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Between Tradition and Modernity: Indigenous Occupational Practices of Tamang Individuals in Kakani, Nuwakot

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores engagement, sustainability, and perception of Tamang individuals who are associated with their traditional occupation such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and natural dyeing. This study explores how Tamang individuals of study area perceive modernity and their traditional occupations. Through interviews, the findings of this study suggest that agriculture and animal husbandry remain the most accessible livelihood options for the research participants but have transitioned to and adopted cash crops and small-scale business due to modern market demands. On the other hand, natural dyeing, although less practiced, has seen significant growth and displays economic potential but also faces difficulties from the scarcity of seasonal resources and inadequate knowledge transmission. Social media assists natural dyeing but is underutilized by other occupations, and formal education lacks integration of indigenous knowledge, which has revealed its failure in preserving traditional occupations. The study also finds that the participants involved in natural dyeing are content with their occupation, while those engaged in animal husbandry and agriculture view it as integral but in need of revision.

Keywords

Indigenous occupations, Agriculture, Dyeing, Traditional livelihoods, Modernization.

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1. Introduction

Nepal is home to a profusion of indigenous communities, whose social organizations, livelihoods, and belief systems are rooted in native cultural practices and ecologies. These communities rely and sustain themselves through indigenous knowledge systems that act as a basis for agriculture, animal husbandry, craft production, and resource management. As Semali & Kincheloe (2002) explain, such knowledge is “deeply rooted in its environment, history and new experiences, and distinct from modern, scientific, formal knowledge”. Indigenous knowledge-based practices vary according to each community’s values, and occupations are usually shaped by geography and tradition. These practices authentically survive in ethnically homogenous societies. Enz (1986) noted that a homogeneous societal culture is one in which the shared meanings and beliefs exist. For homogeneous societies, the degree of consensus is strong. Likewise, an ethnically homogenous community, foremost, provides consistency in worldview as their socio-economic practices, decision-making process, and resource management are shared and communal. The Tamang community, with its distinctiveness, shares strong social cohesion and mutual respect that form their collective identity, and this bond has shaped their community throughout various historical obstacles. It is one of the major ethnic groups of Nepal having their own traditional customs, festivals, religion and language, residing in hilly part of the country (Sapkota *et al.*, 2023).

Despite the indigenous communities of Nepal having maintained relative autonomy through closely-knit social structures, they are encountering increasing pressures from modernization. For Martinelli (2005), modernization is the sum of the processes of large-scale change through which a certain society tends to acquire the economic, political, social and cultural characteristics. Liechty (2003), according to his research in Kathmandu, consumption of western cloths, music, movie and dream to migrate/travel to western countries is symbolized as modernization. Berger (1996) notes that modernization is the internal achievement of a society where the particular process of modernization support each other in combination. Notwithstanding, modernization is understood as the drastic transformation of a traditional society into a modern one with a particular focus on advancements in living standards, morals, values, principles, education, and technology are the concepts of modernization (Sharma, 2024). These expeditious changes in native societies often create conflicts with traditional knowledge systems and livelihood, eventually constructing tensions between cultural/traditional continuity and modern influences.

Based on above understanding of modernization, this research narrows down its focus on how modernization affects or changes traditional indigenous values and practices. Subsequently, this study explores how Tamang individuals in a homogenous community engage in, sustain, and contribute to the preservation of indigenous-knowledge-based practices, such as indigenous farming, traditional animal husbandry, and indigenous craft skills.

2. Methods

As a study area, Kakani, Ward-5, Nuwakot is selected. The rationale to select this area is availability of homogeneous Tamang inhabitants. The research participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. In total six research participants were selected based on their occupation such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and indigenous craft skill (natural dyeing). An open-ended interview is carried out in order to collect data related to their indigenous occupational practices in today's modern society. Informed consent is obtained from the selected participants prior to the interview. The responses from the research participants are analyzed using narrative analysis technique.

