

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Pattharkatta is a composite of two different words *Patthar* and *Katta* together in Nepali language. *Patthar* stands for *stone* and *Katta* is meant *one who cuts*. Thus the literal meaning of Pattharkatta is the *stonecutter*. Stonecutter is a single word in English which refers to a person or machine that cuts or carves stone (Oxford, 1990). Pattharkattas are found to be centred in the western Terai region of Nepal. They are found in Kapilvastu, Banke, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Bardiya and Kanchanpur In Nepal. The total population of Pattharkattas is 552 which is the lowest number among Dalits as per CBS, 2001.

Like Brahmans and Chhetris in Nepal, Pattharkattas are also incorporated in the caste system of hierarchy as Dalits. More specifically, as they are based in Terai, they fall under Terai Dalits group. Dalits are considered the untouchables in the Hindu caste system that still seems to be in practice throughout Nepal. The origin of the caste system is thought to have developed in south Asia towards the end of the Vedic period. The caste concepts entered Nepal for the first time in the beginning of the Lichchhavi era (Bista, 2001). The basis of the caste system was maintained according to hierarchy, occupation, and commensality (Regmi, 1999).

Pattharkatta people sometimes seem to be adopting nomadic life. Owning a house is rare among them. Almost everyone is homeless and they are truly the landless people. They lack permanent shelters and need to move hither and thither to deliver their products. In order to sustain livelihood they become wanderer.

Despite the negligible number, compared to other caste/ethnic groups of the country, Pattharkattas population spreads wide across the western plains of Nepal. Though they are located in the western region, their stone-grinder is exported to different parts of the country and extensively used. It is obvious that with this they have been managing their livelihood for years. Sometimes they move to different locations to dispatch their products. The terms for their products in Nepali are *Loro-silouto* (spice grinder), *Jato* (flour grinder), *Chanauto* (holy chandan grinder), *Okhal* (rice mill) and *Dundh* (stone trough). Construction of aforementioned products is the traditionally assigned occupation of them following which they are named and known as 'Pattharkattas' all through Nepal.

Pattharkattas have sometimes opted to different occupation other than the traditional stoneworks. The use of modern mixer and grinder has replaced their manual products forcing them to adopt alternate sources to make up livelihood. These days Pattharkattas have been found wandering in search of labour works around the market places. They would visit door to door in order to sell their traditional stone-made products. Having no specific skills in hand on any field, Pattharkatta people are found spending a great deal of time in search of manual labour. This merely results in success. Consequently it becomes quite difficult to feed the family with such rare opportunity of works. Their children are not going to school because of poverty. Evidently the generations will suffer transition. The nomadic lifestyle of Pattharkattas has not been changed much.

This study is focused on change in occupation and livelihood strategies in Kapilvastu. Moreover this study mainly focuses on past and present livelihood strategies of the Pattharkattas and their changing occupational behaviours.

1.2 Research Problem

The western Terai region where the Pattharkattas reside, have gone through numerous changes. Construction of Mahendra Highway that stretches from the east to the west along the lower plains, eradication of malaria, formal adoption of open economy in the 1950s and the government policy to expand human settlement throughout unoccupied Terai in the 60s contributed primarily to these changes. Thereafter the process has ever been expanding. Attracted by high-yielding wide terrain, new comers from around different parts of the country began to settle in the Terai. Containing massively productive flat land, sustainable source of raw materials, transport, irrigation and communication facilities, the Terai yet continues fascinating many that resulted in expansion of road network, building of industries, and eruption of markets centres. So the Terai is heavily urbanised. One such case is of Bhairahawa, the centre of the mid-west Terai.

Further west malaria eradication contributed to the growth of Bhairahawa which had begun by 1960 to capture the food grain and smuggling trade in opposition to Butwal, while the construction of an airfield and the opening of a motorable road linking the two towns in the early 1960s further strengthened the position of Bhairahawa as an important centre of trade. New business opportunities, particularly in commerce, were seized with alacrity wherever they are occurred (Blaikie et al, 2005).

Pattharkattas were continuing their traditional occupation of *loro-silouto* till recently from generations. In the past, their forefathers were involved in stonework occupation as the only means of livelihood strategy. They were managing to survive in the relatively smaller economy in the past. And, there was no compulsion to wander in search of jobs elsewhere.

Pattharkattas' surroundings have changed profoundly. It has not been more than a decade that the changes around the Pattharkatta settlements occurred. There are hospitals, private nursing homes, high schools, commercial complexes, hotels, restaurants-bars and lot of shops around.

The road network has been widened linking the villages to national grid. The movement of people can be witnessed till the late evening. A big volume of festivals are celebrated weekly or in some special occasions and people flock at the Pattharkattas periphery from neighbouring districts too. These days the Pattharkattas are trying to assimilate some other occupations as wage labourers in and across the local and national borders.

Over the past few decades, because of dashing socio-economic changes in the surroundings, the Pattharkattas livelihood has been seriously affected. Urbanisation of the area facilitated the residents to use modern tools. Most of the villages have entertained electricity facility in the recent years facilitating people to use electronic goods. The newly arrived modern grinder is automatic, electric and portable. This, the use of automated mixer and grinder, is leading to substituting Pattharkatta occupation. They were reserved to such traditional craft. Their livelihood was relatively secured before these changing scenarios. Uncertainty about whether they will be able to keep up with their traditional skills as means of livelihood prevails. Due to these circumstances, Pattharkatta occupation might have been put on the line.

As they are the truly marginal people in the society, their involvement in managing of common resources is a reverie. The social institutions have gone inert and there is no apparent basis to make a sustainable use of resources. Upliftment efforts from outsiders have been witnessed for years across the Terai basins focusing specially on marginal people. But the helpers have been too naive and hence ended up in raising the economic standards of a handful while the rest are becoming poorer each day (Chhetri, 2006). The ever increasing process of marginalisation has disabled them to think about or act in more sustainable ways of making livelihood. Thus the only means of Pattharkattas livelihood may be threatened.

They are skilled in the traditionally continued occupation of stone carving. Almost everyone in the family gains professionalism on such occupation because of its continuity for

generations and contribute in the production of customary *loro-silouto*. Despite knowing that alteration of this occupation can be much costly, the entire Pattharkatta community is trying to cope with the changing environments.

Pattharkattas were solely dependent on stone cutting occupation. These days this very occupation of stonework is facing competition with emerging varieties of jobs. They have been found working in non-traditional occupational fields where, lacking skills, they are forced to adopt the abhorred jobs earning the least.

On the basis of these problems, some research questions are developed which are as follows:

- 1) How the alteration of socio-cultural, economic and natural environs with development activities in the research area occur?
- 2) Whether their traditional occupation has been changed in terms of livelihood strategies?
- 3) How Pattharkattas assess the changes themselves?

1.3 Objectives of the study

In particular, the objectives of the study are:

- a) To analyze past and present livelihood of Pattharkattas.
- b) To examine the relation of their occupation to others.

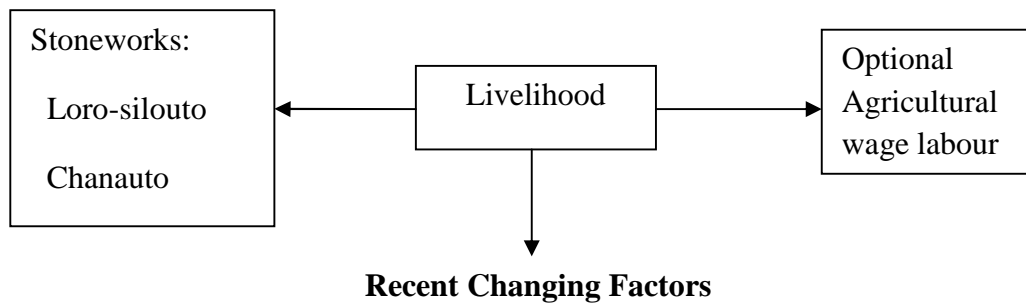
1.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework portrays the change in the economic activities in which Pattharkattas have been involved. To show the aspects of the change the comparison

Figure 1: Conceptual Model Showing the Change in Livelihood Strategies of the Pattharkattas

The past: Smaller Economy: Fewer Activities

A Simple Lifecycle of Pattharkattas with Traditional Occupation



- Irruption of market centres as construction of Mahendra Highway, link roads, migrants flocked at and settlements grew larger
- Tourism: with exposure of Lumbini; the Buddha's birthplace, Hotels-Restaurants-Bars, flow of tourists around
- Basic infrastructure build ups
- Expansion of modern technology as electrification of houses spread

Today: The volume of economic activities grew larger resulting in the following

- Urbanisation
- Industrialisation
- Market Growth
- Labour Export

between a set of activities in which they were occupied in the past and in which they are engaged now have been done. In this study the past refers to the period around fifteen years ago. The model can be seen in relative terms following the context and shall not be empathized in isolation. The figure shows a conceptual model of the research which briefly illustrates the changing livelihood strategies adopted by the Pattharkatta people in the changing socio-economic environment.

The top of the figure shows a limited number of activities that were carried on by the Pattharkattas in the past. They would be earning their livelihood with traditional occupation of carving the stone. The only option other than customary stonework was just agricultural wage labour which they were not forced to practice interchangeably. After having time from the stone carving traditional job they would work as agricultural labourer, with no stress in mind. It can be said that their livelihood measures were aptly measured in the past.

