



SHANTI JOURNAL: A Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
Print ISSN: 2961 * 1601 E-ISSN: 2961-161x
ejournal Site: www.nepjol.info/index.php/shantij
• Peer-Reviewed, Open access Journal
• Indexed in Nepjol



BISHWA SHANTI
CHIRAN-MILAN CAMPUS
URL:
www.bishwashanticampus.edu.np

Nomadic Lifestyle and Sustainable Livelihood Practices of the Raute

Lok Bahadur Oli, Assistant Professor
Rural Development Department,
Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal

Artical History: Submitted 15 September **Reviewed** 28 September **Revised** 6 October
Corresponding Author: Lok Bahadur Oli **E-mail:** olilok535@gmail.com

Copyright ©2023 Author(s) This open access article is distributed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC 4.0\) License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



Abstract

The study highlights the significance of the Raute community, their unique traditional lifestyle, and the challenges they have faced with. It emphasizes the importance of protecting and supporting marginalized communities like the Raute, as well as the need for equitable development. The main objective of the study is to identify the traditional livelihood practices of the Raute tribe in Nepal. The research was carried out in different districts but was focused on the Raute tribe from Gurans Rural Municipality of karnali province in Nepal. This study used descriptive research techniques to look at quantitative and qualitative data from 149 people between the ages of 18 and 65. Purposive sampling was used to interview 70 Raute people in this age group as well as the Raute leader (Mukhiya). To validate qualitative findings, primary and secondary sources were used, as well as informal conversations took place with key persons of local authorities. The study revealed that the Raute tribe, which consists of 149 people and has 48 percent women, frequently shifts their dwellings and uses building materials from the forest. They rely on government assistance and forest preservation activities for income because they lack formal education and employment. Child marriage, dangerous deliveries, a lack of awareness about family planning, and a dependence on conventional medicine are all causes for concern. The Karnali Province has taken steps to preserve Raute culture, however due to environmental changes, poverty and a lack of jobs still exist.

Keywords: Nomadic, Livelihood, tribe, marginalized, cultural heritage, unique, lifestyle, forest resource, Sustainable.

Introduction

Nepal is a country known for its rich diversity in geography and culture. Its varied landscapes have given rise to different communities, each with unique rituals, languages, and ways of life. Among these diverse communities, the Raute stand out as an indigenous group residing in South Asia. The Raute people have a distinctive lifestyle, being fully reliant on forests and their resources. As a tribal community, they hold a special place in Nepal's cultural tapestry and have been officially recognized by the Government of Nepal (SOSEC Nepal, 2018).

The Raute community's traditional way of life revolves around subsistence hunting, with a focus on langur and macaque monkeys. Additionally, they gather wild forest tubers, fruits, and greens regularly to sustain themselves. In order to obtain grain, iron, cloth, and jewelry, the Raute people skillfully craft wooden bowls and boxes, which they then trade with local farmers for essential food supplies. Notably, they do not engage in the sale of other forest products, bush meat, or forest medicinal plants. Despite their historical significance and unique cultural identity, the Raute community's population is facing challenges. Their numbers have been dwindling, and at the time of identity card distribution, there were only 149 Raute individuals left out of an estimated population of 650.

The Raute people refer to themselves as “basisthanemanche,” signifying their deep connection to the forests of western Nepal. This term conveys that they are the original inhabitants of the region, emphasizing their indigenous roots and identity. By using this descriptor, the Raute community seeks to highlight their distinctiveness and assert their place as an integral part of Nepal's diverse cultural landscape. As a matter of social justice, it is essential that marginalized sections of society, such as the tribal communities in Nepal, receive protection and preferential treatment to support their progress and development. Throughout history, the tribal groups in Nepal have endured exploitation, discrimination, and social exclusion, dating back to Vedic times. The constitutional framework of Nepal aims to create an egalitarian society, ensuring equity for all individuals without any form of discrimination based on religion, race, sex, or place of birth. The protection and empowerment of weaker sections of society, including the Raute community, form the essence of this constitutional principle.

The Raute community has chosen to settle in Dailekh due to the abundance of forests that provide them with timber for crafting wooden items, which they use for their livelihood. Additionally, the forests yield medicinal herbs, which the Raute people use to treat physical injuries and minor illnesses. While they roam across regions like Dailekh, Surkhet, Accham, Salyan, and Dang, the Raute tend to stay in one location for a

maximum of three to four months, unless there is a specific reason to migrate. When they do migrate, they cover distances reachable by foot within three to four hours, carrying their belongings along with them, except for those assigned to assist the elderly during the journey. Remarkably, the Raute people do not use any means of transportation during their migrations, adhering to their traditional way of life and connection with the land.