3. Findings

3.1 Indigenous Practices and the use of Natural Resources

Natural sources have played a pivotal role in processing of dyes, where a tradition of indigenous natural dyeing represents a continuation of an ancient native system deeply rooted in local cultural and ecological practices which *Geru* (Ochre) color for the travelling and dwelling Buddhist *Lamas'* Kasaya was extracted using natural sources such as Laha (Lac). Various indigenous resources, particularly the diverse flora of the Kakani terrain, are employed in natural dyeing for the extraction of different colors on natural fabrics. According to S. Tamang, a research participant who is also the local practitioner:

Natural and organic materials such as turmeric are used to extract yellow color, walnuts extract cream color, pomegranate rinds extract *khaki* color, *Tithepatii* (Mugwort) extracts light green, and Banmara (Jungle Crow) extracts blue to cream color. Other natural primary sources are employed for extracting colors on fabrics such as onions peels, pomegranate rinds, Walnuts, *Sayapatri* (Marigold), *Makhamali* (Globe amaranth), *Godawari* (Chrysanthemum), *Chutro*, Sisou Ko Paat (Dalbergia Sissoo), Lemon Juice, *Padamchal* (Himalayan Rhubarb), *Harro paat* (Chebulic Myrobalan), and *Laha* (Lac). (Interview, November 6, 2024)

This shows the local's in-depth knowledge in terms of how different colors are extracted through various locally available plants (natural materials) applying indigenous knowledge and skills. These natural materials are prevalent in the community, its vicinity, and the nearby forest, though their availability depends on the yearly seasonal variations, which usually result in scarcity of materials during off-seasons. Additionally, natural dyeing can only be applied to fibers such as

cotton, wool, denim, *Pashmina*, *Sisnu* (stinging nettle), and bamboo, as they are natural fibers and absorb natural colors of the environmental plants, without any complications. The dyeing process is intricate and can only be executed by a person who is well-versed and trained in this Indigenous method. The process consists of different stages. In this, a participant adds, “the resulting color also depends on what type of container the process is carried out in. The process is usually fermenting, boiling, and mixing with the fabrics. The decision to boil is taken only after fermentation is examined through meticulous monitoring” (Interview, November 6, 2024). This indicates that the process is largely experimental and recursive, with fabrics that are innately inclined to absorb natural colors acting as the base material. The produced colors heavily rely on the container’s material and its size, as its surface can change the course of action during the process, leading to the generation of colors that are undetermined.

Although normative practice within the community had been the use of firewood, she abandoned this practice since the availability of LPG gas. Additionally, another major reason for the exclusion is firewood’s detrimental effect on the environment, so instead of firewood, LPG gas is utilized for the boiling process. She further adds that Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park has implemented restrictions on the use of forest trees for firewood and related sources to limit deforestation. The national park obliges the community members to purchase dry wood on certain occasions, which was not the case in the past with this LPG gas being more in use for the process.

Along with process of natural dyeing families sustain themselves with other occupation such as One of the participants, works in her family’s occupation of animal husbandry, alongside her husband. The tentative number of different animals that she rears is 26. She stated, “I raise many animals in my homestead, around 7 to 8 goats, both female (*Bakhra*) and male (*Khasi*), three Buffaloes (*Bhaisi*) and around 15 chickens. This is a family occupation. I work alongside my husband” (Interview, November 6, 2024). Her husband owns a sloping land, where they grow and amass different types of fodder trees, forages, and remnants of maize and millet straw, which are used for grazing the animals. As the community is surrounded by dense forest, on rare occasions, the grazing route for the animals is also directed towards the nearby forest, which helps them keep their amassed resources adequate throughout the year; the animals are usually guided by her husband. The main production of the occupation is to sell the male goats and chickens and buffaloes for their milk at the local dairy. Regarding the necessary resources that are required for daily functioning, S. Lama explained:

As previously mentioned, the terrain structure of the land provides an inflow of water through brooks and streams without any obstacles, helping the community members to employ it in their activities. Animal husbandry, along with other indigenous practices, has always been self-reliant, especially when

it comes to resources, harnessing the community's indigenous resources. (Interview, November 6, 2024)

The locals practice indigenous activities to prioritize the employment of resources that are prevalent within the community, without having to purchase and import. This self-sustaining system was possible in the past due to the unrestricted access to utilize the nearby forest's resources, but this has not been the case in the present context. Now, Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park only permits moderate resources to be extracted from the local forest (especially dry wood), which has resulted in indigenous occupations of the area having difficulties maintaining themselves without the forest's offerings.