Today, Pattharkattas are yet oriented to conventional stone crushing occupation. But, according to the figure it can be clearly seen, the livelihood options are varied and the volume of the economic activity in their surroundings is expanded to a greater extent. In the box on the bottom of the figure are the fields that the Pattharkattas to be involved in. to earn their livelihood method. The majority of the economic activities are not favouring the quality of the Pattharkattas unless they get prepared to boost the eminent quality in themselves. With the figure it can be clearly said that the traditional *loro-silouto* business as a prominent source of livelihood is on the verge of extinction. The labour they are involved in seems to be the leftover of many other groups of people. Perception toward the traditional occupation remains not changed much as they are lowest paid and least reputed jobs.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

To explore how the Pattharkattas have been managing to adapt in the changing environment shifting from a traditionally accustomed occupation to new ones. Till the landmass uprising in the Madhesh back in 2009, the Madhesi people were not discussed in the national development discourses. We have a limited knowledge about the Dalits who have been living in the Terai belt of Nepal for centuries (Vishwakarma, 2005). Unquestionably, Pattharkattas had the similar fate.

This study provides real information and analysis on how one of the marginal groups in the country is surviving to manage livelihood through antique occupation of their own in the changing environment. In the recent years there has been a massive outgrowth of urbanisation following the increase of population in the areas where Pattharkattas inhabit. Small settlements of the past became modern towns with expansion of market, businesses and structures around the Pattharkattas. New sectors of employment created. This seems merely an opportunity for the Pattharkatta people who subsist on traditional stone-cutting occupation. This research attempting to find and analyse the developing scenarios in the livelihood strategies and traditional occupation of the Pattharkattas will be of much significance for researchers of the similar cases.

This study of the Pattharkattas may help to develop general idea in understanding caste-based occupational communities' latest livelihood strategies to adapt into varying environment. Students of the anthropology schools and academicians may find this research useful to comprehend survival strategies of the Pattharkattas and other backward communities in the country.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

This thesis has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of

the whole thesis with background information of the Pattharkattas. In chapter two, I have reviewed the status of Dalits in Nepal in general and the Pattharkattas in particular from the other researchers and scholars of the related fields. The research methodology, techniques of data collection and the limitations of the study of my thesis is discussed in chapter three. Real research of the thesis starts from chapter four. Here I have presented the data related about different physical, social, cultural and other aspects of their lives. The crux of the research and the findings of the livelihood of the Pattharkattas and their occupational changes are presented and analysed in chapter five. The last chapter summarizes the whole research and its findings along with the recommendations for the future researchers on the Pattharkattas.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Pathharkattas is extremely sparse. This becomes quite evident while carrying out the literature review. In the subsequent paragraphs, it has been attempted to articulate anthropological viewpoints on development and environment together. Anthropologists have always been situating own perspectives in assessing the worldly concerns. Consequently anthropological discourses continued to arise in the concurrent issues as well. This becomes the process of theorizing the postulates. To understand human phenomena these theories stand as the foundations.

2.1 Development, Environment and Anthropology

Anthropology enables us to discover the different cultural worlds that human groups create and inhabit, and to understand these worlds in terms other than our own. Anthropology helps us appreciate that each culture has its own distinctive ethos or worldview, each with its own logic and coherence. Anthropology therefore serves as a bridge across cultures, making once intelligible to the other, preserving the integrity of each (Nolan 2002).

As concepts, the environment and development together presuppose an interest in the management of natural resources, Anthropology adds to this a concern with the ways in which peoples bring their cultural imaginations to bear on the utility of such resources. Here, the relationship between humans and their natural surroundings often appears paradoxical. Humans create and exercise understanding and agency on their world around them, yet operate within a web of perceptions, beliefs and myths which portray persons and their environment as constituted in each other, with neither permanently privileged over the other. This anthropological vista thus links an earlier interest in indigenous classification of the

ecological and economic with the interpretive construction by people of themselves in their environment.

Whether with regard to questions of immediate subsistence or in the name of development, anthropological approaches suggest that environmental transformations can no longer be seen as problems of human activity in relation to non-human physical surroundings. Instead anthropologists question the conventional oppositions between human and non-human agency, or between person and environment, with the result that persons and their changing environments are regarded as part of each other, and as reciprocally inscribed in cosmological ideas and cultural understanding. Overall, this study attacks the sharp dichotomy of human settlement (base or farm) and external 'natural' environment (bush, forest), arguing from African and Asian case studies that most peoples do ascribe a sometimes capricious agency to their environment which they are obliged to interpret and negotiate, and that they commonly regard themselves as inseparably part of it: the forest is the people, in the same way that ancestors are, in a sense, extensions of the living (Croll and Parkin 1992)

The problem of how to live sustainably in different types of socio-cultural and physical context is widely recognised as one of the most daunting challenges today (Milton 1997). Human beings need energy for their survival and continuity of life, which they get from the environment. Natural resources are limited whereas human needs are unlimited. Growth is possible only up to the limit. Human beings are expanding facilities through technology so high level of degradation in environment and natural resources continues.

With the establishment of development activities and introduction of market economy the people lost their land, traditional occupation, natural resources, traditional practices, and thus resulting a loss of sustainable life (Kattel 2000). In this state of instability, they are facing high competition with other groups but are still trying to sustain in various ways.

2.2 Dalits in Nepal

An ethnographic study about Nepalese people was published by Prof. Dor Bahadur Bista entitled with "People of Nepal" (1970) in which he has described almost all castes and ethnic groups of Nepal. In the book, Bista has explained their customs, beliefs and cultural lives in brief. Tracing the history of the specific people, in the book, Bista elaborates how the people of specific occupation have been coping with the new measures of livelihood in the course of time.

Sharma (1994) mentioned stratification in the Nepalese model of caste system in hierarchical order and social mobility of the Dalits in his article, "Caste, Social Mobility and Sanskritisation". The stratification is based upon the Nepal legal code and as described in the structural functional model. He stated that the Tagadhari, Matwali and Paninachalne Nepalese are all ranked along an axiom of purity and pollution. The Dom, Chamar and Paswan caste groups are said to be associated with specific traditional occupations. He describes briefly the Nepalese caste system that was codified in the national legal code of 1853, which is a very good historical description of the Muluki Ain about Nepalese on the basis of caste and occupation. This article describes the caste system, caste ranking, and social mobility but lacks information about the Pathharkatta caste in particular.

After the unification of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah had encouraged more of the Verna system. He stratified Nepali society verbally in *Char Jat Chhattis Barna* (four varnas and thirty six castes) assigning different thirty six professional groups under four broad categories. This was essentially the starting point to emerge labour-based occupational castes in modern day Nepal officially (Bista, 1991).

There had been some efforts to study about Dalits with a significant emergence of NGOs' activities. Many international agencies were supporting programs on various caste and ethnic

communities in the country. Educated active Dalit youths were engaged to motivate such organisations to work for their community and to explore possible employment opportunities for them. A review of HMG's approach to Dalit development shows that various social welfare programs were directly targeted to these communities. These programs remained less beneficial to the targeted population. Government, various organizations and institutions particularly focusing on Dalits studied the socio-economic, political variables, which affected the life of the Dalits but Pathharkattas were kept away.

Jha (1998) has studied about Terai Dalits assessing their social aspect. He has given more focus on socio-economic activities and educational status of Terai Dalits. He finds the low status of Terai Dalis in respect of other high caste people. Owing to engaged in the traditional occupation, it is not successful to fulfil their needs.

New Era (2004) carried out a study on Chamar, Musahar and Dom communities in the Maithili belt of Nepal. This study focused on different issues including health, education, caste based social practices and economy.

Pokharel (1997) studied the ethnography of the Dalits in Terai that covers the ritual feast, festival, life cycle, marriage, kinship, political, religious, socio-economic condition of Musahar briefly. The author has explored several cultural practices and their backwardness and its impact on their social life leadership and reward motivation and other factors that shape the social life. This is study helpful to references for further study. The above mentioned literatures did not cover the Pattharkattas.

Pokharel and Chhetri (2006) analysed the changes in the economic relations between Dalit artisans and the high-caste peasants in a village of western Nepal, Pachbhaiya of Kaski district. The authors duo have explored the process of urbanisation and its consequences for the distribution of natural resources to show how the lives of socially and economically

underprivileged artisans affected by the changes in the environment collectively described as development. They had surveyed on occupation, land ownership and level of educational attainment along with many other socio-cultural features of the artisans.

2.3 Pattharkattas in Dalits

NNDSWO (2006) has prepared "Ethnography of Terai Dalits". This study included about origin and history, population and distribution, physical features: surname and hierarchy, language, dress, ornaments, food, material culture, social organization, life cycle rituals, marriage, death rituals, social, religions, traditional caste council, arts, education, health, migration, local leadership, gender issues, indigenous knowledge. It has also studied about Pathharkatta in these sectors though the book seems to be just covered plenary introduction, which is not enough for further study. However, the study has described the Dalits are backward in educational, social, political and economic and other sectors. Study showed that the traditional occupation is one of the main sources of livelihood of the Dalits. On the other hand, the study found that the large size of the household is causing poverty among the Dalits.

The third survey report prepared by Bhattachan et al. (2002) was based mostly on qualitative findings. Eight VDCs and municipalities from 8 different districts were selected. A sample survey of 25 households was conducted in each site (12 non-Dalits and 13 Dalits) to collect the quantitative information. In other words, quantitative information on Dalit community as a whole was available only for 104 households. His findings show the highest degree of caste-based social prejudices prevalent by the high caste people (48.1%) and the indigenous nationalities (38%) to the untouchables even today.

In a report, DNF (2003) studied about social, economical, cultural and educational condition of Dalits of the country. DNF has explained the about their socio-cultural situation in the society and there is an account of the livelihood opportunities of the Dalits. Report advised most of the Dalits suffer illiteracy and poverty.

NNDSWO, (2004/2005) has prepared "Demographic and socio-economic survey of Daltis" which has focused on census of the Dalit households, their socio economic condition, livelihood, knowledge and skills those living in Kapilvastu district. It has explained social, economic and educational backwardness of the Dalits in the area. In lack of the cultivated land, they depend upon daily wages.