Therefore, Nepal's diversity in geography and culture has led to the existence of various communities, each with its own distinct identity and lifestyle. Among them, the Raute community holds a special place as an indigenous group heavily dependent on forests for their survival. As Nepal continues to progress, it is crucial to safeguard the rights and traditions of marginalized communities like the Raute, ensuring a society that values equity, inclusion, and cultural preservation.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines the level of socio-economic development achieved by the scheduled tribes of Nepal, with a specific focus on the Raute tribe. Despite five decades of planned economic development, the living conditions of these tribes have not significantly improved. The adoption of the neoliberal development paradigm by the Government of Nepal has resulted in more problems than solutions, exacerbating disparities and deprivations within the tribes. The concentration of capital and technology in the global market has adversely affected unskilled labor, particularly from the tribe, leading to reduced social security and justice provisions. The socio-economic development achieved by the Raute tribe has been uneven compared to other communities, as the gains have primarily benefited the better-off members, widening the gap between different sections of the tribe.

There are various issues faced by the Raute tribe like as; limited access to forest resources, social isolation, frequent migration, lack of modern skills and income opportunities, poor sanitation, hygiene, and health hazards, education and health disparities. The Raute tribe in Nepal encounters significant socio-economic challenges, which have hindered their development and integration into mainstream society. The lack of access to resources, education, health facilities, and income-generating opportunities requires urgent attention from the government and relevant stakeholders. Addressing these issues and providing support for skill development and social welfare can play a vital role in improving the livelihood and future prospects of the Raute tribe.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to identify the nomadic lifestyle and sustainable

livelihood practices of the Raute tribe in Nepal.

Significance of the Study

The conducted study has facilitated a comprehensive comprehension of several pertinent inquiries. Undoubtedly, this enhanced understanding has played a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by the Raute community. The study has contributed significantly to the formulation of pragmatic policies and programs, fostering environmental equilibrium, social equity, and the alleviation of rural poverty. By offering pertinent feedback to the relevant authorities, it has sought to enhance the efficacy of the measures implemented. Article 18 of the Constitution of Nepal grants fundamental rights, encompassing the Right to equality before the law (sub-article 1), which states that “All citizens shall be equal before the law.” Nonetheless, sub-article (3) acknowledges the possibility of enacting specific provisions through legislation for the safeguarding, empowerment, or development of socially and culturally marginalized castes, classes, regions, genders, or minorities. As a result, the study has raised this issue to draw the government’s attention to implement additional programs dedicated to the protection and welfare of the endangered Raute community, while also assessing the effectiveness of existing governmental initiatives. Consequently, the study has unveiled novel perspectives and opportunities for the holistic advancement of the Raute tribe.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited only in the Raute of Karnali province to generalize the overall aspects of the nomadic lifestyle and sustainable livelihood practices of Raute found in Nepal.

Literature review

Key Features of the Raute Community

The distinct social and cultural features of the Raute community, an ethnic group within Hindu society. The article delves into their societal structure, gender roles, daily practices, festivals, and interactions with nature. It highlights the unique aspects that set the Raute culture apart from mainstream society. It adheres to a traditional patriarchal social hierarchy, aligning with other Hindu-influenced ethnic groups. However, an intriguing distinction emerges wherein women assume a more prominent role than men in internal management affairs. Within the community, women primarily shoulder household responsibilities and exert significant influence over various livelihood aspects, excluding select pursuits like socializing, hunting, carpentry, and dancing. Conversely, men engage in crafting wooden implements, hunting monkeys, trading goods, and procuring food

grains. The gender-based division of labor constitutes a marked characteristic of the Raute community. Their profound understanding of the forest ecosystem, acquired through endeavors such as searching for medicinal herbs, firewood, and vegetables, underscores their deep-rooted connection with nature. Additionally, their familiarity with spring water sources reflects their reliance on the forest for sustenance. Married women exhibit a strong bond with their husbands and exhibit limited mobility beyond their settlement area. This marital closeness is accompanied by mutual respect and affection. Women participate in relocating homes and constructing new dwellings, while men undertake responsibilities considered conventionally male, such as crafting wooden items and hunting. Children's roles within the Raute community evolve as they mature. Until the ages of 10-14, they are exempt from substantial household duties, allowing them to explore their surroundings and engage in unburdened play. Their involvement in fetching water and assisting during relocations on special occasions prepares them for more significant roles as they grow. An essential cultural practice for the Raute community is monkey hunting, a distinctive technique that fosters interaction with neighboring communities, resolving the local monkey menace. These interactions transpire harmoniously, without conflict, showcasing the Raute's ability to engage effectively with others. Festivals, akin to those celebrated by the local Hindu community, form an integral part of the Raute calendar. During these occasions, meticulous arrangements are made for sustenance, featuring food, homemade ale, and meat. The Raute's active participation in community festivities is balanced with a restricted movement beyond their settlement, contributing to the preservation of their distinct identity. The Raute community's unique attributes, from their gender-specific division of labor to their distinctive hunting methods and their harmonious relationship with nature. The in-depth analysis of their social dynamics and practices contributes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Raute culture (Fortier, J. 2002).