3.2 Dynamics in Engagements, Skill Transmission and Sustainability of Indigenous Traditional Practices

Natural dyeing and traditional crafts, though culturally significant, remain less popular due to the intensive labor, time, and knowledge they require. In terms of livelihood and sustainability, S. Tamang stated:

We fully dedicate our time to this practice, from the beginning of the day to the end, we are always toiling in figuring out new colors and carrying out our daily routine of fermenting and other processes. We adhere to the natural cycle, which can lead to a scarcity of raw material during demand, as season plays a major role in accumulating organic materials. Therefore, due to its restrictions, the income is just enough for sustenance, but we are hoping for a bright future, as people are reverting to Indigenous practices and showing great interest (Interview, November 6, 2024)

The monitoring the process and experimentation is a key aspect of natural dyeing. The whole process is closely assessed by a knowledgeable person. It requires engagement from morning to night, and experimentation with generating new colors from the indigenous, natural sources and is also carried out throughout the year, making use of available sources. However, because natural dye sources are seasonal and are only available during certain times of the year, it leads to a dearth of resources during the off-seasons, so the allocation and implementation of resources should be done in time, according to their function in the process. This stalls the process and hinders financial gain due to demands persisting throughout the year.

Moreover, some participants are trying to continue this practice recognizing the gap in skill transmission with the help from older generations in the family and community. According to S. Tamang, "I am still learning traditional practice (natural dyeing) from my mother because this is my ancestor's skills and this will keep passing down to new generation by the older generation" (Interview, November 6, 2024). Indigenous natural dyeing is a traditional process and she gives all the credit to her mother's contribution, who continue to pass on that knowledge to the new generations. This journey has also helped her to blend indigenous knowledge with technicalities. However, there is a possibility of

criticism that if such indigenous knowledge is blended with modern technicalities, the claim over indigenous essence could disappear in the future.

N. Tamang was also informally educated in traditional occupation by his parents. His father and grandfather were both farmers, and the whole ancestral family was involved in agriculture for many generations. His father was the one who taught him agricultural basics, giving him practical education by taking him to the field at an early age. He remembers:

I have been working since my childhood, but as my father reached an age where he was unable to work, I took more responsibility on the farming side. So, it probably has been more than 10 years since I have fully been involved in this. On the other hand, harvesting strawberries has been just 4 to 5 years. (Interview, November 6, 2024).

When asked about the importance of elders and prominent figures in the community, B. Tamang, who is also the elder member of the same community said that:

Elders are the most important in passing down traditions. This is an important role for a person like me. I think people of my age do share their experience and knowledge, but it is up to the young to take this information. In most cases, they are quick to dismiss the knowledge of the elderly. Though many also listen and learn from our experiences... (Interview, November 7, 2024).

Furthermore, in regard to the community relationship, S. Tamang majorly highlighted unawareness of the community members, in the past, regarding natural dyeing. Although natural dyeing is an indigenous practice that has been functioning since ancient times, many community members were not aware of its importance and entrenched heritage, which led to the neglect of such practices. According to her, "Before there was not much support from the community for my mother and me, but as my mother was able to make the community members aware of the effectiveness of natural dyeing, they slowly became more cordial to us. Many visit us and appreciate our work" (Interview, November 6, 2024). As her mother was able to make the community members aware of the importance of natural dyeing and its embedded importance in their culture, the members slowly were more receptive and amicable. This shift has led to not only a change in perception but also suitably garnered active appreciation.