Women are married at 15 to 16 years of age and give birth to more children to supply wage labour. Thus their children are deprived from education. In Kapilvastu district, many houses are temporarily-built. Majority of the Dalits there have no single piece

Table 1: Occupational Datus of Hills and Terai

Caste Name	Other Surnames	Traditional Occupation	Population		Change %
			1991	2001	
A. Parbate (Hill)					
1. Badi	Nepali	music & dance	1,619,434	1,615,577	-0.2
2. Damsi	Parryar, Hudke (drummer)	tailor - musician	7,082	4,442	-47.2
3. Gaine	Gandharva	minister, metal worker	367,989	390,305	6.0
4. Kadana (Union of Kanti & Sarki)			4,484	5,887	31.3
5. Kanti	Agari (ore-smelting), Biswakarna (iron), Chunar (wood), Mahar, Parki (cane), Pouni, Rasali, Sumir (gold), Tamala (copper)	metal worker	963,655	895,954	-7.0
6. Sarki	Bhul, Charnakar	leather worker	276,224	318,989	15.5
B. Newar (Kathmandu Valley)					
7. Chyame	Chyamkhala, Halahule, Kachikar	sweeper	-	-	-
8. Poda	Devla, Dhabla	sweeper	-	-	-
C. Madhise (Terai)					
9. Banar	Sardar	labourer	582,347	886,204	52.2
10. Charnar	Mochi, Ram	leather worker	-	35,839	-
11. Chidimar	-	bird catcher	203,919	269,661	32.2
12. Dhobi	-	washer man	76,594	73,413	-4.1
13. Dorn	Dum	sweeper	-	8,931	-
14. Dusadh	Pasi, Paswan	alcohol fermenter	93,242	158,525	70.0
15. Halbhok	Bhangsi, Mehtar	sweeper	-	3,621	-
16. Khanawe	Kahar, Mandali	earth-worker	66,612	74,972	12.5
17. Musahar	Soda	earth-worker	141,980	172,434	21.4
18. Tamra	Tanti	weaver	-	76,512	-
Total			2,201,781	2,501,781	13.6

Source: Gurung 2005

of land. Of the Dalits, about 85% households have given off their traditional occupation because it could not accommodate their present-day expenses.

Gurung (2005) mentioned a detailed list of Dalits with their distinct occupations of Nepal. The table 1 shows the occupational Dalits in the hills and the terai. There are several occupational groups in the Dalits whether they are from terai or the hills that are listed in the table. But here too a prominent occupational caste group, Pattharkattas is excluded though it is prepared by country's renowned academician. This illustrates clearly that the Pattharkattas are ignored in the academic fields as well.

The Informal Sector Research and Study Centre (2002) presented the data of Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu district. It has included the population of the Pattharkattas with number of males and females. The data is also sourced from the CBS 2001 census. No other aspect of the Pattharkattas is included and any other specific data is available.

Skimming through the literature toward this paragraph here it is apparent that the data available yet is not enough to understand the Pattharkattas' particular case. They did not clearly define the position of the Pattharkattas within the Dalit community of Terai.

2.4 Livelihood Strategies

Researchers in development studies have been especially active in thinking out ways of using this broader definition of 'livelihoods' to address issues of deprivation - a category that has also been broken down into the dimensions of physical weakness, isolation, poverty, powerlessness and vulnerability. A 'livelihoods framework' recognizes that households construct their livelihoods within broader socio-economic and physical contexts, using social as well as material assets (Staples 2007).

A variety of state institutions and agencies were formed to expand the recognition of Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace, modernize the region and undertake infrastructural projects. During the early years of this 21st century government and non-government institutions' efforts helped fund a variety of projects in the region. Likelihood of International airport facilities at Lumbini was improved, the east-west highway linking far east to the far west of the country was completed, a system of penetration roads linking the hinterlands to municipal centres. The period of such intensified investment coincided with temporary high prices for primary commodities (rice, cereals, oil) on the market. Large landowners in the region historically had been unable to respond to favorable economic conditions due to the lack of necessary infrastructure such as transportation, markets, and credit with the infrastructure such as transportation, markets, and credit. With the infrastructure now in place, these owners found it profitable to expand production for the market beyond the region toward national market. The terms of trade later became unfavorable, but by that time much of the occupied plains' agrarian economy has been transformed.

A domestic agricultural sector emerged in the plains fifteen years back. These days a large scale of national agricultural and mass-based enterprises began investing in the area, competing with regional capitalists for land and labor as there plotting of land and identification of commercial land began, in the other hand. By the time diversification and growth of professional agricultural production for sending nationwide characterized the economy of the Kapilvastu district. The production of basic grains took place largely on small farms and did not expand sufficiently to keep pace with foreign and domestic demand brought about by population growth and by the growth of urban centers within and outside Kapilvastu. The cost of production climbed high and price of the products soared that the marginal groups like Pattharkattas have been always in the problem to afford. Most of the market expansion was associated with export growth, and favoured large farmers.

Livelihoods-what people do to get by- both in terms of fulfilling biological needs and giving meaning to their existence- is an area of enquiry salient to disciplines across the social sciences. For anthropologists the activities people carry out in a bid to survive and fulfill their desires are significant in constituting people as social beings. Observation and analysis of those activities, including the relationships they involve us in, how we relate to them, and how they interconnect at local and transnational levels, help to inform us about multiple socio-cultural issues. For economists, these same activities have first and foremost been viewed as rational and materialist: people's strategies for making a living offer real-life examples of the ways in which scarce resources are distributed. For those in the related fields of Development studies (as well as for those working hands-on in development), analysis of livelihoods and the assets used by people to get by are increasingly being seen as pivotal in creating countrywide solutions to poverty and social exclusion. Others, too, have become increasingly interested in livelihoods as an entry point from which to start making sense of the world at the onset of the 21st century. Scholars of migration from across the disciplinary spectrum plot how the pursuit of employment and other forms of livelihood activity relate to the ways in which people cross the boundaries of nation-states.

The study of livelihood strategies is not a new issue for Nepali anthropologists and sociologists, (Chhetri 2006, Bhurtel and Chhetri 2006, Pokharel and Chhetri 2006, Kattel 2006). The authors have offered a significant sum of research narratives about the livelihood strategies of the Kumals of Pokhara and Arun valley on the environmental changes. The Kumals' traditional occupation is fishing and pottery which has changed notably. The articles are documenting how 'development' and environmental changes have been responsible (among other factors) for altering the aspects of traditions as well as 'cultural and social organisation of Nepali society.' The environmental changes that follow urbanisation or other 'developments' (mainly building of infrastructures like roads, dams, airfields or other

amenities, etc.) have received reasonable attention from scholars and lay people like in Nepal (Chhetri 2006).

Bhurtel (2006) has summed up the aspects of change in the livelihood strategies of the Kumals of Pokhara valley in regard to gradual metamorphosis of natural, socio-cultural and economic environment of the specific study area and those surrounding it as well. The majority of the Kumals are struggling to make a sustainable livelihood because of the variations in the occupational category present in the growing market. He argues that the impact of changing social environment is inevitably embedded to Kumals' livelihood strategies of the study area. With the emerging diverse economy around them the Kumals are showing disposition to 'try' whatever new strategies that they think might earn them their everyday lives.

Kattel (2006) weighs up some developmental activities and its impact to a prominent group of Kumals in Tumlingtar of Eastern Nepal in an article entitled "Development as a process of Marginalisation: A Case Study of the Arun Valley Kumal Community." No noteworthy upbeat impact of the development is traced in this article by the author. There are lots of negative consequences of the development, in other words, modernization of the communities with the changes in their surroundings. Herein the development works are seen to be resulted in hindering the livelihood strategies of the Kumals while the airfield was constructed around their site. The development or the environmental changes have severe impacts in the livelihood of these people. Since the Kumals were the less powerful people in the study site they suffered much at the cost of their livelihoods.

Chhetri (2006) surveyed livelihood strategies of the occupational Jalaris or the Podes of Begnas area of Pokhara valley and found that their condition improved after installing the Fisheris Development Project. The traditional occupation of fishing boomed afterwards.

Chhetri finds that apparently, the Podes, who live among the farmers in Begnas, do not seem to have adopted farming as their primary occupation. In this case the elongated occupation of the Jalaris did not seem to be changing following the environmental alterations. However, their identity of being the Kumals is almost disappeared in terms of securing livelihood in the changing development environment. The traditional Kumal occupation of pottery is no more in place and group identity becoming the Kumals seems less relevant.

Pokharel and Chhetri (2006) have presented a case of Dalits of the Gandaki region. As they report, to follow the time and the tide, the local Dalits were not only dissatisfied with their traditional occupations but they were actually abandoning it. The authors present the views of the young people of the Dalits that they view the occupation of the old generation 'outdated' and incompatible. This signifies that the traditional occupation will no longer exist after the elderly generation passes away. As a result the livelihood strategies of these Dalits changed.

Pandey (2006) researched the livelihood strategies of the Tharus of mid-western Terai discussing about the relationship between natural resources of the research site and survival strategies of the Tharus who live within it. Following decades of changes in the nature of control and distribution of land and forests resources of the area there has occurred a shift in Tharu labour practices along with the increment of migrants from the hills. Tharus became independent labourers beyond control of the landed elites and there are labour choices in the urban areas for them. They were freed from the feudal control and the state stripped the forest from their control. These transitions are simply from one form of manual labour to another. In the concluding line, Pandey writes that despite these changes, the Tharus are still left at the margin of subsistence production.

Among the research outcomes briefly discussed above the latter on Tharu is more relevant to the situation of the Pattharkattas. Both the Tharus and the Pattharkattas tackle the similar

facets of changes occurred by flooding of migrants from the hills, construction of Mahendra highway with link roads, urbanisation and expansion of market in the area.

