ETHNO-LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND EXCLUSION: A STUDY ON EDUCATION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN NEPAL

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DECLARATION

I, **Sadananda Kadel**, declare that the dissertation entitled **"Ethno-linguistic Diversity and Exclusion: A Study on Education of Linguistic Minorities in Nepal"**, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **MASTER of PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my bonafide work. I further declare that the dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BPEP:	Basic and Primary Education Project/Programme
BS:	Bikram Sambat
CBO:	Community Based Organization
CBS:	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC:	Curriculum Development Centre
CERID:	Research Centre for Educational Innovations and Development
CPN UML:	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist and Leninist)
DDC:	District Development Committee
DEO:	District Education Office
DEP:	District Education Plan
DFID:	Department for International Development
DOE:	Department of Education
DU:	Delhi University
ECCD:	Early Childhood Care and Development
EFA:	Education for All
EMIS:	Education Management Information System
GER:	Gross Enrollment Rate
GoN:	Government of Nepal
ILO:	International Labour Organization
INGO:	International Non-governmental Organisation
JNU:	Jawaharlal Nehru University
KU:	Kathmandu University
MJF:	Madhesi Janadhikar Forum
MLE:	Multilingual Education
MOE:	Ministry of Education
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOWCSW:	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
MT:	Mother Tongue
NC:	Nepali Congress

NCED:	National Centre for Educational Development
NCERT:	National Centre for Educational Research and Training
NCF:	National Curriculum Framework
NET:	Net Enrollment Rate
NEFIN:	National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NFDIN:	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO:	Non-governmental Organisation
NLPRC:	National Languages Policy and Recommendation Commission
NPA:	National Plan of Action
NPC:	National Planning Commission
NUEPA:	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
PPC:	Pre-primary Class
PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA:	Parents-Teachers Association
RP:	Resource Person
SIP:	School Improvement Plan
SLC:	School Leaving Certificate
SMC:	School Management Committee
SSR:	School Sector Reform
TU:	Tribhuvan University
UCPN M:	United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
VCDP:	Vulnerable Community Development Plan
VDC:	Village Development Committee
VEP:	Village Education Plan
VSO:	Voluntary Service Overseas
ZHCES:	Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies

CHAPTER - I

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INTRODUCTION

Modern societies are increasingly becoming diverse and multicultural due to the growing trend of migration within and outside the national boundaries, and globalization (Neito 2002). In other words, cultural diversity has become an 'inescapable fact of modern life' (Parikh 2005). Nepal is not an exception to this process. After eradication of malaria from the country, internal migration from highlands (Hills) to the lowlands (Tarai) increased tremendously. For instance, the population of the Tarai region increased from 36.4 per cent in 1961 to 48.4 per cent in 2001. The population density of Tarai increased from 110 in 1960 to 330 persons per sq. km in 2001 (Gupta 2004). As a result, the number of caste/ethnic groups and languages increased significantly in the Tarai districts in comparison to the hill and mountain districts (Rimal 2007). The rapid growth of urbanization (NPC 2006) and settlements nearby newly constructed roads, has also contributed to promote multicultural and multilingual character of Nepali society.

However, one should not forget that Nepal is historically regarded as a mosaic of geographical, social, cultural and linguistic diversities right from the beginning despite its small size in terms of territory and population. Nepalese society embraces various social groups having different religious, racial, caste, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, the authoritarian regime led by the Monarch directly or indirectly for more than 240 years, promoted the hegemony of 'one religion', 'one culture' and 'one language' in the name of 'national unity'. This situation created fertile ground for prevalence of discrimination and social exclusion in economic, political and socio-cultural aspects, which victimized Dalits, janajatis[1], linguistic minorities and other marginalized communities. Subsequently, the terms 'social exclusion' and 'inclusion' have become catch words in the recent development and social policy reform discourses in Nepal. More importantly, the issue of social exclusion gained currency in Nepal as it stepped into a new era of restructuring and transformation as a Federal Democratic

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[1] The word *'janajati'* refers to indigenous people or indigenous nationalities of Nepal which does not belong to the Hindu hierarchical caste group.

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Republic removing the monarchy through the historic and democratic declaration in the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly in 2008. Hence, social inclusion has been an important agenda for state transformation (Gurung 2007a) and building new Nepal.

