

# Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal

Reena Maharjan<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya), one of the endangered communities of Nepal, have been using multiple livelihood strategies from carving grinding stone to wage labour. In course of selling and carving grinding stones, they still practice semi-nomadic characteristics like tribal peoples' routine of periodically moving from one place to another. Due to the lack of their own registered land, they were compelled to many livelihood strategies because the traditional occupation was replaced by new technology. The decline of their traditional occupation and landlessness generate questions about the traditional livelihood and culture strategies of the community. What are the current livelihood practices of the Pattharkatta? How do they negotiate to change livelihood and culture? What are socio-cultural changes they experienced? Nowadays, they have settled in some public places near the road, rivers, and slum areas of the municipality. Some of them temporally migrated to the near market and road where they make and sell grinding stones. Some of them migrated to Kathmandu and temporally settled along the ring road at Balaju Bus Park, Kalanki, Chahabil, Basundhara, and Koteswor.*

*By employing a mixed method design, the researcher collected information through observations and interviews with the selected informants in Kapilbastu and Kathmandu. Descriptive and narrative analysis of the data explored that they were temporarily settled in a public land by making temporary huts in public lands or lands allocated by the local bodies. Few of them continued in traditional occupations-making grinding stones, making brooms and ropes using jute fibers and rest of them changed their livelihood strategies and culture.*

*Keywords: Culture, livelihood, nomad, strategy, exchange*

## Introduction

There is no unanimity on the origin of Pattharkatta in different districts. Many of them did not know much about their origin myths and history. However, during interview with a couple of elderly Pattharkattas shared that their ancestors had

---

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Maharjan is faculty of Sociology/Anthropology at Sahid Smark College, Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

migrated to Kapilbastu from Muzzafarpur (Bihar) of India about 100 years ago. They said that they have been "crushing stones" as an occupation since very beginning. It was informed that they traveled from one place to another to sell their products (Kushbadiya Utthan Sangh, 2011).

Pattharkatta claimed that Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, Banke, Nawalparasi, were their traditional homelands, and the other settlements of Nepal were newly migrated in course of livelihood options. They are scattered in the Terai and temporarily significant number of them stayed in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Butwal. The total population of Pattharkatta increased from 552 (CBS, 2001) to 3128 in 2011. In 2001, the Central Bureau of Statistics separated Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya whereas in 2011, they were mixed into a single category (CBS, 2011). Some Pattharkatta transformed themselves into Kushbadiya, who were recognized as indigenous peoples by National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act 2002 and listed them as an endangered ethnic group by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) and the (NFDIN) in 2004 (NEFIN, 2004; Maharjan, 2022). Being recorded under an endangered ethnic group, all of Kushbadiya received a cash bonus per month from the government. The same group, who were recorded as Pattharkatta, was listed under the Dalit category in the official document of the government.

Livelihood and culture are intertwined as culture and livelihood is defined. "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, skills, habits and any other capabilities acquired by human as a member of society" (Tylor, 1881:1). This definition covers many livelihood activities of people in terms of culture. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. By the term 'livelihood strategy' one might make the obvious mistake of thinking only of the economic activities that a group of people are engaged in (Bhurtel, 2000). Since they have not registered land, they moved wherever they find comfortable livelihood. When they were asked home land in Kathmandu, they mostly named Kapilbastu. Some of them have been living in Kathmandu for a decade, they attached their homeland with one of the districts of

## **Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal**

Tarai. They did not completely leave their home district. On the basis of their negotiation of culture and livelihood, the researcher wanted to explore their cultural change and strategies of the livelihood. What are their cultural practices of the Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya? What are continuity and changes on their livelihood? What are constraint and opportunity of livelihood and culture of the Pattharkatta? Moreover, this article explores history and the political economy of identity and culture.

### **Research Methods**

This research is based on ethnographic study in which the local and national political processes informed the Pattharkatta culture, livelihood and identity. Holmberg states, "Ethnography is current history that is not only informed by the past but something that will also indicate an outline of the next emerging moment" (Holmberg, 2006: 54). The researcher employed descriptive design to find out the livelihood and culture practices of the community.