Review of above studies as many as are related to the socio-economic and cultural activities of Terai Dalits along with some occupational groups of people of the hills. The studies only are not sufficient for the detail knowledge about Pathharkattas in the present context. The literature discussed here did not cover about the occupation and recent changes of their livelihood strategies in the modern day changing environment of the Pattharkattas as required.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Study Area

This study was conducted among the Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu district. Kapilvastu is home to more about two third of total Pattharkatta population. Following are the reasons why the study area is selected.

- a. Two third of total Pattharkattas live in Kapilvastu
- b. Traditional occupation has been threatened due to the modern development

3.2 Research Design

While undergoing any research, planning and designing of research framework plays the vital role. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is used in this study. The source of the data is primary. To complete this study, qualitative and quantitative data is used. Necessary primary data are collected by interview, observation/document analysis. Collected data are analyzed using statistical software tools in clear overview of area. This research is based on the objective in nature.

3.3 Universe: Census

Pattharkatta people are the inhabitants of Kapilvastu, Banke, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Bardiya and Kanchanpur district in Nepal. Among the six districts, the present study has taken place in Kapilvastu district. This one cluster was taken as a unit of analysis. Sixty six households are taken as representative of the whole population of Pattharkattas. Study universe is small so this study uses census method.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

Primary data are collected by following techniques:

3.4.1 Household Survey

Household survey is used to collect information from individual respondents. The household interview has taken the head of household and also with the other member of household where household head were not available. Households are carried out personal interview using questionnaire.

With the help of household survey the necessary information of family structure, education status, occupation, and economic activities, social and political activities. The general information of agricultural productivity, sources of income; and personal identification of the respondents were obtained during household survey.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interview

The headman of the Pattharkatta household, as well as headwomen in the absence of headman and some elders of the village were selected as the key informant for the interview in order to obtain the primary data focusing on livelihood of the Pattharkattas for the researcher as required. Twenty six Pattharkattas were interviewed in the course of household survey. Similarly, other individuals acquainted to Pattharkatta people, social worker, local leaders were also taken into consideration for key informant interview.

3.4.3 Field Visit and Observation

Many anthropologists consider their fieldwork experience as one of the defining moments of their life (Nolan 2002). For me too, being a part of the research became extraordinary experience with the Pattharkattas in the study site. When I first approached the Pattharkattas there in the field, they were disgusted to see someone that is going to interview the people once again with no productive result for them. I could easily understand their hesitation to be

asked. They uttered 'why?' and 'for what/whom?' most often. Bearing in mind that many NGOs and INGOs in the country were heavily involved in interrogating the people in the villages for decades to pursue their research motif, I went with formal process of rapport building. I went trying to appease their emotions saying I was the research student from TU and want a tiny little amount of information to upgrade my academic degree. Finally they were convinced with the help of my local Pattharkatta field guide. In almost every settlement, the Pattharkattas inquired if I were a genuine person or a *dollarwala* (a person earning dollars). For more around twenty years, they said that numerous people came there and asked many things about themselves, who were the dollarwalas. The Pattharkatta locals said these *dollarwalas* act as agents between government and the people earning a lavish life of their own selling the story of their poverty. Such practice of the *dollarwalas* has pushed the people into murky future that the genuine efforts by government and external agencies to uplift the community are always blocked by them. This continues even today, as they remembered, but the plight of the people remained nothing changed. Knowing these stories, I found their discontent to get interviewed easily explicable.

Each household of the Pattharkattas was visited and the data were recorded while observing the occupation of the Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu district. I recorded a total account of how their living is organised and the patterns the houses built, at what job they were involved in while I was by their courtyard. I observed about what women, children and the elderly people were doing and how their work is integrated with the livelihood mechanism of the family.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

Making sense of the data was gathered in the field or from secondary sources, to be examined and manoeuvred categorically with the help of the computer software.

The data, both qualitative and quantitative, gathered in the field are presented accordingly in order to verify the argument being made. Statistical presentation of the data gathered, tables, and diagrams are done entirely with SPSS 17. Similarly, Microsoft Office Word/ Excel 2007 were used for writing down and tabulation of documents. Esri's ArcGis 9.3 will be used for drawing maps.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

This study will be conducted amongst the Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu district only which is home to more about two third of total Pattharkatta population. The study may not cover the whole condition of Pattharkattas following limited time and area frame. This study focuses mainly on their attempt of adaptation to the changing scenarios with the new technical advent in their profession examining its outcomes in livelihood, including their occupation, income, education and the others. This study will be conducted on the basis of field visits and household survey in the Pattharkatta settlements in Kapilvastu district conducted in 2010. So the result may not be generalized to the whole nation but valid for the particular community because of the study coverage of more than one third population of these Pattharkatta people. A limited time is allowed to spend on this research. And, this study was undertaken for the partial fulfilment for the Master's Degree.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SETTINGS OF STUDY AREA

4.1 Physical Environment

The scattered locations of the Kapilvastu district, where this study was carried out, stretch far beyond the Mahendra Highway and the major urban edges. Kapilvastu is located in the south-central plains of western development region occupying 1738 square kilometres of area having almost rectangular shape on the map. The district is joined with hilly area to the north and borders with India in the south while there are two adjoining districts: Dang in the west and Rupandehi to the east. There are 77 VDCs in the district and an only municipality. It lies in the tropical climate zone where temperature ranges from 6.4° Celsius minimum to maximum 42° Celsius. Precipitation averages around 1285 millilitre per annum.

As the principal feature of lower belt of the country the land is totally plain and tremendously cultivable. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood and the land is the major resource in the district. The forest is the second major resource which is being degrading these days. Similarly, natural ponds can be also considered as the major resource in the district that is used as fishing and irrigation. Major crops in the district are paddy, wheat, oil and maize. Sugar, banana and vegetables are the cash crops here.

Kapilvastu is one of the least developed districts in the country which has the lowest rank in the development indicators. Physical infrastructures such as electrification, roads and schools are still underway in many parts of the district.

4.1.1 Social Settings and Its Change

Attracted by the plain fertile land massive migration mainly from the hilly region occurred in and around their region. The total population of the district is 481976 inhabiting people from both the hills and the Terai. The special physical features of the people of Indian origin other than new comers in the area are distinguished as the hill people though living there together. Hill originated people inhabit mainly in the northern belt of the district especially around the East-west highway that crosses the district and the remaining part is inhabited by the people of Indian origin. Major castes in the district are Muslim, Tharu, Yadav, Kurmi, Brahmin, Chhetri and Chamar (District Development Committee, 2064 B.S.). Among the Dalits Chamar, Dhobi, Mushahar, Pattharkattas, Dom, Kori, Pasi and Dusad are found in the district. The majority are the Muslim. The culture of the hill people is the dominant one practiced in the district. Terai culture is dominant among all the groups of people including those from the hills. The main dress is the *Dhoti-Kurta* and *Paijama*. Holi, Deepawali, Ram Navami, Shivaratri, Dashahara and Id are the major festivals observed in the district.

4.1.2 Origin and History

It is not very easy to trace the origin of Pattharkattas due to their scattered population. Not much is known regarding their origin. However, during interviews with a couple of elderly Pattharkattas in the study area it was learnt that most of them had migrated to Kapilvastu from Muzzafarpur (Bihar) of India some 100 years back. They said they have been "crushing stones" as an occupation ever since they migrated to this location. The Pattharkattas in this study area believe that their community is derived from the word *Patthar* meaning stone and *Katta* meant to crush as mentioned in the introductory chapter. It was informed that they travel from one place to another to sell their products.

4.1.3 Population Distribution

The total number of the dalits in the district is 68,948 which are the 14 per cent of the total population in the district (CBS 2001). The research identified only 66 households of Pattharkattas totaling the population 318, comprised of 171 males and 147 females scattered in eleven village development committees and a municipality in the district. The population of the Pattharkattas have been scattered in the as many as ten village development committees in the district. The distribution of the households in various in the study site is as follows.

Table 2: Population Distribution of Pattharkattas by VDC

VDC	Households	Percent
Abhirawa	1	1.5
Bahadurganj	18	27.3
Bijuwa	1	1.5
Fulika	4	6.1
Jahadi	5	7.6
Kapilvastu Municipality	11	16.7
Krishna Nagar	6	9.1
Maharajganj	7	10.6
Pakadi	6	9.1
Shibanagar	5	7.6
Singhkor	2	3.0
Total	66	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table shows the distribution of the Pattharkattas by VDCs in Kapilvastu district. The table clearly shows that the settlements of the Pattharkattas are scattered and the number of houses is also very low. They live in minority in the village ranging the number of

households from one to eighteen. The densest population of the Pattharkattas is found in Bahadurganj VDC in the district that contains 18 households.

4.1.4 Educational Condition

Education is a valuable component in the Pattharkatta society compared to other societies. The Pattharkattas still believe in the fate and the traditional responsibilities given by the society. Deviation from the traditional occupation becomes opposite to their norms they believe. The community is much hopeful about getting education that they can see better future by educating their children. Recently the number of school going children is increasing. The table 3 shows the educational status of the Pattharkattas of different VDCs in Kapilvastu district.

Table 3: Educational Status of Pattharkattas

Educational Status	Number	Percent
Illiterate	272	85.6
Literate	14	4.4
Primary	19	6
Lower secondary	10	3.1
Secondary	3	0.9
Total	318	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Education is the prime factor in determining the one's social, economic and political status in the society. Education helps to get better jobs and earnings that maintain the quality of life and to asserts the rights and speak. The educational status of the Pattharkattas is weak that there is only one Pattharkattas who has passed the SLC examination and that is also from India. The literacy rate of the Pattharkattas is only 14.47 per cent as compared to 33.8 per

cent of overall Dalit and 54 per cent of the national. A similar finding was obtained by National Dalit Commission in a study of Dalits that showed that 65 per cent of the Dalits were illiterate and only 1.48 percent of the Dalits were above SLC (NDC 2005). The table below shows that there is sharp and surprising fall in the number of the students in the higher classes; the number of the students in the lower secondary is decreased by half than in primary level and in secondary it decreased by three times than in the lower secondary. The fall in the number of school going children is because the children also have to contribute in making of livelihood of the household.

