Sharma, M. R. (2015). *Social structure and the caste system in Nepal: A historical perspective*. Kathmandu: Nepal Academic Press.

Sharma, S. R. (2016). *Acculturation and modernization: Socio-economic impact on marginalized groups in Nepal*. *Journal of Social Change*, 10(2), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jsc.2016.0123>

Sharma, P. R. (2018). *Cultural traditions and socio-economic dynamics of the Badi community in Nepal*. Kathmandu University Press.

Shrestha, R. (2015). Cultural adaptation and language use among ethnic communities in Nepal. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 24(3), 213-225.

Subedi, N. P. (2021). Occupational change and socio-economic status of Dalit communities in Kaski. *Janapriya Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 10(1), 95-106.

Thapa, L. (2020). Social unity and occupational shifts: A historical analysis of the Badi community. *Global Anthropology*, 7(1), 98-110.

Thapa, S., & Subedi, R. (2017). *Modernization and its effects on the socio-economic status of indigenous communities in Nepal*. *Nepalese Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(1), 23-38.

Thapa, S., & Khanal, R. (2019). *The role of traditional occupations in rural economies: A case study of the Badi people*. *Journal of Social and Cultural Studies*, 12(3), 145-160.

Thorat, S., & Newman, K. S. (2010). *Blocked by caste: Economic discrimination in modern India*. Oxford University Press.

UNDP. (2023). *Report of the task force on the development and upliftment of the Badi community of Karnali Province*. United Nations Development Programme. <https://www.undp.org/nepal/>