Both primary and secondary data were analyzed. The primary data were collected from selected informants in the field visits in Kapilbastu and Kathmandu valley in September-October 2018. Because of their mobility and migration to Kathmandu and other cities, earlier appointments did not work both in village and Kathmandu. But, many of long term observation and interviews were possible in Kathmandu. The researcher observed their stonework activities, their house, settlement pattern, food, children, family interaction, and interaction with customers. The researcher interviewed about their livelihood strategies, cultural change, occupation, education, division of labour in family, wage labour, migration stories, remittance, and economic management of the households. Whereas, the secondary data were obtained from various sources such as published and unpublished literatures, previous study reports, journals, government planning and policy document, etc.

Among the Tarai district, Kapilbastu was purposely selected because the largest settlement and highest number of their population is in Kapilbastu. Among the scattered settlements, 33 households were selected for a detailed study. When the researcher visited the field, only 15 households were found in this village. Therefore, the researcher decided to incorporate 15 respondents of Pattharkatta in different part

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

of Kathmandu valley (Chabhil, Basundhara, Buspark, and Koteswor). Recall method was used to recall their occupation and livelihood before a decade and now. Other methods of data collection were: key informant interviews, life history and observation.

### **Livelihood and Culture of Dalits**

Livelihood implies more than a way of living and thus it goes beyond the concept of basic needs. It involves the improvement of capacities and assess/resources (material and social) required for a sustainable living. It is revealed that most rural households rely on multiple income sources and adopt a range of livelihood strategies (Thieme, 2006). Along with the changes in socio-economic and cultural aspects of Pattharkattas, its influence on them is remarkably noticed. The environmental resources at their disposal are equally important determining cultural factors regarding the choice of particular kind of livelihood activity and, options available instead.

Caste-based socio-economic structure causes inequality, livelihood diversity and opportunity among specific communities even in today's free market economy because most of policymakers and politicians still treated caste as a fixed and unchangeable sociocultural problem rather than a dynamic phenomenon (Mosse, 2018). In Nepal, the National Dalit Commission registered 26 communities as Dalits: 19 Terai Dalits and 7 Hill Dalits. They have been experiencing untouchability and multi-dimensional marginalization in their livelihood and culture (Giri, 2018). When livelihood strategies of the Musahars changed, their ritual and everyday practices of caste based untouchability also changed (Giri, 2018). Among them, Tarai Dalits have entered a vicious circle of poverty when they entangled unequal reciprocity with politically powerful communities. Because of various discriminations, they are deprived of opportunities and tend to be excluded from financial, political, and social enterprises, which are articulated to their poor socio-economic, educational, and political status (Bishwakarma, 2017). Many researchers explored that Dalits (specifically Tarai Dalits) are the most vulnerable community in terms of livelihood and perpetuation of traditional culture (Bishwakarma, 2018; Chaurasiya et al., 2019; Pariyar & Lovett, 2016). Mary Cameron (2010) analyzes not only the genesis of the Dalit identity, but also the livelihood strategies of hill Dalit of Far Western Nepal. She argued that *Riti-Bhagya* (unequal reciprocity among so-called clean castes and Dalits) was practiced in everyday life. Dalits worked outdoor labour of so called-clean castes

## **Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal**

and received a nominal quantity of food materials for their family livelihood (Cameron, 1998). Migration and women's labour were considered another dimension of the livelihood of the Dalits. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood among the marginalized Dalits. Landless Dalits tapped multiple strategies of livelihood with the construction of roads and urbanization. Many of them involved construction labour, third-country migration and development projects Nepal. Because of development, labour migration, education, and penetration market, they concluded that traditional patron-client relations were almost disappeared among the hill Dalits (Pokharel & Chhetri, 2006).

When talked identity, the discourses for and against the continuation of Dalit symbols are presented throughout Cameron's writing (Cameron, 2010). She presents the discussions of the internet nepaldalitinfo, the author analyzes both the retaining and elimination of Dalit identity. The word Dalit and its development have a long history in Nepal. In the defense of the criticism of the term an Indian product, the author quotes Om Prakash VK Gahatraj "it is right, many things are imported from India including foods, and culture because we are an open border. Truly when Baba Saheb Ambedkar came to Nepal in 1956 and had important discussions with the Dalit leaders of Nepal, since then the word Dalit was used to address this community" (Cameron, 2010: 18). Mishra argued that identity of a community is fluid, in-the-making, depends on livelihood opportunity. Like all historical processes, ethnicity meanders, enters into rapids, and then meanders again (Mishra, 2012). His claim is that cultural identity contributes to strategies of opportunity for power and resources.