4.1.5 Housing Patterns

The housing pattern of the Pattharkattas is even unique and traditional. Houses are made of thatch, bamboo and mud. Most of the houses contain only one room that accommodates everything a house needs. The house is normally accommodates a nuclear family. While there are a number of guests to a house, they communally manage where to lodge and dine the company.

There houses were very simple. They were small huts with the roof of fodder and wall of bamboo sticks and pieces of dried woods. The huts were mud-pasted with a door and a very small window which looked like a small hole in the wall, in each and the light hardly permeated through. Most of the huts were in clusters and shared the same courtyard in and around them.

4.1.6 Health and Sanitation

Although they do not have toilet in their home they are aware of the effects of defecating open. The research report summons that everyone of them wash hands after toilet. This

signifies their awareness about sanitation. Drinking water and the practice of not washing the hands before food and after toilet are the major sources of disease. It is very difficult for the Pattharkattas to construct a toilet since they do not have necessary land and money. When asked about whether there should be toilet or not, they replied that they need not have toilet while the rest of other Pattharkattas are without toilet.

Table 4: Use of Washing Materials after Littering

Materials used	Frequency	Percent
Soap water	13	19.7
Soil/Ash water	46	69.7
Water only	7	10.6
Total	66	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The majority (69.2 percent) of the respondents used soil for washing hands after toilet instead of soap. The Pattharkattas can not easily have the soaps for washing because of their poverty. They opine that the use of soap is better than using soil and ash for washing purposes, while it comes to do it in practice they go for second alternative the majority is dependent on.

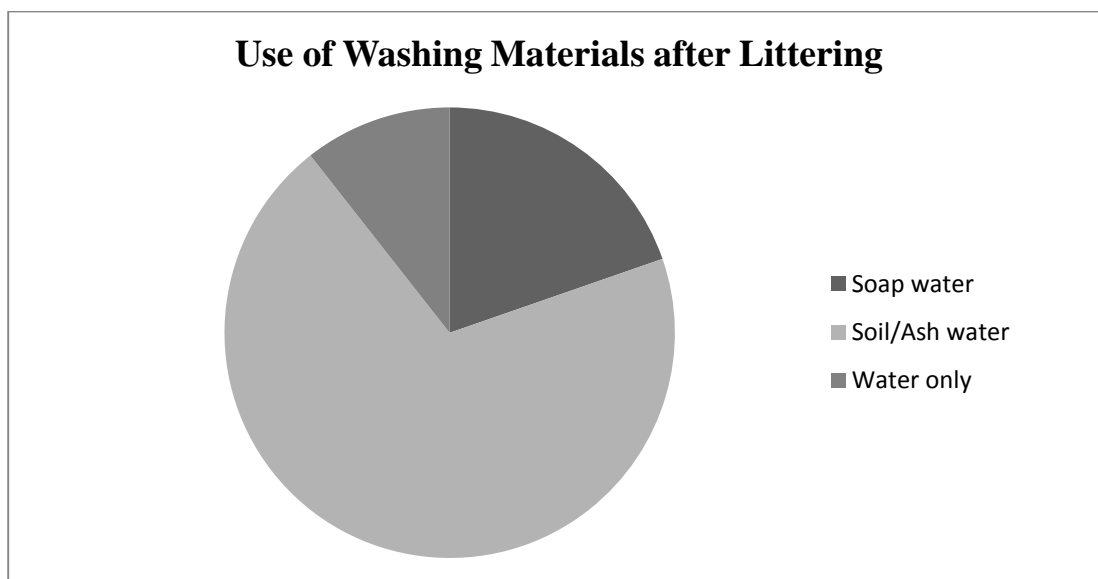


Figure 1: Use of Washing Materials after Littering

In Terai source drinking water is underground water which is propelled up with hand pumps. It is medium quality to have hand pump as a source of drinking and rinsing purpose. A vast majority of the Pattharkattas drink and use hand pump to fetch water from the underground source. Quite a few people use water from tube well and tap, only 1 each.

Table 5: Drinking Water Sources

Source/Type	Public	Own	Neighbour's	Total
Tap	1	0	0	1
Hand Pump	30	9	24	63
Well	1	1	0	2
Total	32	10	24	66

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table five shows that most of the Pattarkattas do not have clean and safe drinking water supplied from pipeline because out of sixty six households, sixty three households are found using hand pump. So the table six below shows that the Pattharkattas mostly suffer from water related diseases.

Table 6: Frequent Diseases Suffering the Pattharkattas

Disease	Number of Family	Percent
Diarrhoea	19	44.2
Skin Diseases	2	4.6
Fever	19	44.2
Others	3	7

Source: Field Survey, 2010

4.2 Cultural Aspects

In the coming paragraphs a brief ethnography of the Pattharkattas has been presented. Leaving behind, a vague scope of the word 'culture' is dealt with in a mirror study such as this. For the purpose of plain description, ethnography on people can be considered to be the core of the observable fact. In an attempt at understanding the value systems that are the guiding posts for shedding light to their whole culture, a collection of the following ethnographic information has been carried out.

4.2.1 Family

A family is a unit of society where a group of people live together of the same descent. Families in Nepal tend to be nuclear except some land-owning families in the Terai live in large joint families (Bista, 1991). Father, mother and their children make up a family except in joint family. A representative Nepali household is built up from the average of each gender and age combination per household in population as a whole.

Table 7: Average Family Size of the Pattharkattas

Number of Family	Households	Percent
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Members		
2-3	18	27.27
4-6	28	42.42
7-9	14	21.21
above	6	9.09
Total	66	100

Source Field Survey 2011

The sum of these averages yields the average household size in Nepal of 5.68 (Chhetri 2004). Average six people make up a family of the Pattharkatta. They practice patriarchy to maintain order in the family as a senior male member heads the family. Basically males deal with outdoor business and woman head looks after the children. Nurturing of children is a sole responsibility of woman and she cares household affairs. Males are involved in physically hardworking labour.

The table 7 above shows that the largest group of family size is medium having four to six members which is 42.42 percent of the total households. To cope with the changes in economic spheres Pattharkattas starting to live in small size of nuclear family is seen 42.42 percent from the table.

The average family size of the community is 4.82 which are quite less than the average size of the district that is 6.61. The greater the family size the lower will be the chances to manage the livelihood resources for the family.

4.2.2 Religion

The Pattharkattas are the Hindus of Madhes who observe all the Hindu rites, rituals and festivals, however it is slightly different from the Hinduism in the hills. For instance, Dashain is the biggest festival among Hindus in the hill, whereas it does not possess much importance in Madhes. The Hinduism is observed from their ancestors. There does not seem Buddhism among Pattharkattas. And, interesting is that many of the Pattarkatta do not know even what to term the religion they are observing. They are ignorant to it whilst they observe Hinduism unknowingly.

4.2.3 Language

The mother tongue of Pattharkattas is Awadhi (99%). A lot of the household members are found to be speaking Hindi as they are closely influenced by the Indian culture from the south. These days Pattharkattas are also influenced by the state media that they are being accustomed to know Nepali language. Since there is a continuous interaction between the groups of people, being inspired to learn second language seemed obvious. Accordingly Pattharkattas speak Nepali as well today.

4.2.4 Social Interaction of the Pattharkattas

Practice of untouchability is scoffed at Nepali society as a satire in the modern day society. The people in the specific caste are assigned certain rules and regulations in the Hindu caste system. There is a hierarchy of the groups of people where the Dalits are on the bottom and the Brahmins are on top. Dalits are severely affected by this hierarchical order of the society as they are treated as untouchables for centuries. The caste based discrimination was abolished by law in 1963 and made punishable since 1991 with the provision of both cash and jail penalty, but it still prevails in most part of the country. Literacy rate among Terai Dalits is low as compared to the hill Dalits. Intra-caste untouchability is considerably high among the Dalits of Terai too. Pattharkattas also have the similar fate.

Caste based discriminations in Pattharkatta community is very high. Almost all the respondents (98.5 per cent) responded that they face caste discriminations. Coontrary to popular discourses, they face more discrimination from dalit castes than from higher castes. Two thirds of the Pattharkattas faced discrimination from dalit castes whereas only one third faced from non-dalit caste or higher castes. But the discrimination from the dalits is unacceptable because they are also untouchable castes. Generally they face more untouchability in house. Other places of untouchabilty are the public places like school, tap, temple and public ceremonies. It is found that the discrimination in public places like temple and school have reduced significantly.

Terai is a symbolic representation of the country as a whole which is rich in its landscape and the cultural heritage. There are many feast and festivals which are celebrated in Terai with enthusiasm and joy. It was equally important to see how the social relationship is when they celebrate festival both within and outside Dalit communities. And also, the participation in the feasts and festivals of higher castes show that Dalits are socially respected and there is

harmony in the society. The Pattharkattas (84.8 percent respondents) are invited in the feasts and festivals of the higher castes. In a question whether they dine together with the higher castes in the feasts and festivals the response was no. More than two thirds of the Partharkatta (81.7 per cent) replied that they did not dine together.

The untouchability is very much a rampant phenomenon among Dalits in Madhes, almost all the Pattharkattas (98.5 per cent) said they had experienced the discrimination. In a question asked about whether there is caste-based social discrimination or not, vast majority said 'yes'. During the field visit high caste members of the society were also asked about the untouchability. Many of them said, because of the Pattharkattas' low-caste status in the society, they can't easily get invited to work. According to these high caste people this has been undergoing with moderations in the recent times. In the region the Pattharkattas are easily identifiable as untouchables and, are rare to be employed in the proximity to high caste people or in the entrepreneurs they own.