The Rautes, an indigenous community residing in Nepal, are distinguished by their exceptional cultural identity, meticulously preserved across generations. Evidencing their distinctiveness, they hold the distinction of being the sole nomadic group within the nation, opting against establishing permanent settlements. In defiance of the contemporary challenge of eroding cultural diversity, the Rautes have admirably persevered, steadfastly upholding their customary lifestyle, thereby assuming an esteemed and invaluable role within the rich tapestry of Nepal's populace. Statistical approximations project the Raute population in Nepal at around 180 individuals, distributed among approximately 52 familial units. Predominantly concentrated within the mid-western territorial expanse, this region holds particular sanctity for the Rautes. Although a formal historical record of the Rautes is absent, popular belief maintains that they sought refuge in the wilderness, deliberately departing from settled life and the trappings of modernity. Eschewing

permanent habitation, formal education, and agricultural pursuits, the Rautes have channeled their expertise into woodworking craftsmanship and simian hunting, activities that sustain their subsistence in the bosom of the forest. Even amid the ongoing tide of globalization, catalyzing acculturation and imperiling cultural diversity, the Rautes have admirably upheld their distinctive nomadic heritage. Their adept preservation of time-honored practices within the whirlwind of a swiftly modernizing globe serves as an exemplar, encapsulating instructive lessons for humanity at large. Rautes of Nepal emerge as a quintessential and riveting exemplar of an indigenous collective within the nation. Their steadfast refusal to embrace permanent habitation, unwavering dedication to the nomadic lifestyle, and resolute safeguarding of cultural traditions collectively underscore their profound significance within Nepal's heterogeneous populace. Their resilience amidst the juggernaut of modernization accentuates the criticality of according due respect to, and absorbing wisdom from, such extraordinary cultural enclaves (Kafle, 2014).

“My people like the services and support offered by the government. Majority of my people say “never think of farming or permanent settlement. They warn me “if you do so, we’ll not take you as our leader.” I may involve myself and my two sons into farming or education, but what will the rest of us do?” (Mahin Bahadur Shahi, Raute Mukhiya).

Surprising Practices of the Raute Community

Discover the intriguing practices embraced by the Raute community, an enigmatic tribe with a rich cultural heritage. These surprising activities offer valuable insights into their distinctive nature and characteristics. By examining their past and present practices, we can draw meaningful comparisons and gain a deeper understanding of their way of life. The Raute, a community of hunters and gatherers, avoid using pre-stitched clothing and instead sew their own clothes when necessary. Except for the Raute Mukhiya and a few other people, remaining outside the community is generally forbidden unless you have given the authorities advance notice of your specific purpose. The Raute community doesn't count its members out of concern that it may result in a population decline. When settling, they place a premium on clean water sources, though they now increasingly take nearby marketplaces into account. Raute women adhere to traditions including not combing their hair and donning decorative forehead jewellery. They only eat meat by grilling it, and they only get married inside the community, often in arranged unions. Widow/widower marriage and polygamy are prohibited. Only during marriage are sexual relationships permitted. The elderly, single women, physically disabled people, and needy children are all supported. They faithfully follow the prohibition against stealing and support themselves by asking for what they require. They bargain collectively while they shop, have dinner together without waiting, and worship God at midnight. Instead

of using physical punishment as a form of discipline, the Mukhiya is called upon to mediate conflicts. Doors in widows' huts are positioned differently. When a member dies, settlements are usually moved, usually to a nearby area. A policy prohibiting cutting children's hair under the age of 10 is in place, and hair is cut using a blade rather than scissors. Women are not subject to discrimination during their periods or after giving birth. For 12 years, they stay away from the places where they lost a member. It may highlight the importance of preserving their culture, the challenges they face in a rapidly changing world, and the need for understanding and respecting their unique way of life. Additionally, it might discuss efforts to promote cultural preservation, sustainable development, and how these surprising practices are of interest to anthropologists, sociologists, and researchers studying indigenous communities (Bista, 1976).

Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive research to analyze qualitative data gathered during the research. The study's target population comprised 149 individuals, among whom 70 fell within the age range of 18 to 65 years (Rural Municipality Profile, 2074). The research involved interviewing from the 70 Raute peoples which is 18 to 65 years and head of Raute (Mukhiya). The purposive sampling was used in the study area. During the survey, the data collected was of both quantitative and qualitative nature. The sources of data for the study were both primary and secondary.

Informal discussions were held with various stakeholders, and key person interviews were conducted with the Chairperson of Gurunsh Rural Municipality and the Chairperson of SOCEC Dailekh. These interviews proved particularly valuable for cross-referencing and validating the qualitative information collected during the study.

Results and Discussion

In contemporary times, the issue of livelihood has emerged as a critical concern for tribal communities, particularly those residing in and around forests. For generations, these tribal groups have subsisted by engaging in hunting, gathering, fishing, and shifting cultivation, relying heavily on forest resources to sustain their way of life. The forests not only serve as a means of livelihood but also hold immense cultural significance for these communities. However, in recent years, their traditional mode of sustenance has encountered significant challenges.

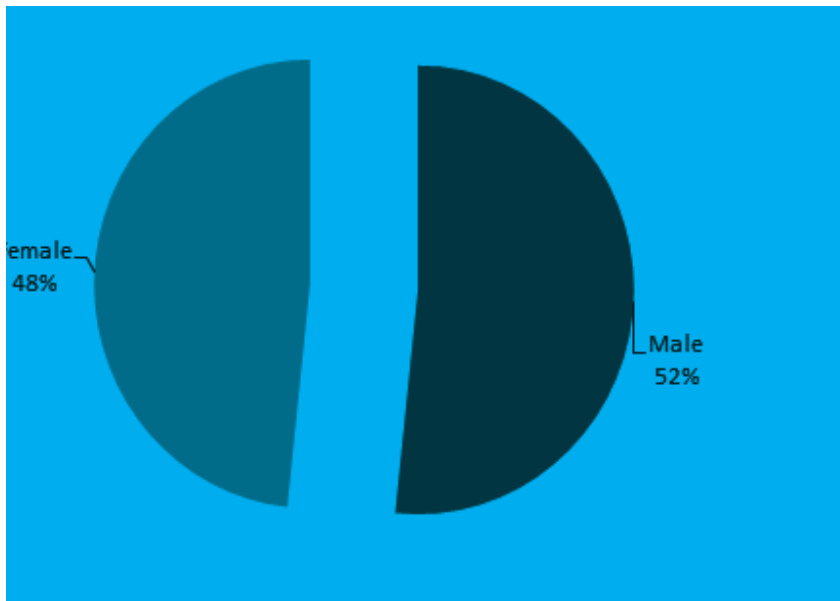
The tribes refer to themselves as the "kings of the forest," emphasizing their deep-rooted connection to these natural habitats. They primarily communicate in a non-written Tibeto-Burman language, but many of the younger members have learned to converse in Nepali, the national language.

Furthermore, their isolation from mainstream society has had adverse effects on their social lives. They do not adhere to the rules and regulations of other communities, which hampers their social development. This divide has created a significant gap between the older and younger generations and is likely to have detrimental effects on future generations as well. There are other parameters that also influence their socio-economic status, and a detailed exploration of these factors is provided below for a better understanding.

Population

Focusing on the particular location in question, the Raute tribe consists of 149 members. Among them, approximately 48% are women.

Figure 1: Population of Respondents



(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

The figure presented above illustrates the age distribution of a population, showcasing the percentage of males across various age groups. According to the data depicted, males of different age groups make up 52% of the total population.

