Cultural Identity of the Khambu Community of Nepal and its Transformation

Ram Kumar Rai
Ph.D. Scholar
Central Department of History
Tribhuvan University
Email-rairamkumar2037@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the shifting cultural identity of the Khambu community in Nepal, focusing on the nature, causes, and consequences of this change. The research highlights the risk of the Khambu identity fading and aims to understand both historical and current cultural practices. It examines how cultural identity has evolved, identifying key factors driving this shift. Using cultural identity theory, the study assesses the benefits and challenges of these transformations. A qualitative, interpretivist approach guides the research, prioritizing the lived experiences and perspectives of Khambu individuals. Ethnographic methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis are employed to gather rich and meaningful data. By engaging directly with community members, cultural leaders, and practitioners, the study captures the nuanced expressions of identity and the tensions caused by change.The research interprets cultural shifts through a context-sensitive lens, considering both external forces, such as modernization, migration, and government policies, and internal factors like generational changes and evolving community values. It offers insights into how Khambu traditions are maintained, adapted, or abandoned over time. Finally, the study provides recommendations to help preserve and strengthen Khambu cultural identity in the face of rapid change. Through its findings, it contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural identity theory and the resilience of indigenous traditions in contemporary society.

Keywords: Pachha, samet, khamwapu, mundhums, suptulung, khambungwa

Introduction

One of the ethnic groups, the Khambu, has been known to have unique qualities that have enabled them to be divided into different local groups with similar social structures and cultural practices. Clear social and cultural distinctions have been identified between the various subgroups (Campbell, 1840). It has been said that the word "Khambu" has come from the words "land," "khambungwa," and "khamwapu," which have been translated to "sons of the soil" (Bantawa, 2058). A person's self-concept has been shaped in part by their culture, and as new experiences have been had, people's sense of self has been changed in response to culture (Lusting, 2013).

The development of the Mundhum religion and communal identity has been seen to have coincided with the maturation of the Khambu ethnic group. A part of the Khambu community's cultural identity has been Chula Dhunga, also known as Teen Chula, the "Suptulung," or "the three hearth-made stones" (Bantawa, 2058). In Nepal, a long-standing tradition of Khambu, a unique ethnic identity, has existed (Pradhan, 1991). Kirat, Rai, Yakkha, Yamfu, Lohrung, Athpahariya, Walung, Mewahang, Danuwar, Sunuwar, Jirel, Hayu, Thami, Baram, Danuwar, Surel, Chepang, Majhi, and so on have been used as other names for its community. The worship of Mundhum civilization deities like Same, Sammeling, and Tinchula has revealed their connection to the Khambu people (Imehang, 2008). Kirat people from other cultures have been named after their personalities by Aryans, who have referred to them as Anaryas (Acharya, 2070).

The Khambu have not been considered a single entity (thar), but rather a federation of clans that have been further divided into "samait" (class) and "pachha" (lineage). It has been unknown how many Khambu clan divisions there are, though many academics have proposed that there have been a lot of sub-groups. To explain the origin of the clan and the social customs associated with it, each Khambu clan has had its own oral history, myth, or story (Hogdson, 1858). These communities' evolving dimension has been reflected.

The Khambu have been followers of the Mundhum religion since ancient times, with animistic nature and ancestor worship having served as its cornerstones. A hierarchy has not been created within the religion. In their sacred ceremonies, ethnic shamans from the Nakchong, Mangpa, Dowang, and Nakso tribes have been employed by the Khambu (Bantawa, 2058). The Khambu have progressively assimilated Rai, Kirat, and cultural tenets of other major world religions they have come across, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Lamaism. This is the way that the Khambu communities' cultural identities have been evolving (KNF, 2009).

Cultural identities have been recognised as dynamic, essential to a person's sense of self, and existing within a social framework that has been constantly changing (Hutapea, 2020). The cultural identity of the Khambu people in Nepal has been examined in the context of evolving trends, delving deeply into the intricate nature of Khambu culture, identity, and its dynamic aspects. The principal god of all Khambu has been Teen Chula (Suptulung), the name of the house's three stone ovens made over a hearth (Chemjong, 2003).

Since it has been referred to as the stone, the suffix "lu" or "lung" has been found in most household oven names. The majority of ceremonies, ranging from birth to burial, have been conducted on the sacred Teen Chula, which has been considered the gateway to the real, everyday life of the Khambu people. A "Teen Chula" (Suptulung) has been buried on one side of the interior corner of every Khambu home (Rai, 2011).