In regard to the occupations being accessible to the community members, G. S. Tamang, who is the local school educator, pointed out the difficulties in getting involved in indigenous art and craft-related areas for local youths, who have not previously worked in similar fields, because of its demand for technical skills and artistic vision. He also stated that accessibility differs for other indigenous occupations of the community, such as agriculture and animal husbandry, as they are more accessible and convenient to most. She aids the information through her assessment:

I have also seen a lot of people return from abroad or from Kathmandu and re-engage in agriculture and animal husbandry, but I do not see much of the same happening for traditional craft (weaving, crafting bamboo baskets, natural dye, handicraft, etc). I cannot give a precise reason for it, but it is probably because it requires thorough skills. Through this field, I feel this field can re-emerge.... (Interview, November 7, 2024)

This statement reflects a concern for sustainability for art and craft-related occupations due to the lack of active transmission of skills, eroding from its cultural importance. And very few people in the community are involved in traditional art and craft compared to the engagement in animal husbandry or agriculture. One of the reasons for that is, the limited structure of these types of occupation within the community. Individuals who do not come from traditional art and craft households find it difficult to enter its purview, despite the growing interest. And there is limited training available for them if they want to pursue indigenous natural dyeing or traditional crafting within the community, which diverts individuals in other accessible directions, such as agriculture. Contrary to natural dyeing, agriculture and animal husbandry are the most common hereditary occupations of the community. Thereby, many individuals are born into a farming and raising livestock environment, making it accessible from the start. As S. Lama stated, “This (animal husbandry) was taught by my parents. Before getting married, I was raised in the same lifestyle as my parents used to raise animals as well.... This is an ancestral profession for us” (Interview, November 6, 2024).

On the other hand, the farmers share a stronger bond within themselves as they have a traditional way of helping each other called the *Parma system* (reciprocal labor exchange in farmland of community members) in agriculture. The farmers of the community, socially and also financially (because of the implementation of the Parma system in their work), support each other, but as per N. Tamang, the community as a whole does not financially or socially encourage the people involved in agriculture, except for purchasing general agricultural products.

On similar lines, agriculture and animal husbandry are also occupations that demand maximum effort, even if the results are minimal. Accordingly, N. Tamang engages in the occupation every day of the twelve months. He states, “My family and I have to work throughout the year, without break, as the nature of this occupation is such, dependent on seasons” (Interview, November 6, 2024). Seasonal suitability dictates crop cultivation, making the year-long agricultural process vary by plant type. This continuous labour allows little flexibility. Similarly, S. Lama practices animal husbandry year-round. Unlike farming, it lacks seasonal variation and requires constant engagement in animal care and milk production with minimal adjustments and no calendar breaks.

Concerning sustainability, unlike S. Tamang, who adheres to the indigenous process of natural dyeing very authentically, although she also has made modest modification to adapt to the current environment by incorporating LPG Gas and

excluding the use of firewood, N. Tamang and other farmers of the community have mostly deviated from cultivating only indigenous crops and plants to emphasizing cash crops such as Strawberries due to its high demand in the market. Indigenous crops such as *Kodoh* (Millet) and *Mula* (Radish) generate minimal profit compared to strawberries, which have high demand. This has made the farmers of the area focus more on cash crops, but without total neglect of indigenous plants and crops, even though cash crops themselves do not generate preferred profit.

In the traditional practices, the earnings are to sustain their family. However, in order to cope with the economy some prioritizes rearing chicken for profitability over the traditional focus on cows and buffaloes, but due to the high demand of chicken, now chicken seems more suitable to the current situation as it brings them decent money during sale.

In the past, the indigenous animal husbandry of the area favored buffaloes and cows due to the profitability of their milk, whereas chicken was reared for personal consumption. In contrast, today the focus has shifted to chicken rearing, which has helped participants to make a modest profit through its sale in the local market. This shift shows a proof that traditional practices alone may not provide sufficient economic returns, as per the demand of the market. Therefore, adapting to market became a basic necessity to maintain stable income.

Moreover, N. Tamang noted that the poorly structured market, which lacks consistent accessibility for farmers due to frequent fluctuations in market rates, makes production decisions challenging and often leads to miscalculations that, in many cases, result in significant losses. (Interview, November 6, 2024). Furthermore, another major issue for the farmers is that they do not have access to the market directly; most of the time, they are obliged to sell at unfavorable rates. As such, G. S. Tamang, stated that no instant measures are being taken by the local government addressing agricultural issues. He adds, "...there could be a greater participation in agriculture if the market had a proper structure where farmers didn't have to worry about selling their products at fluctuating margins" (Interview, November 7, 2024).