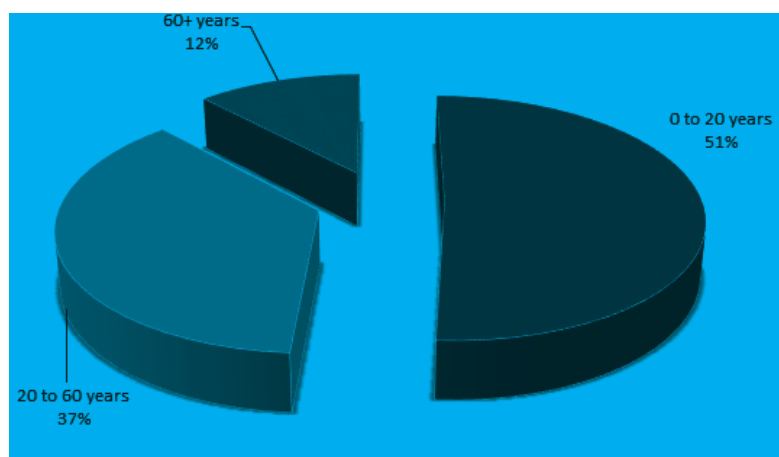
Age Groups of Raute

The figure depicts the distribution of age groups among the members of the Raute tribe in Nepal. The data was collected by SOSEC-Nepal, and provides valuable insights into the population's age structure.

Table 1: Age Group of Raute in the study area

Age (years)	Numbers of people	Percentage
0-10	49	33.00
10 - 20	26	17.00
20-30	15	10.00
30-40	19	13.00
40-50	11	7.00
50-60	11	7.00
60-70	14	9.00
70-80	1	1.00
80-90	3	2.00
Total	149	100.00

(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

Figure 2: Age Groups of Raute in the study area

(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

The provided figure 2 and table 1, illustrate the age distribution of a population. It reveals that children aged 20 years and below constitute 51% of the total population. Additionally, individuals above 60 years old make up 12% of the population, while those above 80 years old represent 2%. Moreover, 30% of the population falls within the age range of 20 to 50 years.

Settlements and Housing

The houses constructed by the Raute community are made primarily from forest materials, but some changes in construction methods can be noticed. These houses are

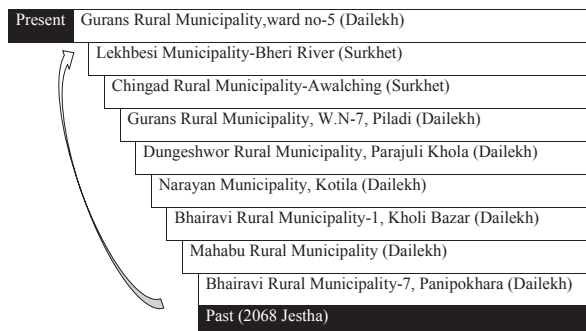
built on a temporary basis because the tribe constantly migrates. Due to their nomadic lifestyle, the houses are not constructed using durable materials. Regarding the issue of identity cards, the Raute community, residing in and around Dailekh's Gurans Rural Municipality, began receiving identity cards on August 15, 2018. The main purpose behind this initiative by the rural municipality was to conduct a factual census of the Raute community and facilitate the distribution of government services to them. Notably, a portion of the Raute community has been permanently settled in Aampani (ward no. 12) of Parsuram Municipality, Dadeldhura, and Rajyauda (ward no. 4) for the past 34 years. Some children from this settled group have started attending school, and some youths have acquired citizenship certificates, pursuing careers as forest guards and joining the police and army. These positive changes in their practices suggest a return to a more conventional lifestyle. With the recent distribution of identity cards in Dailekh, there are no other Raute groups remaining in a nomadic, hunting-gathering way of life. According to data collected by Gurans Rural Municipality, there are currently only 149 Raute individuals (Rural municipality profile,2074).

Previously, social security allowances were distributed to them based on verbally listed names and their place of residence. However, after the distribution of new identity cards, these cards have become the basis for receiving government and non-government organization services. During the study period, it was observed that the Raute community initially settled in Gurans Rural Municipality but later migrated to Lekhbesi Municipality, where conflicts with the local community led to another migration to the bank of the Bheri river. However, by the end of the study, the tribe had migrated back to Gurans Municipality.

Settlement Pattern of Raute

The settlement pattern of the Raute tribe has been meticulously documented in the given sketch, portraying the substantial changes that have occurred over a significant period. The traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Raute tribe has gradually transformed, resulting in notable shifts in their settlement habits.

Figure 3: Settlement pattern of this Raute



(Sources: SOSEC Dailekh, 2019)

Observation shows that the Raute tribe has displayed a pattern of frequent and varied settlement changes. Throughout this study, it was noted that they shifted their settlements on nine different occasions, with the names of the specific locations provided in the diagram above. Within the duration of the study, they relocated to three distinct places.

One positive aspect of this settlement shifting is that they returned to Gurans Rural Municipality, a place that holds significant importance for them. It has played a crucial role in providing them with recognition and support for their overall livelihoods. Over the course of eight years, they undertook journeys and established settlements in several districts, namely: Jajarkot, Dailekh, Achham, Dailekh again, Surkhet, and ultimately back to Dailekh (Source: SOSEC Dailekh, 2019).