The study has examined the complex process of Khambu ethnic recognition and the possible "systemic error" that has resulted in the false belief that the ethnic group has been merely a policy category subject to political manipulation. It has focused on the history, culture, and evolving trends of the Khambu community in Nepal. One ethnic group that has been divided into different local groups with similar social structures and shared cultural traits is the Khambu. These groups have had unique characteristics (Subba, 1999). It has been unknown how many Khambu clan divisions there are, though many academics have proposed that there have been a lot of sub-groups. To explain the origin of the clan and the social customs associated with it, each Khambu clan has had its oral history, myth, or story (Rai, 2008). This study has aimed to analyse the cultural identity of the Khambu community and its evolving trends, as well as the effects these trends have had on both the Khambu communities and Nepalese society from a social and cultural standpoint.

Methodology

Based on a review of earlier works, nearly all researchers and writers have brought up, looked into, and analyzed historical and cultural issues in their work. In this field of study, no substantial scholarly investigations into the social, cultural, and evolving trends of the Khambu people have been encountered by me. Thus, it has been an attempt to present the information and facts regarding the problem of cultural identity and shifting trends and conduct a critical analysis. The article's philosophy has been interpretivism, and the socioculturally evolving nature of Nepalese Khambu communities has served as its ontology. Knowledge about their community and evolving trends has served as epistemology, and the effects of these changes have been considered axiological. Both primary and secondary data sources have been used in its preparation; the primary sources have been what have given the documents their final form. The paper's methodological approach has been qualitative.

Discussion

Cultural changing trends and the khambu community

The various tangible and intangible cultures that have been adopted by people around the world appear to be global in scope and have been subject to temporal and situational variations. Development, progress, adaptation, migration, diffusion, urbanisation, industrialisation, renewal, revolution, modernisation, westernisation, culturalization, self-realization, and other significant factors have been considered particularly significant in the transformation of culture. Therefore, cultural changes have been defined as modifications to human behaviour, relationships, and interactions with the values, beliefs, traditions, customs, laws, arts, ethics, and other constructs that have been created to meet their needs. Culture has been dynamic in this sense, having evolved through time. There have been two categories of culture: intangible and tangible.

Human culture began to emerge about 2.5 million years ago. Fundamentally, cultural studies have been based on the tools that prehistoric people have used to survive. In a similar vein, archaeological findings have indicated that the origins of iconography, jeweller design, and painting have dated back 35,000 years (Burkitt, 1992). Rituals related to birth, marriage, and death have progressively evolved since then. Tangible and intangible cultures have been intimately related to one another, or have been interdependent. Tangible culture has been easy to accept, but intangible culture has been difficult to accept.

Although it has appeared that people have been reluctant to adopt technology-related beliefs and practices against their will, the tangible cultural heritage of their communities has been gradually altered by people. It has appeared that new institutions, norms, beliefs, and values have been created through processes of abstract cultural value competition and organization (Subba, 2056). In essence, values have shaped the traditional cultural structure. According to anthropologist Julian Steward, cultural shifts have resulted from adaptations made to the environment and technology (Steward, 1968). Similarly, another anthropologist, Leslie White, has argued that technology and energy have developed according to the strategy of cultural adaptation to the environment (White, 1949). Anthropologist Ember has similarly claimed that renewal, diffusion, cultural adoption, revolution, and adaptation, among other factors, have been responsible for traditional cultural change (Ember, 1995). Similarly, the critical theory that modern movements like the peace, environmental, and homosexual movements have been crucial to

cultural transformation has been the basis for the definition of cultural change (Adam & Sydie, 2002).

According to Peter M. Blame, social structure and other changes have required mobility as a prerequisite. However, homogenous relations have been strengthened in the absence of intra-caste or inter-group relations, which have been incompatible with structural change. Caste discrimination in this context has fostered intra-caste relationships while undermining inter-caste relationships. Professional standing and status disparities have also been present in institutions, education, and other assets (Blam, 1976). Since these movements have primarily concerned the direction of people's living standards, self-realisation, and values, they have basically appeared to be distinct from the nature of labour and capital and class struggle. According to Rishikesh Regmi, globalisation, development, and diffusion of culture have all had an impact on cultural change (Regmi, 2007). It has been mentioned that critical theory has been crucial in influencing the community's social and cultural components (Abraham, 2004).