4.2.5 Marriage

Contrary to the state law, Pattharkattas prefer child marriage. Marrying quite earlier in the Pattharkatta society is a very persistent phenomenon. In a traditional way the parents arrange the marriage of their children in their early age merely above eight. The children or the perspective couple marry even without knowing or seeing each other. Although the marriage is held at the early age they girl is not sent to the husband's home. She needs to stay at home for few years from three to five years and again another ritual called "Gauna" - second marriage - is held to formally send her to the husband's house. The government law has determined the age at marriage; 21 for boys and 18 for girls. Marriage held forcefully and without the consent of the boys and girls by the parents is considered illegal. But the child marriage is still getting a social favour in the Terai and in the Pattharkattas society.

The boys' side is offered a huge amount of dowry by the girls' side. The girl's family has to respond all the expenses for the boys after the marriage. This is the major factor that people prefer their children to get married at earliest possible so as to accomplish the ritual with affordable amount of dowry. If grown girl has to be married they need to pay huge amount of dowry to the bride side. And the amount of dowry also depends on the education and job of the husband; more the husband is educated and with better job, the bigger will be the size of dowry.

Child marriage has lots of negative consequences in the Pattharkattas society. Primary and important effect seems to be on education. The married children mainly girls can not continue education since she has to bear the responsibility of the wife. There is the tradition in the Pattharkattas community and also in many castes in the Terai that the newlywed wife is not allowed to go out of home until few years - about four to five years. Child marriage also results in the low economic condition due to lack of jobs and misunderstanding between husband and wife. Though the society gives them the identity of bride and groom they can't function what it would have to be. The Pattharkattas community is suffering from the impacts of child marriage.

Marriage is not only related to familial and social relations, but it is a very important from the point of view of the livelihood strategies of the Pattharkattas. It is the source of labour for them because along with their newlywed wife in their home one more candidate for the labour is also added in the house. So they prefer to marry their children in nearby locality. So that they both sides can exchange their labour quickly at the time of need.

4.2.6 Belief System

The Pattharkatta community is lifting traditional beliefs and has gained much wider awareness on treatment arrangements. In multiple response question as to where do they go

for treatment of the disease, most of the family (42 percent) replied that they go local health post to be diagnosed by medical doctor. Similarly, some of them, nine households, go for herbal medicine instead. And, fifteen percent of the respondent households preferred Dhami, the traditional faith healer where about the same number (14) favoured treat at home on their own.

Table 8: Respondents Preferring General Treatment

First priority	No. of respondents	Percentage
Doctor	28	42.42
Dhami (Traditional Faith Healer)	15	22.72
Baidya (Herbal method)	9	13.63
Home remedy	14	21.21
Total	66	100

Source: Field Survey 2010

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF PATTHARKATTA AND ITS CHANGES

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). Along with the changes in socio-economic aspects of Pattharkattas environment, its influence on them is remarkably noticed. The environmental resources at their disposal are equally important determining factors regarding the choice of a singular number of economic activity and, options available instead. Arguments are built in the forthcoming passages about the Pattharkattas of this locale, their changing values favouring the so called modernity which is one of the central factors affecting to force the adoption of the present economic activities.

Discussing the changes in the natural, socio-cultural and economic environment of the research area, the comparison of the traditional, comparably a small volume of economic activity in which the Pattharkattas were involved in the past and what they now are engaged in are made in the following passages. An exact yardstick of time has not been allocated on the aforementioned notion. But instead, particular events and incidents relating to the specific economic activities have been mentioned in order to explain the adoption or abandonment of the socio-economic activities in question. For specificity, the past is generally meant to be the period before at around fifteen years.

5.2 Livelihood Strategies

It is revealed that most rural households rely on multiple income sources and adopt a range of livelihood strategies (Thieme 2006). Pattharkattas surround the urban areas where massive change occurred in the recent years having direct impact on their earning of living. Following these all they have been coping with the changing environment.

5.2.1 Occupation and Economy

The traditional occupation of the Pattharkattas is carving stone grinding slates, called "*Silauto and Loro*". The occupation has been still continued by the Patthatkattas and is the only and major source of living. Almost all the Pattharkattas are following their traditional occupation as a main source of earning. They are not satisfied with their occupation.

Table 9: Reasons for the Dissatisfaction over Traditional Occupation

Reasons	Responses	Percent
Low income	39	90.7
Low social prestige	43	100
Hard to work	38	88.4
Unavailability of the materials	3	6.9

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The reasons for the dissatisfaction with their traditional occupation are many. The most common reason for not being satisfied with the traditional occupation was low social prestige (100 percent), followed by low income (90.7 percent) and hard to work (88.4 percent). A few responded on unavailability of the materials. The occupations followed by the Dalits in Nepal are considered as having low social prestige in the society largely dominated by the higher castes. The table 8 shows a response to a multiple response question as to why they were not satisfied with their occupations.

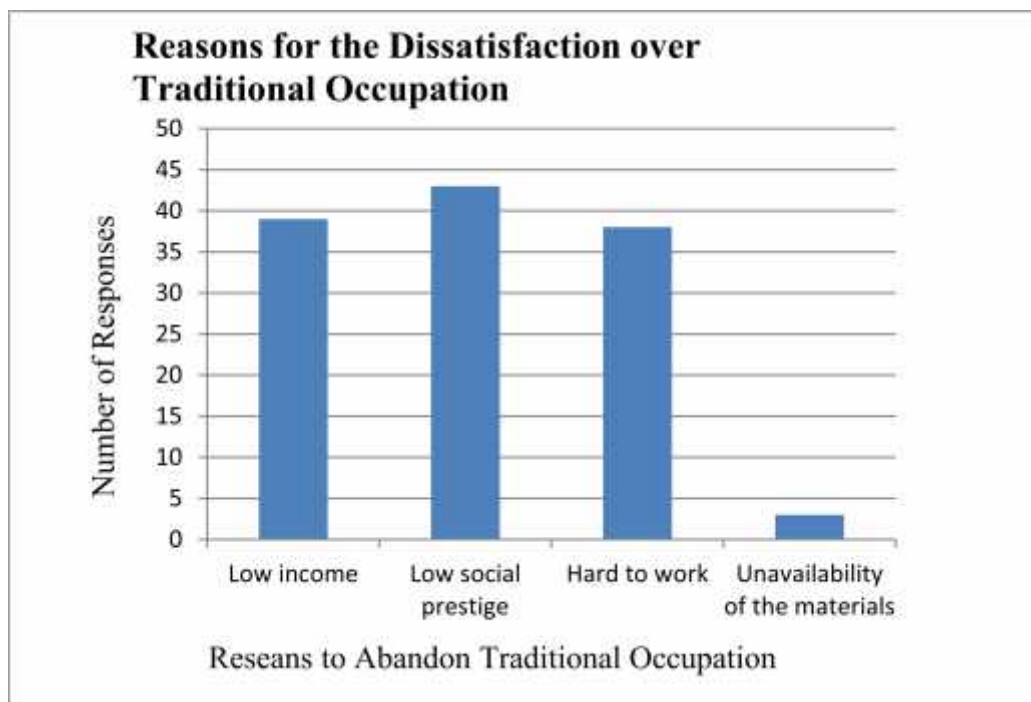


Figure 2: Reasons for Dissatisfaction over Traditional Occupation

The figure 2 above displays that majority of Pattharkatta people feel insecure of having low social prestige in the society and they want to abandon their traditional stonecutting occupation. Somehow an equal proportion of Pattharkattas, 39 and 38, think the stone carving remunerates less and it is hard to work respectively. Very few have opined that they are discarding the traditional stonecutting job because of unavailability of raw materials. The data shows that a prominent cause to leave the age-old occupation by Pattharkatta is social.

5.2.2 Livelihood Resources

It is explored that the Pattharkattas are massively dependent on traditional occupation. Stone carving and the agricultural labour is their main source of livelihood. No single Pattharkattas is involved in the government job. Neither are they employed as a foreign employee other than working in India as wage labourer. The Pattharkattas were confined in the periphery of their traditional boundaries.

During off season, when there is no agricultural work, the Pattharkattas remain workless since they do not have their own land and the cattle also. It is seen that most of the Pattharkattas do not have any cattle in their home which makes the family member little busy and provides some incomes also. In the hills of Nepal, it is found that each household contains some cattle such as buffalo, ox, goat and chicken (FAO 1992). On the contrary, the Pattharkattas do not own any cattle as there is difficulty for providing the fodders due to lack of their own land.

5.2.3 Land Ownership

Land holding or the size of the land a family holds is the primary and important determinant of the economy of a household in a society whose economy is largely a subsistence economy. As Nepal is not an industrialized country, its people overwhelmingly depend up on the agriculture. And for agriculture, sufficient size of land is needed to make the household keepings. Therefore, although the Pattharkattas are known as a landless community, their actual landholding and the types of land -own, public, with the certificate or not- have been studied.

On the contrary to the national data - 47 percent Terai Dalits as landless - and the popular claim that all the Terai Dalits are landless (Bhattchan, 2002) more than half of the Pattharkatta own land. A significant number of Pattharkattas have the land without land certificate. Due to the provision that a person without having a citizenship certificate, most of the Terai people did not have land certificate and had difficulties in purchasing the land. National Dalit Commission also approves that most of the landless Terai Dalits are residing in the public land so they have no land ownership certificate from the land reform office and the lack of citizenship certificate was the main reason for not getting land ownership certificate (NDC, 2005).

The unregistered land the Pattharkattas use for housing and agriculture are of various types. These type of land include the land of landlords, government land, own land and of relatives. The table 9 shows the number of the households having the unregistered land. Almost half of the family -51.5 percent- have been residing in the land of the landlords whereas other one thirds (34 percent) is using the government land. The land of the landlords is leasehold sort of land for certain time.