Situation of Employment in the study area

The Raute tribe is facing an increasing threat to their existence due to various challenges. Their traditional way of life, which revolves around trading their woodcrafts, is being jeopardized by the presence of cheap plastic goods in the market. Additionally, changes in the climate have made it difficult for them to rely solely on nature for sustenance and food crops.

As the tribe does not engage in formal education, their opportunities for suitable employment that matches their skills are severely limited. Consequently, they are dependent on government and non-government agencies for support in order to survive. This support comes in the form of financial aid, incentives, and donations. Unfortunately, the lack of education and modern job skills presents difficulties in finding appropriate jobs for the tribe members. However, it's important to note that the Raute tribe is not interested in modern jobs, as their way of life is deeply rooted in their traditional practices.

Overall, the Raute tribe's future remains uncertain, and they continue to face challenges in breaking free from the cycle of poverty due to limited employment opportunities and the changing dynamics of their environment. However, the government's initiative to involve them in forest preservation provides a glimmer of hope for their sustainable living. Government of Nepal, hence has let these tribes to look after the Forest as a ban pale as a paid job.

Situation of Raute Women and Children's

The situation for the Rautes is concerning as their population is dwindling due to child marriage and unsafe delivery practices. Despite respecting their women and children, their present context appears to be extremely poor compared to other castes in the country.

The restriction on women from staying outside of their troop overnight seems to justify their limited thinking and practices, while child marriage further violates the rights of children. The overall well-being of women and children in the Raute tribe requires urgent attention to ensure their proper existence in society. Restricting women's freedom of speech and movement within the tribe hinders their growth and development, representing one of the darker aspects of this community. It is crucial to grant women the freedom and rights guaranteed by the constitution of Nepal to improve their situation and promote their well-being.

Educational Status of Raute

In this tribe, modern education was once seen as a taboo, resulting in children being prohibited from attending schools. However, a positive change is taking place as some children from these communities have come to recognize the significance of education and are now advocating for proper schooling opportunities. It is disheartening to know that in the past, some of these children were even scolded for trying to learn the alphabet. In response to this situation, a local NGO has stepped in to support the education of Raute children by providing them with a friendly teacher. This teacher has noticed that the children show genuine interest in their studies. However, their educational progress is frequently hindered by the opposition from Raute leaders who obstruct their learning journey.

“Raute children dream of becoming doctors and drivers but the leaders prevent them from studying saying that is something they have never done,” said Teacher. In general, the educational status within the tribe falls below the national standards, requiring effective measures and interventions to address the existing shortcomings and uplift the educational outcomes.

Health, Maternity & Family Planning

The Raute community exhibits limited knowledge about family planning and views it negatively, considering it a sin. In addition, their approach to treating illnesses is closely connected to their environment. During times of illness, the common practice among the Raute is to consult a Dhami for suggestions. If the Dhami determines that the illness is not due to faulty rituals, the Raute may then consider visiting the nearest health post for further treatment. Below is a table illustrating the tribal practices followed by the Raute when they

experience sickness:

Table 2: Illness and Common Practices of Raute

Sickness	Tribal Practice
Illness	Consult Dhami
Not due to faulty rituals	Visit nearest health post for treatment

(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

The information provided is based on the understanding of the Raute community's beliefs and practices regarding family planning and healthcare, relying on medicinal herbs and Shamanism for treatment.

Table 3: Local herbs for treatment of Raute

They primarily rely on medicinal herbs derived from leaves, roots, bark of trees, and plants found in the jungle. The Raute people have a strong belief in Shamanism, and despite the availability of modern medicine, they prefer using herbs for treatment. As a result, they are hesitant to seek medical assistance from hospitals.

S. No	Sickness	Raute ritual for treatment	Remarks
1	Cold and cough	Pittchar herbs by rubbing it in stone	
2	Wound	Salla tree covers	
3	Excess blood	Kammi herbs from the forest	
4	Diarrhea	Local herbs	

(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

Sanitation Status of Raute

The Raute groups exhibit significantly inadequate knowledge about sanitation and hygiene. They rely on open water sources for drinking and lack access to proper toilet facilities. Recently, they were asked to leave Lekhbesi due to their contamination of the local drinking water source, highlighting their poor understanding of water sources and sanitation practices. The tribe's constant migration to different locations contributes to their substandard housing and sanitation conditions.