Yogendra Singh has presented an alternative viewpoint on social and cultural transformation. Recognizing modernisation as a cultural belief, Singh (1978) has argued that logical development, a sovereign viewpoint, empathy, a scientific worldview, and advancements in human technology have all contributed to cultural change. The anthropologist Srinivas has contended that modernisation has not been a neutral term and that the field of knowledge, values, and attitudes, as well as physical, cultural, and social institutions, have all been considered the foundation for cultural change (Srinivas, 1977). Cultural change has also been specifically influenced by migration. Specifically, the process of social and cultural change has been significantly influenced by migration in search of opportunities (Curaan & Saguy, 2000).

It has been mentioned that changes in the social and cultural structure will have occurred due to changes in values, traditions, technology, and profession (Burnett, 1942). Similarly, cultural interdependence has contributed to the alteration of the cultural structure. Acculturation has actually been the process by which various cultural groups have modified their native cultures and absorbed characteristics from one another as a result of their interactions (Lange, 1965). According to Merton, conflict has arisen from the disparities in values and interests that have existed within a society, which have been the basis of that society. Furthermore, because conflict has been a topic of historical development in sociological literature, conflict has had a beneficial role in society's

development, particularly in the social, economic, and political transformation of society (Merton, 1976).

After the perspectives of different anthropologists have been examined, it has been concluded that cultural transformation is a complex process. Though it cannot be connected to a single value, modernisation has occasionally been leveraged to bring about improvements. Almost all Western nations seem to have been the birthplace of the modern educational system, democracy, industrial advancement, modern technology, etc., that have existed in the world today. Nepali society has undergone a number of social and cultural transformations following the 2007 political upheavals. In actuality, Nepal's social and cultural landscape has been changed as a result of the collapse of the Rana dynasty, the British defeat and independence of India, Nepal's ties to the outside world, and modern education.

A major factor in the promotion of a single language and culture has been the Ekbhasha-Ekbhesh Panchayat policy, which has been brought about by the political shift of 2017. However, this panchayati policy has led to attempts to supplant other ethnic cultures. With the dissolution of the panchayat, the political shift of 2046 has contributed to the creation of an open and free society. Following this, groups with ties to different tribal tribes have been founded in an effort to institutionalise the culturalism and identity slogan. The fundamental rights of Nepal's castes appear to have been somewhat governed by the "Constitution of Nepal 2047."

Ethnicity and identity have become major issues after the then-government has established the National Tribal Development Committee in 2054. Cultural pluralism has been accepted as the acceptance of one another's cultures by all social groups, including small ones that have embraced their own customs and ways of life without discrimination (Subba, 2056). The 2047 constitution has adopted the policy of preserving the customs of various castes and tribes; in other words, the constitution has aimed to integrate tribes and tribal people into the mainstream process of nation-building. It seems to have had some influence on efforts to integrate the various castes that have called the nation home. It has made particular efforts to advance and defend the castes' and mother tongues' fundamental rights. The development of harmony, equanimity, coexistence, and brotherhood over caste religion has thus been aided by the 2047 constitution. The people's movement of 2062–2063 has helped Nepal establish a republic, which has made it possible for the country to successfully implement the Nepal–2072 Constitution. In essence, this constitution has

placed a special emphasis on the inclusiveness principle. Bringing castes into the mainstream has become imperative for those who have been falling behind in all areas, including the government bureaucracy in Nepal.

In this sense, it has become evident that studying cultural shifts does not limit the subject of culture to a specific location or group of people. It appears that cultural changes have occurred as a result of processes such as development, progress, adaptation, migration, diffusion, urbanisation, industrialisation, new exploration, political revolution, modernisation, westernisation, culturalization, adoption of Para culture, etc. since it has been constantly changing over time. The phrase "transformation from traditional culture to new culture" has described the ongoing changes that have taken place in the tangible and intangible heritage cultures that have been developed by humans since the beginning of time in order to meet their needs.

Change-related factors

The social landscape has been ever-evolving. This has also attracted the Khambu community. The Khambu community has been open to change, even though they seem to have been traditionalists in some aspects of their social and cultural practices. In this way, a few references have seemed to head towards modernity, while others have remained more traditional.