Table 10: Types of Unregistered Land Occupied by Pattharkattas

Ownership of Land	Number of households	Percent
Landlords	34	51.51
Government	23	34.84
Own	6	9.09
Relatives	3	4.54
Total	66	100

Source: Field Survey 2010

As the land is purchased without registering in the district land revenue office and the purchaser does not have any certificate of the purchasing, the Pattharkattas sometimes have to return it to the seller. Landlessness in Nepal is closely associated with the insurgency and intensity of conflict (IMF 2005). There occurs a frequent quarrel in the Terai community on the matter of the land. Caplan also found in the western hills that the conflict between Dalits and the high caste people have been witnessed (Caplan, 1972). The Pattharkattas have also similar cases of conflict with landlords. The following graphical presentation depicts clearly the portion of lands of different kinds the Pattharkattas belong to.

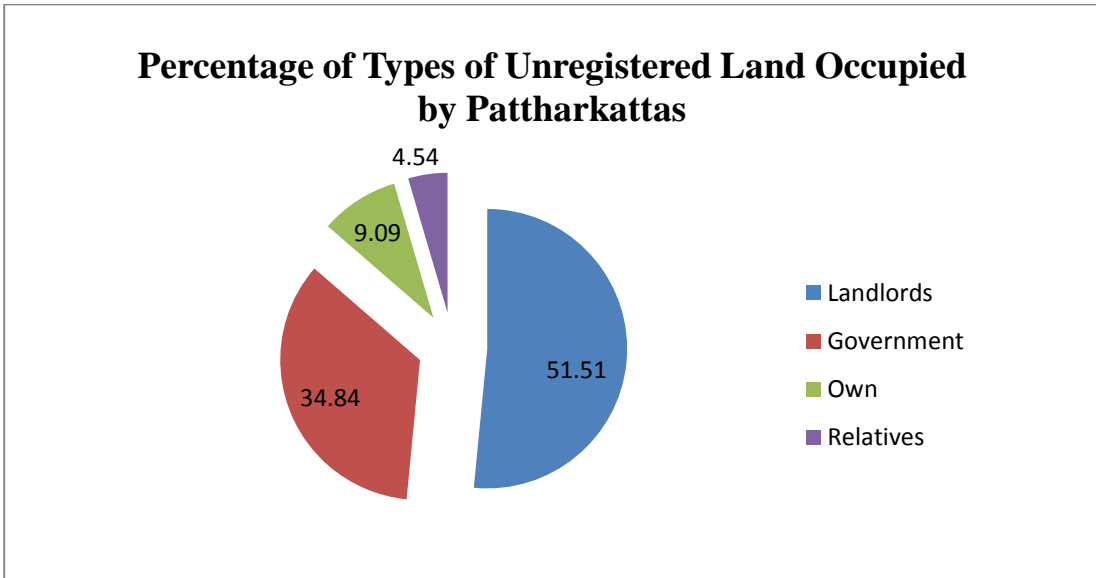


Figure 3: Percentage of Types of Unregistered Land Occupied by Pattharkattas

5.3 Assessing the Past

The landscape of Kapilvastu district is quite amazingly decked by the nature and considered mysterious since there are many consecrated sites; Tilaurakot and Devdaha. Tilaurakot is the historical place where Buddha spent his youth. Now the widespread recognition of the famous Lumbini has become the landmark of the country at large. The renowned Mahendra highway divides the district approximately by half. The highway is linked with feeder roads constructing web of the lanes through the district.

The Pattharkattas settlement looked like actually the makeshift homes designed to retreat temporarily. Nevertheless, these are their permanent residences where they have been living for centuries though they move hither and thither to dispatch the products. The Pattharkattas lived in a homogenous social unit in close clusters. This has become prominent for them as it facilitated a joint participation in their economic activities and to continue cultural practices. Being landless, Pattharkattas managed sometime to grow vegetables in pieces of lands or the wastelands to satisfy their family needs. In many cases Pattharkattas exchanged their products with food grains: rice, oil, maize and spices.

There would be abundance of raw materials, the boulders for the Pattharkattas to gather and prepare the rockwork. They would go to the '*Banganga*' riversides around their settlements and fetch the necessary amount for few months to continue the craft.

Table 11: Types of the Sandstone Products Pattharkattas Prepared in the Past and their Market Prices

Product Types	Primary Purpose	Cost (NPR)
Loro-Silouto	Grinding spices	150
Chanauto	Chandan ghotne	100
Jato	Floor grinder	200
Okhal	Rice mill	200
Dundh	Stone Trough	350

Source: Field Survey 2010

Pattharkattas opine that their work is artistic and creative one. Most of the time, while manufacturing the stonework objects, they apply artistic techniques to decorate the products. This crafting doesn't imply to the *dundh* because of its use in non-human environment or for the cattle. They believe that the stonework they produce are the super in quality as there are other groups of people adopting to make *Loro-silouto* business these days copying them. Pattharkattas seemed much confident and competent in their traditional family occupation of crafting stone. The people searching *loro-silouto* of original quality come to them and purchase, they believe. They are producing a limited variety of stonework though. The *loro-silouto* was congruent with the culture of the people. A tentative estimate of the cost of each of these stoneworks has been done with the help of the interviews taken with the key informants.

5.4 Present Livelihood Strategies

The rapid growth of the towns into urban centre with its gigantic attraction is certainly prime reason for initiating socio-cultural and economic changes in the surrounding areas. The colossal augmenting of social amenities and economic opportunities has shaken the cultural bases on which the traditional societies were to be built. Relatively stable and self-sufficient village economy, facilitated by numerous socio-economic institutions has delved into broader economic development. The very position in the society defined on that basis of division of labour has been disadvantage for them.

Table 12: Past and Present Occupations of Pattharkattas

Past Occupations			Present Occupations	
Job Types	Number of households	Percent	Number of households	Percent
Stoneworks	61	92.42	25	37.87
Agricultural labourers	3	4.54	8	12.12
Industrial labourers	0	0	17	25.75
Porters	2	3.03	9	13.63
Latrine cleaners	0	0	7	10.60
Total	66	100	66	100

Source: Field Survey 2010

As the table 12 shows, in the past majority of the Pattharkattas were involved in stoneworks (92.42%). But due to several environmental changes in their vicinity, Pattharkattas are having multiple opportunities to be involved around nowadays. These changes show not only the limitations of their traditional stone related jobs but also open up the new avenues of opportunities for the people in the new fields. These changes in the occupations are brought about by mainly the industrialization, urbanisation and markets.

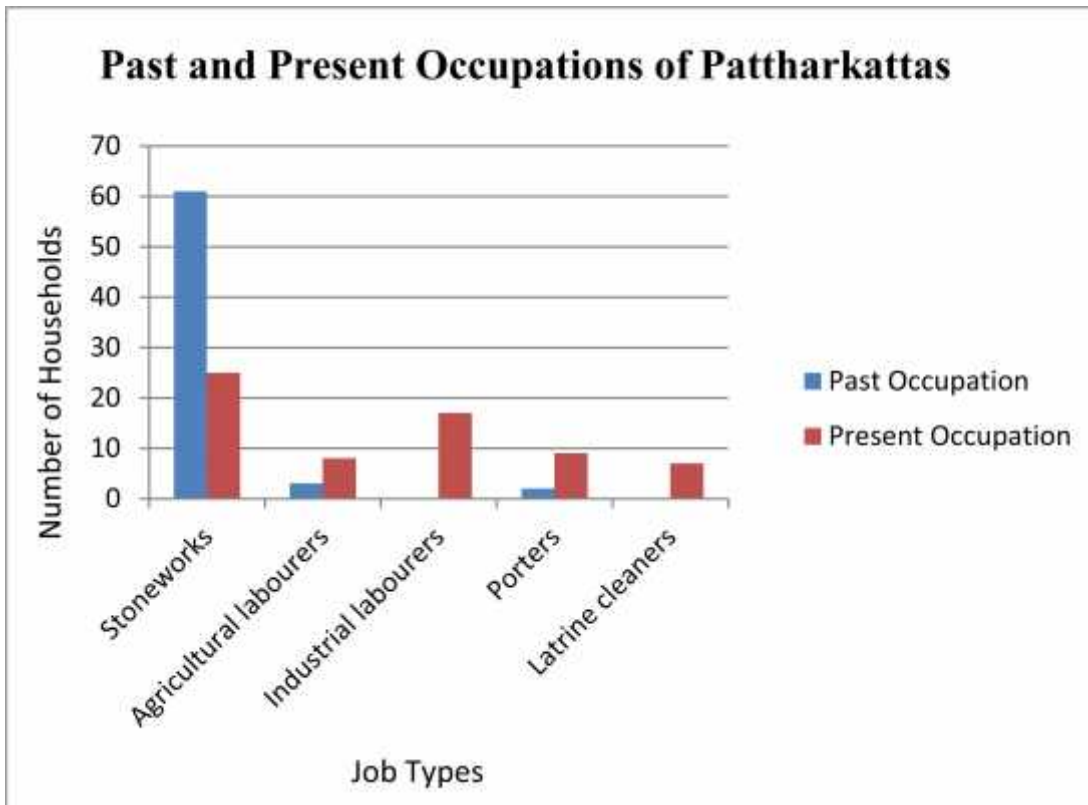


Figure 4: Past and Present Occupations of Pattharkattas

The data in the table shows that there is considerable shift towards the new area of jobs in the community. According to the data, less than half of the population is seen engaged in the traditional stoneworks. This shows that the people are having very difficulty in resisting the pressure of the time and technology in their lives. So they are in the transitional phase of adaptation in the new environment and are in search of jobs in other fields. But still the data shows that they are not being able to do and get the well paid and standard jobs.