Budhathoki (2012) argued that Pattharkattas of Banke and Bardiya recognized themselves as Kushbadiya rather than Pattharkatta. The Same people in Rupandehi and Nawalparasi have claimed themselves as Kushbadiya. He noted that both of them were landless and engaged on carving stone and grinding (Budhathoki, 2012). In Kapilbastu, the pattharkatta are associated with Dalit people. They also recognize themselves as Dalit because other Tarai castes have treated them as Dalit for centuries (Budhathoki, 2012).

A report, "Ethnography of Tarai Dalits" (NNDSWO, 2006) covered a short introduction of Pattharkatta without detail historical origin, culture, and livelihood. It

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

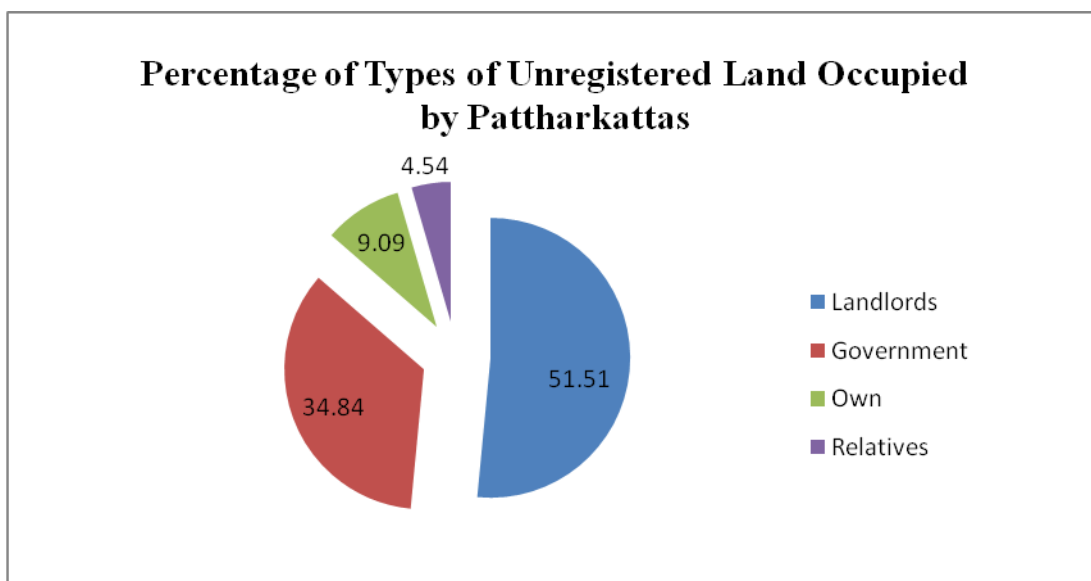
reported their physical features, hierarchy, arts, education, migration, leadership, gender, and knowledge. Among them Terai Dalits are most marginalized sections and among them Pattharakatta is the lowest socio-economic group (Dahal, 2010). Studies showed that the traditional occupation is one of the main sources of livelihood for the Dalits. Both historical documents and social memories of the people showed that Pattharkattawas a community of Dalits.

### **Occupation and Livelihood of Pattharkatta**

BinodPattharkatta shared that their traditional occupation was carving stone, and grinding slates, called "*Silauto and Loro*". The stone carving and selling in cash and kind occupation have been still continued by both the Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya. It is their main source of living in Kapilbastu and Kathmandu. The difference was the selling transformed from kind to cash in the villages also. Both the Kushbadiya and Pattharkatta shared the same culture and livelihood strategies. Though they are not satisfied with their occupation, they did not get better options and opportunities in an emerging market. The reasons for their dissatisfaction were the low price of grinding stones and low social prestige.

The land was considered the main source of livelihood. Most of them were found landless. The landholding size of a family is a determinant of the livelihood of a household in society. The land was considered both sign of prestige as well as a backbone of livelihood for many communities in Nepal. They have been living in public and big landlords' land. The unregistered land was used for housing, vegetable farming and small farming by the community. The following graph depicts the portion of different kinds of land used by the community.

## Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal



This presentation articulates that they are economically poor, and politically powerless communities. Among the informants, 51.51% were living in the land of landlords in their surroundings. Only 9.09% of the Pattharkatta have own land and the land size was very small for the subsistence of their family. Out of the total, 38.84% have been living on public land. They do not have big houses because of the lack of stability of land and the policy of government. For the sake of livelihood options, they compromised their Pattharkatta identity though they followed occupation and culture as before. To get government social security fund per month, many Pattharkatta changed their last name Kushbadiya.