As a result, the Raute tribe's sanitation status has shown little improvement over

time, leaving them vulnerable to waterborne diseases. Moreover, their practices pose a threat to the nearby communities and their sources of drinking water. The situation calls for urgent measures to address the sanitation and hygiene issues faced by the Raute group and to protect the health and well-being of both the tribe and the surrounding population.

Income and Expenses of Raute Tribe

The study observes that the income sources for the Raute tribe primarily came from government support, non-governmental organizations, and private sectors. These incomes were categorized into monthly and annual terms. It was discovered that a significant portion of the income was allocated to basic needs, particularly food expenses. Another notable finding was that a portion of the income was being spent on alcoholic beverages. Despite this, the total income appeared to be sufficient to sustain the tribe's needs for an eight-month period. Below is a table displaying the Raute tribe's basic income and expenses for reference.

Table 4: Income of Raute tribe

S.N.	Description	No. of Raute	Monthly, NRs	Annual, NRs
1	Social allowance from Central GoN	149	4,000	7,152,000
2	Social allowance from province GoN	149	2,000	3,576,000
3	Selling wooden materials	-	-	200,000
4	Support from NGOs/INGOs	-	-	900,000
5	Individual support	-	-	400,000
Total				12,228,000

(Sources: Field survey, 2022)

The total amount of income for the Raute tribe is NRs. 12,228,000 per year. Per person income from central GoN is 4,000 and province GoN of karnali is 2,000, in a year is NRs. 894,000 of total population of Raute which is 149. The per person income per month from total amount divided is NRs.6838.93. The given data are based on the recent years.

Breaking with their tradition

The Raute community, known for their traditional way of sustaining themselves through hunting and gathering, used to avoid work and education. Surprisingly, some members, including the former leader Mahin Bahadur, have deviated from their traditional principles and taken up jobs. This shift is significant as they once considered touching money as a sin.

Presently, the Rautes reside in the Lekbesi Municipality of Surkhet. The former leader, Mahin Bahadur, along with the current leaders Suryanarayan, Dil Bahadur, Bir Bahadur, and the youth Prakash Shahi, have been appointed as Raute social cadres at the Social Service Center (SOSEC) in Dailekh.

Previously, the Raute people sustained themselves by selling wooden utensils. Unfortunately, they can no longer continue this ancestral profession because they have been prohibited from cutting trees. Despite this challenge, the community's leader believes that the incentives provided by their jobs offer a stable source of income, eliminating the need for them to seek donations and wander from place to place. This has brought about a significant lifestyle change for the Raute community.

Future initiation of the government

The Karnali Province recently introduced new laws and policies aimed at safeguarding the language, culture, and traditions of the Raute community. The province believes that these measures will play a vital role in preserving and promoting Raute culture. One significant aspect of the new law is that individuals from other castes must obtain permission before offering assistance or meeting with the Raute people.

Despite the community's efforts, there has been an increase in alcohol consumption among the Raute people. To address this concern, the provincial authorities have decided to take charge of regulating alcohol distribution. They plan to establish police stations near Raute settlements to monitor and control the supply of liquor more effectively.

Additionally, the province government has made promising announcements to enhance the well-being of the Raute community. They plan to set up mobile schools and health services, ensuring that education and healthcare are conveniently accessible at the doorsteps of the Raute people. These initiatives are expected to improve their overall quality of life and well-being.

Changing Patterns of Livelihood

Livelihood is a dynamic term, subject to the influence of time, location, available resources, culture, and practices. Its meaning varies from place to place, and people's ways of making a living can change over time. The depletion of forests and alterations in the external environment can have significant effects on the assets, activities, and outcomes related to livelihoods. When individuals respond to these changes by adjusting their behavior, it is referred to as employing coping strategies. However, constant reliance on coping strategies can lead to a shift from livelihood strategies to mere survival tactics, which may result in the loss of valuable assets.

For many communities, the forest has been a crucial aspect of their livelihoods, but this dream is now being challenged. While some traditional practices persist, tribal communities have undergone considerable changes in their livelihood patterns. The study group faces unique challenges, such as a lack of land ownership and increased human activity in urban areas. Moreover, advancements in communication systems have significantly influenced the trends in livelihood sources.

As a consequence of these changes, villagers who once solely relied on traditional methods are now embracing new technologies while still preserving their traditional knowledge.