In the similar vein, A. M. Tamang, who is also the local government service provider, provided his assessment on the matter of divergence from indigenous customs in animal husbandry. According to him, "Although poultry is lucrative, in this region climate is not suitable for it, so people usually engaged in traditional animal husbandry" (Interview, November 7, 2024). This does not seem to be a drastic change in indigenous animal husbandry compared to indigenous agriculture. Furthermore, animal husbandry is not a lucrative profession, however, S. Lama explained:

Our family consists of 13 members, and almost all of us are involved and are dependent on this occupation, yet given the number of people, we are self-sustainable and are capable of providing formal education for our children. This occupation till now has been profitable (Interview, November 6, 2024).

Despite a significant family size, her family succeed to sustain solely through animal husbandry, making them financially capable of providing formal education for their children. However, the over reliance on single occupation often also leads to setbacks, which causes monetary loss and moral dejection. She further added, “I have seen people and have experienced myself being discouraged from continuing our practices because of diseases like bird flu and *Khoret* (FMD Disease) which harms our profession significantly, but these are part of the occupation” (Interview, November 6, 2024). Zoonotic and other contagious viral diseases, such as *Khoret*, are recurring, and their outbreaks cause irreparable damage, often killing most of the farmed animals. This is the biggest challenge in terms of sustainability and maintenance for people involved in animal husbandry in the community.

3.3 Continuation Indigenous Practices Amid Foreign Employment

Modern employment effects on natural dyeing in the community are minimal, as those who are involved in it are small in numbers and have persevered despite various social and economic challenges over the years. As per the information by S. Tamang, art and traditional craft field is broad and while modern employment could have had pernicious effect on similar practices such as artistry, her experience with natural dyeing has not been so, as she stated “I cannot say for other indigenous practices, but natural dyeing in this community has not been affected by modern employment... This is something I enjoy doing...” (Interview, November 6, 2024). Also, a significant motive behind the continuation of natural dyeing in the area being impervious to modern employment is because of the engaged individuals, like S. Tamang and her mother, who have the utmost passion and interest in it. The availability of indigenous, organic resources despite their seasonal characteristics also keeps the involved people thoroughly engaged, instigating experimentation and development. Besides, the resources mostly do not demand purchase and are prevalent throughout the community, hence limiting substantial expenditure.

Unlike the traction that natural dyeing has gained, the interest in agriculture and animal husbandry have both declined, although many young whose family occupation is agriculture, seem to return to the community after abroad labor migration. However, this only seems like a last option, rather than of interest. N. Tamang himself had worked abroad for a while before returning to his household occupation. He explained:

I went to work abroad in Malaysia for 11 months, but returned as I felt I was very distant from my home. I returned to my traditional occupation. Many of my friends have also done the same thing. Many have returned from Gulf countries to continue agriculture. People of my age group leave this occupation behind for modern or abroad employment, as the pay is high, but they are unable to find a home there, so they return. The biggest issue with this occupation is money, but people in my circle eventually have returned after earning some cash abroad or in Kathmandu. (Interview, November 6, 2024)

As mentioned above, many individuals in the community return and continue their household occupations as they find it difficult to acclimate themselves to a different culture and environment. The distance between them and their families also makes it difficult for them to completely fit into an unfamiliar environment and work earnestly. Even though the money offered, especially in Gulf nations, is appealing, most return and re-engage in traditional practice, where they feel most comfortable. Also, as mentioned by N. Tamang, these individuals have assimilated moderate amounts of money from their job abroad or in other cities of the country, usually Kathmandu, which results in the re-engagement process.

A. M. Tamang provided a similar account. He pointed out:

Young people prefer to go abroad because our traditional occupation is just enough for survival; it is not profitable. But what I have also seen is that many individuals return and engage again in their traditional occupation, which gives me the belief that these traditional occupation can be revived. (Interview, November 7, 2024)

Both N. Tamang and A. M. Tamang have highlighted the interplay of foreign employment and traditional occupation. They both attribute migration to foreign lands for work although A. M. Tamang has expressed optimism, as many in the area do return after a spell abroad. He also stressed the importance of development through pragmatic measures-a responsibility of the government-such as practical education about agriculture to the young individuals in schools and proper market facilitation, which would enable them to stick to their traditional occupation.