### **Educational Status of the Population**

Education is prestigious and closely interconnected with the livelihood of people. The Pattharkatta still believed in fate and the traditional responsibilities given by society. The stonework was considered God-given work for them. Deviation from the traditional occupation becomes opposite to the norms they believed. The new generation of the community is much more hopeful about access to education and better future by educating their children. The informant shared that the number of school-going children was increasing.

Education contributes to get better jobs and earnings that maintain the quality of life. The educational status of the Pattharkatta found very weak. There was only

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

one Pattharkatta who has passed the SLC examination in the village. He did not get any job opportunity in the district. He migrated for seasonal labour in India. The literacy rate of the Pattharkatta is only 21.65 per cent as compared to 41.8 per cent of overall Dalit and 65.9 per cent of the national (CBS, 2011). A similar finding was obtained by National Dalit Commission in a study of Dalits that showed that 65 percent of the Dalits were illiterate and only 1.48 percent of the Dalits were above SLC (NDC 2005). The number of school-going children was too low because the children also have to contribute in making of livelihood of the household.

By looking educational distribution of the respondents, it can be concluded that they were the least literate people among sedentary people. Out of 30 respondents, 60% were mere literate (they do not have a school education) and 13.33% were illiterate. The following table shows the detail of the educational distribution of the respondent.

**Table 1: Educational Status of Respondents**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Illiterate	4	13.33
Literate but no formal education	18	60
Primary	6	20
Lower Secondary	2	6.67
Secondary and higher secondary	0	0
Total	30	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2018*

This table indicates not only the educational marginality but also the exclusion from livelihood opportunities of the Pattharkatta. Educational marginalization proliferate multiple capability failures as Amartya Sen (2000) stated in terms of livelihood options. Because of the educational deprivation, they have been compelled to continue the traditional occupation, labour-intensive works, and migration.

### **Present Livelihood Strategies**

The Pattharkatta have also diversified their livelihood strategies in comparison to a decade ago. Most of them continued their traditional occupation which was still regarded as lucrative in urban areas but many of them started new jobs like construction and agrarian labour, toilet cleaner, and general wage labour. The



## Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal

following table shows transformation of livelihood strategies of the Pattharkatta for a decade.

**Table 2: Occupational Transformation Status**

Occupation Types	Past Occupations (10 years ago)		Present Occupations	
	Number of HHs	Percent	Number of HHs	Percent
Stoneworks	24	80	15	50
Agricultural labour	2	6.66	3	10
Migration labour	2	6.66	6	20
Porters	2	6.66	3	10
Garbage/toilet cleaner	0	0	3	10
Total	30	100	30	100

*Source: Field Survey 2018*

As above table show comparative changes in occupation and livelihood strategies of the Pattharkatta for a decade. Within a decade, stonework was declined from 80% to 50% whereas other all sectors increased. At present, 50% of the Pattharkattas were still involved in stoneworks. But due to several environmental changes in their vicinity, Pattharkattas were having multiple opportunities to be involved nowadays. The dramatic changes in occupation from 80 to 50 showed that the traditional occupation of the Pattharkatta has been changing. These changes show not only the limitations of their traditional stone-related jobs but also open up new avenues of opportunities. These changes in occupations are brought about by mainly urbanization, construction, and penetration of the liberal market. The table shows that there is a significant shift towards the new strategies of livelihood. According to the data, half of the population is seen engaged in traditional stone works. This shows that people are having difficulties in resisting the pressure of the market and technology in their lives. So, they are in the transitional phase of adaptation in the market and are in search of jobs in other fields. Because of a lack of skill and education, they are not being able to do and get well-paid and standard jobs.

### **Hunting Gathering**

The Pattharkatta are highly interested for hunting. Hunting is a socio-economically embedded livelihood option of rural Pattharkatta. They hunt wild game and gather wild fruits, edible roots, and tubers. In the past, hunting and gathering were their prominent livelihood strategies. They shared that hunting and gathering were gradually decreased in recent days. They were skillful hunter by using traditional technologies. Their main hunting prey were jackal, mongoose (*Kathuro*), squirrel, wildcat, tortoise, porcupine (*Dumsi*), komodo dragon (*Gohoro*), fox, rat and python. They used dogs to smell and drive the hunt. They shoot the game with iron-tipped spears or arrow. They also used domestic nets to trap the animals. They usually hunt in a group and share equally whatever they found. Jackals and porcupines were the preferred prey among many other wild animals. Both of them have extra its medical values in addition to food values. They made liquor out of the jackals' meat which was expensive because of its medicinal use on asthma, gout, and uric acid patients. They visited the jungle as well as the riversides for hunting. Because of community forestry rules and the disappearance of wildlife the degree of hunting and gathering were nominal among the Pattharkatta. These days, they mostly apply hunting and gathering to extract medicinal products rather than livelihood options.