Migration and others

The aforementioned Khambu community has appeared to have had a migration trend since antiquity. A reason for the need behind migration has been identified. It seems that migration for survival has occurred following the ancient population growth. A new language, as well as several distinct Khambu cultural processes, have been created as a result of this migration. Any group or individual in particular has experienced a change in culture and social structure during this process for a variety of reasons. The Khambu community, as previously mentioned, has migrated across the nation for a variety of reasons. It seems that poles have been set up everywhere, and this has been the state of affairs. In the Khambu community, migration has been the primary topic of change. As a result, various names have been used for them throughout the ages, including Jimi, Rai, Kirat, Dewan, Yakkha, and Sunuwar. The relationships with individuals, the ruling classes, and other religious communities have been considered the primary cause of this.

In a similar vein, the following factors have also contributed to the cultural shifts within the Khambu community, which have impacted the social order as well:

1. Intercultural Relationships

   Exposure to and interaction with other ethnic groups have led to the blending of traditions, beliefs, and social practices, gradually influencing the Khambu cultural framework.

2. Education

   Increased access to formal education has broadened perspectives, particularly among the younger generation, often leading to a reevaluation of traditional values and identities.

3. Allure to Other Countries

   Migration for work, education, and better living standards abroad has introduced Khambu individuals to global cultures, resulting in the adoption of new lifestyles and a partial detachment from indigenous practices.

4. Advancements in Communication and Transportation

   Improved infrastructure has enabled greater mobility and connectivity, making it easier for community members to access diverse influences and experiences beyond their traditional settings.

5. Public Policy

   Government policies on ethnicity, language, education, and development have had both direct and indirect effects on cultural preservation and transformation within the Khambu community.

6. Development of Tourism

   Tourism has brought economic opportunities, but also led to the commercialization and reinterpretation of Khambu cultural symbols, sometimes altering their original meanings.

7. The Function of the Global Society

   The pressures and trends of globalization have encouraged a shift towards modern, cosmopolitan identities, which may conflict with or overshadow indigenous cultural values.

8. Shift in Politics

Changes in political structures and leadership—especially regarding ethnic representation—have impacted how cultural identities are expressed, recognized, and maintained.

9. NGOs' Function

Non-governmental organizations working in development and empowerment often introduce new social models and value systems that may support or challenge traditional Khambu practices.

Cultural shifts within the community of Khambu

A society founded on linguistic, religious, social, economic, and cultural equality is what the Constitution of Nepal-2047 has envisioned. The fundamental objective of the country's constitution at the time has been to preserve wealth and sound governance by addressing social justice issues and reducing inequality and discrimination. Numerous attempts have been undertaken to put equality, health, education, language, religion, and culture into practice as fundamental rights of citizens.

To strengthen coordination-based national unity and include all castes and tribes in nationalism's broader advancement, cultural diversity has been addressed and protected. Consequently, unique provisions for work, healthcare, and education have been made, which have helped to elevate the tribespeople.

The "Constitution of Nepal-2047" has bestowed powers that have been implemented through the establishment of special commissions and institutions. The "National Tribal Development Committee" had been founded on June 23, 2054, by the then-government of 'Sri Panch', specifically for the general development of the tribal tribes (Adhikari, 2057). The committee that was established in this manner has completed the task of cataloguing all of the nation's tribal tribes. Simultaneously, the ancient Khambu tribe has been identified as the Kirat Rai tribal group. The state's one-language-one policy has limited tribal people's rights to practise their religion, language, and culture, particularly within the panchayat system. As a result, it seems that the essential work for the documentation and cultural preservation of tribal peoples has not been completed. The Khambu community has been known by various titles prior to 2047, including Jimi, Kirat in certain locations, Rai, Karta, Matha, Dewan, and Majhia. However, the 2046 people's

movement has given every caste and community a significant chance to write about themselves and reveal who they are.

Simultaneously, the Khambu caste, referred to by the aforementioned appellations, has attempted to assert their initial identity as Khambu from diverse perspectives. Following that, the Khambu community, which now resides across the nation, has begun identifying as Khambu and referring to themselves as such.

Culture has been the social transformation process. Members of society have been both users and carriers of culture. Cultural shifts have occurred in society on a regular, organic, and sometimes spontaneous basis. A number of factors, including natural disasters, politics, the use of science and technology in the classroom, employment abroad, foreign employment, legal changes and modernisation, and other diverse causes, have contributed to partial or complete cultural shifts. The Khambu community's culture does not appear to have been exempt from this influence. The significant changes in their tangible and intangible cultural aspects have now been discussed within the previously mentioned context.