Similarly, S. Lama stated that most of her friends and colleagues, who are of the same age, are still engaged in animal husbandry and traditional, hereditary occupations; however, she has discerned many individuals pursuing modern or foreign employment in Kathmandu and abroad. She said:

Most of the people in my circle are still working in their traditional occupations, although I have seen young people from this village going abroad and to Kathmandu. But in my experience, my friends who grew up together with me are still involved in traditional occupations such as agriculture and raising animals. (Interview, November 6, 2024)

This is a prevalent occurrence among Tamang individuals of the community who are involved in agriculture or animal husbandry, where they have reverted to their traditional occupation after engaging in foreign or modern employment for a short duration. Although the case of S. Tamang differs due to the increasing fascination with natural dyeing in the modern context, the state of agriculture and animal husbandry seems to debilitate and deviate from their indigenous origin, showing effects of foreign/modern employment.

3-4 From Formal Education Marginalization to Digital Visibility

Formal education has had marginal to no influence on the participants. S. Tamang has studied up to grade 12, and during her academic journey, she does not

recall any mention of indigenous knowledge, as it was not included in the academic curriculum. She recalled that there were instances in grade 11 and 12, where the students were encouraged to pursue business, but any pragmatic adoption or continuation of indigenous knowledge was left to be desired (Interview, November 6, 2024).

N. Tamang also went through similar situation where formal education has had an indifferent influence on them regarding their household occupation. He left school after grade eight, and during that time as he recalled, there wasn't anything substantial concerning indigenous agriculture that would influence or shape his perception. He said, "I have only read till class eight. I do not recall being taught anything about my community. Education hasn't had any influence on my life; everything about agriculture I have learned is through my father" (Interview, November 6, 2024). The case is the same with S. Lama, as she mentioned, "I attended school till class eight... It has not had any impact on my work or my heritage" (Interview, November 6, 2024).

From the perspective of an educator, G. S. Tamang adds:

The curriculum that we teach has a vast gap between theory and practicality. We mostly focus on theoretical aspects rather than teaching practical knowledge. The curriculum lacks Indigenous knowledge or practical education, and because of it, many individuals are not very interested in traditional practices. Though our curriculum has educated many young people, the prioritization of Indigenous education is still missing. (Interview, November 7, 2024)

His statement reveals a substantial disconnect between formal education and the preservation and promotion of indigenous practice. The curriculum's exclusion has resulted in reliance on familial transmission rather than educational institutional learning. And consequently, familial transmission through family members has had a greater effect than formal education on the participants. The expertise of all the participants stems from intergenerational education. This is a result of formal education overlooking indigenous practices, indigenization of knowledge, and cultural significance, and implementing a rigid approach with a strong theoretical emphasis. Additionally, the curriculum's lack of practical education, with the absence of pragmatic indigenous-centric teaching, limits the engagement of Tamang individuals in traditional practices. He further adds, "the only effort that has been made in indigenizing education is the introduction of the *Matri Bhasa* (Mother Tongue) subject for students of grade one in the local school, which teaches students to speak the Tamang language and write in *Sambhota* script. Although the subject is discontinued from grade two onwards" (Interview, November 7, 2024).

G. S. Tamang also pointed out *Matri Bhasa* in the curriculum. He stated, "...we introduced a subject on the Tamang language in grade one... We here are mostly from the Tamang community, but we ourselves are incompetent

regarding our *Lipi* (script), so this is the basis for community preservation...there have not been any major initiatives taken by the government to support indigenous practices as of now, but the Bagmati state government has appropriated us financial means to preserve *Ghumbas* of the area. (Interview, November 7, 2024)

The Federal government has not provided any guidelines for the local government to implement, concerning the indigenization of education and promotion and sustainability of indigenous occupations, except for the facilitation of monetary support for the preservation of local *Ghumbas*. And given the statement by the Ward Chairperson, a lack of mutual understanding and communication seems discernible between the Federal government and the local government.