### **Stone Cutting Income**

Stone cutting or making grinding stones (*Silauto, Okhal, Lohoro, Jhato*) are the main traditional occupation of the Pattharkatta. Recently they get fully involved in these activities for commercial purposes. The Pattharkatta of Kapilbastu brought stone slabs from the jungle and riversides. Most of the Pattharkattas in Kathmandu brought stones from the forest of Chure and Tarai. The Pattharkatta argued that only experienced Pattharkatta identified workable stone slabs. Not all stone slabs were useful to *Silauto-Lohoro and Okhal*. There are some veins (*Naso*) around the stone and those stones are used for the carving. It is not easy to find stone slabs with veins. The Pattharkatta of Kathmandu has established a connection with contractors who supplied stone slabs from Tarai to Kathmandu. They buy raw stones from the contractors and carve according to the demand of the market.

Although electric grinding machines have replaced the market of stone products, people still wanted them because they were cheaper, more durable, and natural. They claimed that electric product users also used stone products because of

## Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal

the different taste of ingredients produced from stone products. Hammers and chisels are key tools of stone carving. They not only make the product but also carved pictures and artistic shapes of the product. Some customers like the art and shape of the product in Kathmandu. The customers in the villages engaged in lengthy bargaining whereas urban customers dealt with short bargaining. Binod Pattharkatta said that sometimes customers buy their product without bargaining. To produce a pair of *Jhato*, one skillful person has to work at least 8 hours. Similarly, for a good size *Silauto*, one has to work around 6 hours.

In the village settlement, the Pattharkatta carried their product to the villages for selling. Some of them used bicycles to carry the heavy loads of carved stones and visited many villages. They sold their product very cheap price in villages whereas the same product could be sold at higher price in urban areas. There was significant difference in price between rural and urban areas like Butwal and Kathmandu.

**Table: 3 Stone Products and their Prices in Kapilbastu and Kathmandu**

Product Types	Primary Purpose	Cost Rs. Kapilbastu	CostRs. Kathmandu
<i>Loro-Silouto</i>	Grinding spices	200 to 300	600 to 1200
<i>Chanauto</i>	Chandan making	100 to 150	400 to 600
<i>Jato</i>	Floor grinder	300 to 400	1200 to 1500
<i>Okhal</i>	Rice mill	300 to 400	1000 to 1200
<i>Dundh</i>	Stone Trough	350 to 500	-
<i>Pala</i>	Oil light	-	200 to 400

*Source: Field Survey 2018*

They said that their works were artistic and creative. Most of the time, while manufacturing the stonework objects, they apply artistic techniques to decorate the products. They found confident and competent in their traditional family occupation.

### **Cleaning, Wage Labour and Migration**

In Kapilbastu cement factories like Jagadamba Cement, Ambuja Cement, Bridge Cement and Agni cement have been established within a decade. Other industries and factories are also established in the district like Marka Oil, Mayo, Noodles, and Bhagwati Steel industries. A large scale of labour was needed both manual labor and cleaning of offices and houses. Those who were not interested to continue their traditional occupation, have joined labour and cleaning jobs now.

With the industrialization and urbanization of Taulihawa and other areas of the Kapilvastu district, new areas of job were automatically created for low-paid labour. Since the products from the industries have to be taken to the urban areas of the district, many labour got the opportunity of porter. This new avenue of jobs has become an opportunity for the Pattharkatta. About 10 percent of the total Pattharkatta in Kapilbastu district shifted into the porter. Similarly, another new area of job for them is seen in garbage and toilet cleaning. This is the result of the urbanization of the Taulihawa and nearby areas. The expansion of settlements in the areas generated low paid jobs as a new area of occupational involvement for Pattharkatta.

Urbanization promoted the use of safety tanks for toilet outlets and Pattharkatta were offered to clean them periodically. Frequent calls from the urban dwellers helped them become professionally involved in cleaning toilets as a means of survival for Pattharkatta. Field survey explored that about 10 percent of the Pattharkatta got opportunity in this sector.