5.4.1 Industrialisation

With the growth of population and their needs, the traditional mode of production can not fulfil all their demands. Such large scale demands can only be fulfilled by the industries which can produce large amount of goods with the machines. So industrialization is inevitable process of development in human civilization. Though Nepal is not well-

industrialised country, still some industries are seen being established in the Terai part of Nepal. Kapilvastu district is not the exception. Within past twelve or fifteen years some of the industries are established in the district, mainly in its headquarters Taulihawa.

The industries which are established in Kapilvastu are cement factories like Jagadamba Cement, Ambuja Cement, Bridge Cement and Agni cement. Other industries and factories are also established in the district like Marka Oil, Mayo Noodles, Bhagwati Steel industries and the like. A large scale of labourers is needed in these industries. Thus the Pattharkattas in the district are also attracted to these industries to work as labourers.

The table 12 shows that 25.75 percent of the total Pattharkatta population is engaged in industrial labourers. This is totally a new area of job for these people.

With the industrialisation and urbanisation of Taulihawa and other areas of Kapilvastu district, another new area of job was automatically created for low-paid labourers. Since the products from the industries have to be taken to the urban areas of the district, many labourers are getting jobs of porters. This new avenue of jobs has become opportunity for the Pattharkattas. Table 11 shows that 13.63 percent of the total Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu district have become porters.

5.4.2 Urbanisation

Similarly another new area of job for them is seen in latrine cleaning. This is the result of urbanisation of the Taulihawa and nearby areas. Human expansion of settlements in the region is growing. Buildings are built in the aforementioned areas which has generated the low level jobs as a new area of occupational involvement for Pattharkattas.

Urbanisation promoted use of safety tanks for toilet outlet and Pattharkatta people are offered to clean them which required doing periodically. Frequent call from the urban dwellers

helped them become professionally involved in cleaning toilets as a means of survival of the Pattharkattas. In my field survey of 2010, as shown in the table 12, 10.60 percent of the Pattharkattas were found involved in this new area of job as latrine cleaners.

5.4.3 New Markets

Occupational shift of the Pattharkattas is mainly due to the changes in the market. Nowadays in markets, people can buy automated grinders in cheap prices. In one hand traditional stone grinder occupy larger space and heavier to carry, while on the other, these newly arrived products in the markets are light, efficient and beautiful to look at. Because of these and other reasons, the traditional job of stone craft of the Pattharkattas is put on the line.

These changing scenarios in the markets have forced the Pattharkattas to search for the other options for their occupation. But due to lack of education, opportunities and equal rights from government and the community of their area, Pattharkattas, though they are trying to find jobs in new areas they are still engaged in low-paid jobs of manual work which are considered to be of low social prestige.

5.4.2 Labour Export

For many decades, Nepali citizens have crossed the open border with India to seek temporary employment in non-agricultural occupations during dry season (Shakya 2009). Pattharkattas can't afford the costly flight to take off abroad. As an alternative, they cross the Nepal-India border in search of work. There too the Pattharkattas are employed in some lowest ranked jobs. They have been working in India as latrine cleaners and general wage labourers which are paid lowest sum. Number of people going elsewhere for labour works varies as new generation is attracted to fast-track cash-in-hand jobs.

Table 13: The Number of Pattharkatta Households Exporting Labour by VDCs

VDC	Households	Number of Labourers in India
Abhirawa	1	0
Bahadurganj	18	9
Bijuwa	1	1
Fulika	4	0
Jahadi	5	1
Kapilvastu Municipality	11	6
Krishna Nagar	6	0
Maharajganj	7	1
Pakadi	6	4
Shibanagar	5	0
Sihokhor	2	1
Total	66	23

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table above shows that the Pattharkattas from almost every VDC are in temporary migration to India for wage labour works. A few people in the urban settlement move to India for wage laborer job search. Despite rare possibility of getting works across the border Pattharkattas seem to be self-reliant in a sense that the percent of outgoing persons is on the far bottom. A significant number in Bahadurganj remained on the top to send their people to work in India, 50 percent.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

In this section the major findings of my research are mentioned in a nutshell. Pattharkattas have long been engaged in stoneworks, making *loro-silouto* as an occupation. Stone carving has been their primary source of livelihood for generations. Yet, a significant number of them have been engaged on it. Despite these facts, recent changes in their environment have challenged them to rethink about it whether to continue the occupation or to abandon the occupation as their primary source of livelihood.

The economic occupations in which they are engaged have diversified like never before. Despite variations in job options, majority of them are struggling to make a livelihood through their traditional occupation of stoneworks. They are adopting a 'Hit and Try' strategy with other choices in the market having uncertainties about what works truly or not for them. Pattharkattas are affected by the new socio-economic environment and have the relations with other peoples in their area. Besides this, their communal ties and collective identity of being Pattharkattas are in danger to be outmoded.

The conceptual model summarizes the diversification of the strategies of earning the livelihood for the Pattharkattas following changes in their surroundings, a recently emerged phenomenon. With the booming new economic spheres Pattharkattas have opportunities to diversify their occupation. Lacking education, skills, apt economic background they loose the chances of getting involved in the new economic activities. On the other hand, socially, they are put on the margin.

So all these points and data discussed above prove that Pattharkattas are in the phase of transition which is really difficult for them because neither they are satisfied with their traditional job of stone crafts nor are they able to adapt themselves successfully in the new changed scenarios. This can be said on the basis of the data that most of Pattharkattas are confining themselves in the low-ranked jobs of manual works. This transitional phase for Pattharkattas seems very costly in two senses: first they feel threatened in their very existence and second, because of that they are unhappy about their uncertain future.

6.2 Recommendations

Due to limitations of time allowed for the thesis and the topic of the thesis itself I focused on the traditional occupation of the Pattharkattas in Kapilvastu and their occupational changes in the recent times and their impacts in their livelihood. 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. This very transitional phase of the Pattharkattas in their livelihood changes is focused in my thesis. Doing so, I have focused on the reasons on their occupational changes and its impacts on their livelihood.

This should not be understood that my project is not the complete research on the Pattharkattas. It is because the Pattharkatta settlements are scattered in the other districts of the Terai region of Nepal as mentioned in the previous chapters. So there is more space for further research on these people. Except the occupational changes in the Pattharkattas, the future researchers can explore different other dimensions of their lives like their cultural heritage, artistic aspects of their occupation and their food habits and the like.

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Survey Question sheet

1. Place of origin and present residence

- a) Have you always been a resident of this place? (Circle one)
a) Yes b) No
- b) If NO, where is your place of origin? (Write District, Municipality/VDC, Ward, Village)
- c) How long have you been here and when you moved to this place? (Note Year)
- d) When did you settle in this place? (Note Year)
- 2) From where do you get the raw materials to make the products?
River banks Private land Government forest Others....
- 3) Do you have to pay for the raw materials (boulders)?
a) Yes b) No
- 4) If YES, what factors do you think have influenced such a change? (Circle applicable responses)
a) Nationalisation
b) Privatisation
c) CF hand-over,
d) Others (specify)
- 5) Type of occupation the household is involved in (Circle one)
a) Making stone-products
b) Wage labour
c) Business, specify ...
d) Other
- 6) What was your previous occupation before you started above named occupation?
- 7) Is this a traditional job for your family? (Circle one)
a) Yes b) No
- 8) What was the primary occupation of your parents?
A) Loro-silouto/ Stoneworks
B) Agricultural Wage labour
C) Business: *specify* ...
- 9) Do you encourage your children to involve in the same occupation in the future?
a) Yes b) No

10) Is the occupation run as an individual or a joint household enterprise? (Circle one)

a) Individual

b) Joint

11) What is the time spent to produce a set of the following stoneworks?

Days

a) Loro-silouto

b) Okhal

c) Chanauto

d) Dundh

12) Is this traditional occupation remunerating enough to sustain your family needs?

a) Yes

b) No

13) Are you thinking about changing this traditional occupation?

a) Yes

b) No

14) If Yes, what are the options?

a) Industrial labour

b) Agricultural labour

c) Porter

d) Latrine cleaners

15) How long do you engage in this occupation in a year?

a) 12 months

b) 6 months

c) 9 months

d) Other

16) What are the major problems for your occupation?

a) Low income

b) Low social prestige

c) Hard to work

17) What are the major changes that have influenced your Occupation? (List)

18) In your view, what factors were responsible for such changes? (List)

19) Rank the importance of income from this occupation for your household's livelihood?

(Circle one)

a) Primary

b) Secondary

c) Tertiary

20) After you adopted this occupation, do you feel that you and your household members have been able to eat well and live a better life?

Yes

No

21) If Yes, please tell us in what ways it has improved. (Write points like level of income, education for children, health for family etc.)

- 22) From the point of view of earning a livelihood, what strength and weakness you perceive in your Occupation? (List and use other side if needed)
- 23) How satisfied are you with your Occupation? (Circle one)
- a) Very satisfied; b) Satisfied; c) Less satisfied; d) Not satisfied
- 24) What is the genre of your stonework, in your opinion?
- a) Artistic b) Manual
- 25) In your opinion, what developments have taken place in and around your village over the past ten years? (Allocate the order of priority as given by the respondents)
- a) Road construction
- b) Tourism (hotels, lodges etc.)
- c) Building Construction (Private)
- d) Schools
- e) Hospitals
- f) Expansion of Bazaar nearby
- g) Others *specify ...*

26) Which development activity in particular has affected your occupation the most?

27) Has it affected what you usually eat or wear?

- a) Yes
- b) No

28) Who are your customers? (Note the groups of people and their place of residence)

People

Residence

- i)
- ii)
- iii)

29) Has there been an increase or a decrease in the customer numbers over the last ten years? (Tick one)

- a) Increase
- b) Decrease

30) Is there any caste-based discrimination against your community?

- a) Yes
- b) No

31) If Yes, what are the cases?

- a) Untouchability
- b) Restrict religious practices
- c) Jobs unavailable

32) My hut is in owned land.

- a) Government Land
- b) Landlord's
- c) Private
- d) Relatives