Shifts in the embodied culture

The Khambu community's tangible and intangible cultural heritage has gradually changed for a variety of reasons. Particularly in regards to the modifications of cultural legacy, contemporary development, the application of building techniques, contemporary educational framework, modifications of legislation, modifications of politics, dissemination of culture, westernisation, re-culturalization, political revolution, economic capitalism, migration, political disputes, advancements in science and technology, etc., have been the primary causes. The Khambu community's numerous tangible and intangible cultural legacies have been changed as a result of these foundations. Furthermore, internal ancient migration has been the primary cause of the shift in the Khambu community's cultural assets. Other contemporary factors include employment abroad, the hotel and tourism industry, different sources of income, and the modern lifestyle of the Khambu community, including food, costumes, and information technology. They have played a unique role.

The eastern region of present-day Nepal has been the centre of the traditional original culture and heritage of the Khambu community since ancient times. As it is a religious,

educational, and cultural place of pilgrimage, it seems that the art related to Mundhum has been built in this area. The Khambu community has played an important role in the preservation of these traditional heritages. However, it appears that the traditional and cultural heritage of the Khambu community, which has left the main area to seek opportunities elsewhere, has gradually changed over time. Khotang, Bhojpur, and other districts have been designated as the study centers for this research in order to compare the cultural changes that have occurred between the Khambu community in Khotang and the Khambu community that has migrated to other areas and developed into a different breed, language, and culture.

Examples of how the Khambus' physical culture has changed.

Changes in language and ethnicity**:** Due to the migration from Khambu to Bantwa, Chamling, Thulung, Kulung, Bahing, etc., a dozen new castes have been created. They have also created a language of their own. However, it seems that culture and Khambu Mundhum have formed the foundation of rituals. After the unification of Nepal, dozens of surnames such as Rai, Dewan, Jimi, Athapaharia, etc., have been formed based on the title of Kiptia. Among them, it has been found that the whole Khambu community has been called Rai. After the unification of Nepal, the name Kirat has been used to refer to Rai, Limbu. It seems that after the creation of Three Kirat (near, middle, and pallo Kirat) as administrative units, the word Kirat has started to be used more. In fact, the word Kirat has been a term used by Aryas to refer to non-Aryas (Acharya, 2007). Similarly, there have been other changes. That is, changes in clothing, changes in hinges, jewelry, food, installation of Tin-chula, construction of houses, traditional weapons, different names of Kul-pitri, and different names of rituals. However, regardless of caste differences, it seems that the basis of culture for all of them has been Mundhum and Tin-Chula, so it can be proven that all of them are the Khambu descendants of Khambuhang (Bantawa, 2058).

Changes in the abstract culture of the Khambus

Abstract culture has been developed along with human development. Abstract culture has been centred on the emotions of the human community. Intangible cultural heritage has been playing an important role in building the outlook towards life and the world. Intangible cultural

heritage has been created as a special presentation while expressing feelings of faith, belief, value, recognition, hope, disappointment, joy, surprise, happiness, sorrow, grief, etc., which have arisen in the human mind. Language used to communicate feelings, music, and special activities expressed in religious and cultural rituals have been the basis of abstract culture. Environment, environment, time, and geography have played a special role in the creation of abstract culture. Culture has been changing. Due to war, conflict, politics, the modern education system, changes in environment and environment, culturalization, migration, natural disasters, urbanization, modern lifestyle, etc., changes have been observed in traditional beliefs, values, beliefs, and ideals, i.e., intangible cultural heritage.

The reasons mentioned above have played an important role in the gradual change in the religious and cultural aspects of the Khambu community, i.e., the intangible cultural heritage. In particular, the changes in the intangible cultural heritage of the Khambu community living in the eastern region of Nepal have been compared and discussed below.

Language, script, and others

The language spoken by the Khambu community has been called Khambuyang. The script used by the Khambu community has not been clarified. Research has been going on to determine whether the current Srijanga script is the Khambu script, but it has been found that the Khambu script has been used separately in other places. Nowadays, due to various reasons, the language and script of the Khambu community have changed. Due to indifference towards their own language and culture, encroachment of foreign culture, para-culturalization, migration, transportation, etc., the language and script of the Khambu community have been changed. In addition to that, due to internal and external influences, including mixing and contact with other linguistic communities, their mother tongue and script have been stopped being used (group discussion date 2077.10.24). But it seems that the Khambu community has preferred Nepali and English languages and Devanagari and Roman scripts instead of their mother tongue. Originally, Nepali language was the language of Rajkaz, so it was intended to be spoken. Due to the modern education system and urbanization, English language has become their priority. Similarly, a big change seems to have occurred in other areas as well. Religious festivals, marriage rites, death rites, family structure, Kipat management, education system, musical instrument materials, treatment methods, knowledge, and skills, etc., have changed.