The occupational shift of the Pattharkatta is mainly due to the commercialization of the market. Internal migration was one of the traditional strategies of livelihood of the community. Many of them preferred rural to urban migration for the stone works as well as in search of other options. For many decades, Nepali workers have migrated to India to seek temporary employment in non-agricultural occupations during the dry season. Pattharkatta could not afford the costly flight and fee of consultancy to go overseas. As an alternative, they migrated India in search of work. They were employed in low-paid jobs. None of the households sent their member to third-country labour migration so far.

### **Social Security of Government for Kushbadiya (Pattharkatta)**

## Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal

Because of religious and linguistic proximity with plain origin people Pattharkatta were regarded as Hindu lower caste or Dalit. Culturally they are different from the mainstream Hindu caste culture. There is debate among themselves and ethnic elites in the name of their ethnic status. Because of the absence of internal hierarchy, concepts of purity, pollution, and intra-discrimination, and untouchability, some of them claimed that they are Kushbadiya ethnic groups rather than caste groups. By changing the last name from Pattharkatta to Kushbadiya, the same group of people was registered in both Dalit category as well as Indigenous Nationalities. The government of Nepal presents its ambiguous position by listing the same community into two categories by naming two different names: Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya (CBS, 2001). CBS 2011 makes a single category of their population naming Pattharkatta/Kuswadic. Because of their dual recognition as Indigenous and Dalit, the identity of the Pattharkatta as Dalitas as well as Indigenois still in question within both organizations and society at large. Both the Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya are locally treated as Dalits by other communities and people do not accept food and water from them. Even Dalits considered the Kushbadiya as having lower social status. The Kushbadiya named Pattharkatta were confused with their own identity. Harish Pattharkatta from Kapilbastu stated that when he was interested to become an executive member of Kushbadiya Utthan Sangh, he was refused only because of being Pattharkatta<sup>2</sup>. NEFIN identified and recognized Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) as indigenous people by the act of 2002. In 2004, they formed thenational-level organization the Kushbadiya Utthan Sangha in Nepalgunj and became a member of NEFIN. Kushbadiya written group registered them in NEFIN and they were put into the endangered group then each member of Kushbadiya gets Rs. 1000 as social security bonus from the government. This connection was built with the help of Om Gurung who was chairperson of the Identification and Recommendation of Ethnic People High Commission Task Force. The Pattharkatta also became aware of their identity due to the strong movements concerning indigenous rights by NEFIN and the advocacy of their association. They become much more motivated to identify their identity after the Kushbadiya began to receive social security allowances from the government. Now, most of the Pattharkatta identified themselves as Kushbadiya.

---

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Harish Pattharkatta on 27 Sept 2018.

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

If they were asked, "Who are you, Pattharkatta or Kushbadiya?" They answered that they were both. They were Pattharkatta before becoming Kushbadiya. Harish said that they were both old Pattharkatta and new Kushbadiya. He argued that because of government funds everyone preferred to name Kushbadiya rather than Pattharkatta. Social security contributed a large portion of the livelihood of the family. Changing identity from a caste to indigenous community was one of the important strategies of their livelihood.

The Kushbadiya has now been recognized as the indigenous people of Nepal. Because of their poverty, even though they named themselves Kushbadiya, other caste ethnic communities around them discriminate against them as untouchable. Harish told me that other people did not want to sit near and eat with them. They were also not allowed to enter local teashops and restaurants at Kapilbastu and Rupandehi. But in Kathmandu, they were not forbidden to enter teashops and hotels.

### **Conclusions**

Because of the absence of migration and penetration of the market, the Pattharkatta have employed multiple livelihood strategies. On the basis of their occupational transformation, it can be argued that the Pattharkatta have been adopting a market-based livelihood. Their traditional occupation was not only less prestigious but also low-income. It was very hard to adjust to the traditional occupation. By changing the last name from Pattharkatta to Kushbadiya, the same group of people enjoyed social security funds under the category of endangered indigenous nationality. The government of Nepal presents an ambiguous position by listing the same community into two categories by naming two different names. Because of their dual recognition as Indigenous and Dalit, the identity of the Pattharkatta as Dalit as well as Indigenous is still in question within both organizations and society at large. Both the Pattharkatta and Kushbadiya are locally treated as Dalits by other communities and people do not accept food and water from them.