Comparisons between the Past and Present of the Raute

The Raute, also known as the Raji or Banraute, are an indigenous nomadic community residing in the forests of Nepal. Their way of life is deeply rooted in ancient traditions and practices that have evolved over centuries to adapt to their unique environment. Here, we explain both past and present practices followed by the Raute community:

Table 5: Comparisons between the Past and Present of the Raute

Description	Past Practices	Present acts
Population	618 numbers of total population recorded during the census 2011.	149 numbers of the population were identified and distributed with identity card.
Employment	Bartering with the wooden craft and skills demonstration during festive events.	Bartering, skill sharing, incentives from the government and burrow of the money with different persons.
Status of Raute women	Respected but are limited with the norms of the Raute culture.	Not much changed so far from previous days. Women are still limited for household chores, restricted to speak with outsiders, are not allowed to lead the tribe or hunt.

Health and Maternity	Poor and followed the herb based treatment.	Still not much improved so far but these tribe are improving and believe the homeopathic treatment. However, community members are not allowed to stay night out of the tribe for treatment.
Sanitation Status	Poor and unhygienic	Still, not much of the scenario is changed. Their shifting of locality hints that their poor facilities of residence indicates their poor sanitation facility and status.
Future perspective	More oriented towards settlement issues	Nowadays, they are more concerned about the employment, money, proper settlement and improved status in the society.
Conflict	Harmonious people looking for settlements with soft trees for making their carved wooden crafts.	Change in settlements and increasing restrictions has created issues in their settlements. Similarly, their poor efforts towards the sanitation are not easily accepted by the other community.

(Sources: Field Survey, 2022)

Conclusion

The traditional livelihood practices of the Raute Tribe exemplify an exceptional harmony between humans and nature. Their deep-rooted connection with the forest and sustainable practices offer valuable lessons for modern societies seeking to achieve a balance between development and environmental conservation. Preserving their cultural heritage and empowering the Raute Tribe to safeguard their way of life are critical steps in ensuring the continued existence of this unique and resilient community.

References

- Bista, D. B. (1976). Encounter with the Raute: The last hunting nomads of Nepal. *Kailash*, 4(2), 317-327.
- Bista, D. B. (1976). *People of Nepal*. Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2011). Kathmandu: Ministry of Population and Environment, Nepal.

- Contemporary Vision Nepal. (2013). *Conservation of Raute through Livelihood Programs* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCkFG6iRfzU>.
- Fortier, J. (2002). The Arts of Deception: Verbal performance by the Raute of Nepal. *The Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*, 8(2), 233-257.
- Fortier, J. (2002). *Raute People of the Forest: Tradition and Change in Nepal's Himalayas*. University of Washington Press.
- Fortier, J. (2002). Reconstructing the Raute: Statelessness, self-determination, and livelihood security among an endangered people of Nepal. *Human Organization*, 61(2), 125-137.
- Fortier, J. (2002). The Rautes: An ethno-ecological 'refugee' community in the mountains of Nepal. *Banko Janakari*, 12(2), 1-7.
- Fortier, J. (2002). The Rautes: Notes on a Nomadic Hunting Tribe of Nepal. *Nepal*.
- Joshi, A. L. (1993). Effects on administration of changed forest policies in Nepal. In *Policy and Legislation in Community Forestry*. Proceedings of a Workshop held in Bangkok, Jan 27-29. Regional Community Forestry Training Centre, Bangkok.
- Kafle, S. (2014, February 12). Changing Life Style of Raute. *Annapurna*.
- Kafle, B. (2014). The Last Nomads of Nepal: A Case Study of Raute Community. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 41(1), 59-75.
- Profile. (2014). *Gurans Rural Municipality Profile*. Asmita Printing Press, Surkhet, Nepal.
- Rana, S. (2010). Change in Livelihood of Raute through Micro Enterprise Development Initiative. *Micro Enterprise Development Program*, 1, 121-129.
- Reporter. (2016, February 12). PM Oli meets Raute Mukhiyas. *Kathmandu Post*. Retrieved from <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-02-12/pm-oli-meets-raute-mukhiyas.html>.
- Sejuwal, K. (2014, March 5). Raute Get Job. *Nagarik*.
- Singh, N. B. (1997). The Story of Raute Women. *Bheri Sandesh*, 1(1), 47-50.
- Singh, N. B. (1998). The Endangered Raute Tribe in Nepal. *Askal Paila*, 1(1), 117-125.
- Singh, N. B. (1998). A Research: Raute in Trouble. *Pourakh*, 1(9), 26-27.
- Wolff, H. K., & Pant, P. R. (1993). *A Handbook for Social Science Research and Thesis Writing*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- SOCEC Nepal. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.osec.org.np/>