Indigenous practices are also connected with the social media. For S. Tamang, “social media such as Instagram and YouTube has helped me to expand natural dyeing’s market through online marketing, since many individuals, especially from textile and clothing businesses in Kathmandu, have shown interest in it because of its biodegradable and non-toxic characteristics” (Interview, November 6, 2024). This demonstrates that social media is boosting indigenous occupational practices such as natural dyeing in gaining interest and demand from urban locations.

Not only online marketing and networking, but, social media has also helped to build upon her indigenous knowledge of natural dyeing to expand it. Online classes and YouTube have helped her in generating new colors from available indigenous and organic resources. She said, “social media has benefitted me a lot. I have learned a lot through the internet, building on my existing knowledge.... It has encouraged me and my mother as it has broadened our scope...” (Interview, November 6, 2024). Since a lot of technical information about natural dyeing was not passed down or was gradually forgotten, indigenous natural dyeing had a very limited scope, but as social media has introduced new methods that could be integrated to create a particular color, this has bolstered its purview as well as indigenous processes.

However, for N. Tamang, the influence of social media has been minimal. He adds, “I mostly use Facebook and TikTok for communication and entertainment purposes. Most of the farmers in the community use social media for entertainment” (Interview, November 6, 2024). The situation is similar for S. lama, as she remarked, “I just use social media for entertainment. I sometimes use Facebook and TikTok, but I have not used it for educational purposes... it has not influenced me in any form” (Interview, November 6, 2024). This showcases that benefit of social media are not similar to every individual though they live in same community. Similarly, the effect also varies from person to person.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the present context, no aspect of society can be immune to the influences of modernity and its values, and many pertinent studies have reached this conclusion regarding indigenous livelihood and practices. For instance, in one of the study by

Gurung (2024), it is found that transhumance pastoralism is declining due to an encroachment of modernity in the village and lack of state's engagement with the pastoralist community. This suggests that indigenous practices among Tamang could also decline if the state fails to oversee those needs. The participants of the study area rely substantially upon cash crops because of their profitability in the modern market, leading to a replacement of traditional crops. For them, although agriculture is the most accessible occupation, it has undertaken a notable shift towards cash crops such as strawberries and this has reduced the cultivation of traditional crops. The case is similar for animal husbandry since it has also adapted, driven by modern circumstances, to small-scale chicken farming rather than traditional buffaloes and cow rearing, however, without entirely abandoning them.

Kunwar and Pandey (2016) have presented the influence of tourism, another aspect of modernization, on the Tamang community residing in Gatlang by showcasing the commodification of traditional lifestyle. The influx of tourists in the area has led to the transition of a community, previously solely focused on animal husbandry and agriculture, to a site of considerable cultural exchange. These effects of modernization, although not tourism, but evolving modern market structure, modern employment, and foreign interest have played a pivotal role in transforming indigenous occupations trying to align with the modern system and practices in the study area. As such, natural dyeing, an indigenous craft, continues to be practiced in the area with the application of traditional knowledge and making use of locally available resources. The occupation has also seen a revitalization in recent years because of foreign interest and gap in thorough skill transformation and high-end market requirements, placing it in a promising economic position. Despite that, natural dyeing profession in the study area is facing difficulties with respect to accessibility and participation because of inadequate knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, with concern to sustainability, natural dyeing foresees a prosperous future despite the scarcity of resources during off-seasons. Furthermore, despite youths migrating to Gulf countries and Kathmandu for higher income employment opportunities, many individuals return to the community and reintegrate into agriculture and animal husbandry after modest income accumulation, denoting a cycle of constant withdrawal and engagement. In the meantime, social media and the internet play a dual role such as, it has contributed to the marketing and networking of the occupation due to which foreign interest is attracted. But most farmers and members inside the community remain unaware of the tool's potential for occupational growth, showcasing unequal treatment of modern technology among people with differential background.

To conclude, the traditional occupations and practices are going through a significant transformation due to modern influences. Indigenous practices such as natural dyeing due to its non-toxic and environment friendly nature, is gradually taking its height to make its space in modernity. On the other hand, despite their

efforts, other indigenous occupations such as traditional farming and animal husbandry have struggled to adapt to the modern environment, demonstrating unequal dealt of modernization.

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