Their traditional occupation was stonework but because of new technological inventions and interventions to it, they are forced to search the other options of occupations to earn their livelihood. The unintended consequences of the transformation of identity created debates of caste ethnic status but it supported their livelihood. This study concluded that both livelihood and cultural identity are fluid

## Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal

phenomena of the people rather than static forever. Marginalized communities changed their identity if their livelihood became easy. Renaming is considered as livelihood strategies at large because Rs. 1000 per month per person is big deal for marginalized community. This is the good example how state policy helped to change livelihood status and cultural identity of particular group of people.

### References

- Bhurtel, B. (2000). Changing livelihood strategies of the Kumals living in Pokhara Valley of Western Nepal. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation. Tribhuvan University.
- Bishwakarma, M. (2017). Democratic politics in Nepal: Dalit political *inequality and representation*. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 2(3), 261–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891116660633>
- Bishwakarma, M. (2018). *Political transformations in Nepal: Dalit inequality and justice*. The University of Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from [https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/17882/1/bishwakarma\\_mb\\_thesis.pdf](https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/17882/1/bishwakarma_mb_thesis.pdf)
- Budhathoki, C. B. (2012). *Access barriers to healthcare services in Kushbadiya Community: Report presented in Kathmandu*. Social Inclusion Research Fund, SNV Nepal.
- Cameron, M. M. (2010). Many Dalits: Debating identity in a new Nepal. In Arjun Guneratne (ed). *Dalits of Nepal: Towards Dignity, Citizenship, and Justice*. Lalitpur: Himal Books.
- Cameron, M.M. (1998). *On the edge of the auspicious: Gender and caste in Nepal*. University of Illinois Press.
- CBS. (2001). *Population Monograph of Nepal*. Kathmandu: CBS.
- CBS. (2011). *Preliminary Report of Census 2011*. Kathmandu: CBS.
- Chaurasiya, S. P., Pravana, N. K., Khanal, V., & Giri, D. (2019). Two thirds of the most disadvantaged Dalit population of Nepal still do not deliver in health

Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal (Vol.: 01, Jan, 2023)

facilities despite impressive success in maternal health. *PLoS ONE*, 14(6), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0217337>

Dahal, D. R. (2010). Hindu nationalism and untouchable reform: The status of Dalits in Nepali society. *SASON Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 1. Pp 13-36.

Giri, M. (2018). Political Economic dimensions of marginalization: The case of the Musahars of Eastern Tarai, Nepal. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation Submitted to the FoHSS, Dean Office, T.U.

KushbadiyaUtthanSangh. (2011). An Annual Report. KUS.

Maharjan, R. (2022). Dual identity of Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya)community of Nepal. *KMC Research Journal*, vol. 5 (5), 83-95.

Mishra, C. (2012). Ethnic Upsurge in Nepal: Implications for Federalization. In C.Mshra and O. Gurung (eds). *Ethnicity and Federalization in Nepal*, Kathmandu: CDSA.

Mosse, D. (2018). Caste and development: Contemporary perspectives on a structure of discrimination and advantage. *World Development*, 110, 422–436. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.06.003>

NDC. (2005). *National Dalit Commission. Citizenship and Land Ownership Status of Dalit Community in Nepal*. Kathmandu: NDC.

NEFIN. (2004). *Janajati Empowerment Project*. Project Document submitted to Enabling State Program (ESP) (Kathmandu: NEFIN/ESP).

NNDSWO. (2006). *Demographic and socio economic survey of Dalits*.Baknundole, Lalitpur: NNDSWO Central Office.

Pariyar, B., & Lovett, J. C. (2016). Dalit identity in urban Pokhara, Nepal. *Geoforum*, 75, 134–147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.07.006>

Pokharel, S. K. &Chhetri, R.B. (2006). Changing livelihood strategies of the Dalits: A case study in the Pokhara Valley. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*. Volume 33, Special Issue, Pp 63-80.CNAS/TU.

Sen, A. K. (2000). Well-Being, Capability and Public Policy. *GiornaleDelgi Economist e Annali di Economia*, 53, 333-47.



**Changing Livelihood, and Culture in Pattharkatta (Kushbadiya) Community of Nepal**

Thieme, S. (2006). *Social networks and migration: Far West Nepalese labour migrants in Delhi*. Münster LIT

Tylor, E.B. (1881). *Anthropology an introduction to the study of man and civilization*. London: Macmillan and Co