Conclusion

Culture has been an important foundation of a nation. The culture of the various castes and tribes within the country has become the national culture. A national culture with a long cultural history has carried the history of civilization. Culture has been the basis for measuring how prosperous any country is. The culture of the Khambu community, which has been an ancient community, has played an important role in building the national culture. The language, religion, culture, and civilization related to the culture of the Khambu community have strengthened their identity. The Khambu civilization, which has had a long history, has played an important role in preserving the world and culture on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has played a historical role in connecting Nepal-India relations. Written, oral, and archaeological sources have proven the history and culture of the Khambu community. Folk music, folk drama, myth literature, and acting performances have proven the identity of the Khambu community. Musical and acting performances related to Mundhum, religious rituals connected with daily life, etc., have expressed the world view of the Khambu community. Cultural and technological tools, linguistic traditions, scripts, and other tangible and intangible cultural heritage dimensions have been the basis of worldview. Mundhum Darshan has been the basis of the way of life of the Khambu community. Especially in religious, social, and cultural rituals from birth to death, Mundhum Darshan has had a special importance. Likewise, Mundhum Darshan has had a great impact on traditional treatment methods, beliefs, values, etc. Religious and cultural heritage, social heritage, food technology, clothing-jewelry, hospitality, Guthi system, judicial system, traditional agricultural technology, Mundhum-music, cosmetics, and decorative items have had their unique identity. But in recent times, due to various reasons, there has been a change in the status of the Khambu community. In fact, due to migration, conflicts, floods, earthquakes, modern influence, modern education system, influence of western culture, indifference and ignorance towards their own culture, inter-caste marriage, discriminatory policies of the state, foreign employment, etc., the original culture of the Khambu community has been in crisis.

In fact, Khambu has been a shortened version of the terms Khambek, Khambungwa, and Khamwapu. Khambek means earth, Khambungwa means first human, and Khambapu means "earth master." (Bantawa, 2058). Khambu is a very old and distinct ethnic identity. Khambuwan is the historical geography of the Khambu ethnic group (Sampang, 2005). In current times, who are

also known as Kirat, the Rai, Yakkha, Yamfu, Lohrung, Athpahariya, Walung, Mewahang, Danuwar, Sunuwar, Jirel, Hayu, Majhi, etc., clans are still considered Khambu today. The worship of these deities as Same, Sammeling, and Tinchula, or the Mundhum civilization, reveals their relationship (Imehang, 2008). Aryas have been revealed to have referred to this group as Kirat, who speak a language that is unintelligible to them (Acharya, 2070). Aryas used to call people from other cultures Anarya and name them after their personalities.

The Kirata Kingdom in Sanskrit literature and Hindu mythology has referred to any kingdom of the Kirata people, who have lived largely in the Himalayas (particularly the eastern Himalayas). They have fought in the Kurukshetra War alongside the Parvatas (mountaineers) and other Himalayan tribes (Kirata Kingdom, 2023). The Kambojas, Gandharas, Kiratas, and Barbaras have been named as northern tribes together at Mahabharat (12,206). The Yavanas, Kiratas, Gandharvas, Chinas, Savaras, Barbaras, Sakas, Tusharas, Kankas, Pathavas, Andhras, Madrakas, Paundras, Pulindas, Ramathas, and Kamvojas have been named as tribes outside the realms of Aryavarta. The Aryavarta kings have had reservations about engaging with them (Karat Kingdom, 2023). On this premise, it has been thought that the Khambus were given the name Kirat as well (Acharya, 1970).

The term Kirat has appeared in several different contexts in ancient Hindu literature. The first Kirat term has been mentioned in the Rig Veda. However, instead of 'kirat', the term 'kilat' has been used. Secondly, the use of the word Kirat has been found in the Yajur Veda. Thirdly, the word Kirat has also been used in the Atharva Veda (Atharva Bed, 10/4/14). Aside from that, the term Kirat has appeared in the Upanishads, Smriti, and Puranas, among other places. However, the name Kirat mentioned in these manuscripts cannot be linked to the Khambu people of Nepal. Because the castes specified in Hindu scriptures, like the Kirat caste, have been referenced in many Hindustan locations (Deep, 2021). They are not at all like Nepal's current Rai, Limbu, or Khambu communities.

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