Emergence of cultural, ethnic and linguistic identity as an issue in the agenda of the political, social and development discourses, has sensitised people regarding the 'hegemony of one dominant language over the other minority tongues with lesser power and smaller number of speakers' (Rao 2008), which is considered leading to the exclusion of linguistic minority children from exercising their right to education in their home language. On the other hand, the minority children attending the school are compelled to 'face ridicule from peers and teachers when they speak the dominant school language with the accent of one's own native tongue or the language of their home' (ibid., p. 68). Lack of teachers' familiarity with the minority languages, inadequate understanding of the language and cultural background of children, and their negative attitude towards tribal children (ibid., Jhingran 2005) may force children towards learning disadvantage. In this context, linguistic minority or tribal children may feel embarrassed to speak not only dominant language but also their own mother tongue in the classroom. They might realise that there is a huge gulf between their home culture and school culture, and home language and school language. In addition, one of the school related factors responsible for repetition and dropout is dominant language as the medium of instruction (Plan 2006, UNESCO 2007). This situation victimises particularly the children from indigenous nationalities, namely, janajatis who do not speak Nepali as their mother tongue.

It is evident that most of the researches undertaken on social exclusion in the past are poverty-driven which do not pay sufficient attention to the social dimensions of exclusion. The literature of development and social policy is dominated by economic and political dimensions of social exclusion (Pradhan 2006). In the context of Nepal, many studies carried out so far on language and bilingual education, are primarily based on psycho-linguistic perspectives which focus specifically on language acquisition and cognitive development of children. However, the phenomenon of bilingualism can not be viewed in isolation from the social contexts without considering the importance of 'socio-linguistic and social-psychological dimensions of bilingualism' (Mohanty 1994). But

such researches have not adequately addressed the issues of ethno-linguistic diversity and exclusion in education from sociological, socio-linguistic and social policy perspectives. Thus, there is an urgent need to explore how Nepali society is linguistically diverse and how linguistic minority children are excluded from the education system. Further, it is necessary to assess whether the mother tongue-based multilingual education already implemented in some schools is addressing the educational issues of linguistic minority children or not. This dissertation explores with the help of a micro-empirical, field based study in order to interpret the macro policy discourses relating to multilingualism in Nepal.

Social Exclusion: Conceptual and Theoretical Understanding

It is understood that the term 'social exclusion' is relatively new in social science jargon. Before its emergence, the terms such as 'marginalised', 'disadvantaged' and 'deprived' were commonly used in the West. It is stated to be first specifically used in France in the early 1970s in 'response to the problem of sustaining social integration and solidarity' (Barry 1998, as cited in Barata 2000). According to Silver (1994), "exclusion discourse began to appear in France during the 1960s. Politicians, activists, officials, journalists and academics made vague and ideological references to the poor as 'the excluded'" (p. 63). However, the credit of coining the term "social exclusion" goes to Rene Lenoir, the French Social Action Secretary of State in the Gaullist Chirac government in France (Silver 1994, Sen 2000, ILO/Estivill 2003, de Haan 1998) who studied French social problems for more than 15 years (Beland 2007).

Initially, Lenior stated that 10 percent of the French population who fell under the category of "excluded" were 'people with mental and physical disabilities, the suicidal, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, youth drop-outs, adult offenders and other social 'misfits' (Sen 2000)'. Beland (2007) argues that Jean Klanfer, social commentator published a 'moralistic' book entitled *L'Exclusion sociale: Étude de la marginalité dans les sociétés occidentales* (Social exclusion: The study of marginality in the western societies) in 1965. Klanfer gave more emphasis on personal responsibility to explain social problems. In his definition he used the term 'social exclusion' to refer to

people who cannot enjoy the positive consequences of economic progress due to irresponsible behavior (Klanfer 1965, as cited in Beland 2007). But Lenoir focused on social and economic conditions rather than personal responsibility to explain social problems and defined social exclusion in an extremely broad manner (Lenoir 1974, as cited in Beland 2007). Based on Lenior's original list of the 'excluded', scholars kept adding more categories to it. For instance, Silver (1995, as cited in Sen 2000) suggested to include the followings to the list:

> 'a livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit, or land; housing; minimal or prevailing consumption levels; education, skills, and cultural capital; the welfare state; citizenship and legal equality; democratic participation; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; family and sociability; humanity, respect, fulfillment and understanding' (As cited in Sen 2000, p. 1).

This is the revised list which includes education and many other important aspects of human life. It denotes that definition and areas of social exclusion are expanding gradually.

The idea of social exclusion was also introduced by sociologists to refer to new sources of inequality. According to Giddens (2006) 'social exclusion refers to ways in which individuals may become cut off from full involvement in the wider society'. Social exclusion is also considered synonymous with poverty and disadvantage due to the misunderstanding of the overall concept. Walker and Walker (1997, as cited in Byrne 1999) make a clear distinction between 'poverty' and 'social exclusion' stating that '*poverty* refers to the lack of material resources, especially income, necessary to participate in British society and *social exclusion* is a more comprehensive formulation which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society. Social exclusion may, therefore, be seen as the denial (or non-realisation) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship' (ibid., p. 2). This definition traces the fact that the concept of social exclusion is much broader than the term 'poverty' which embraces only economic aspect. It also indicates that either structural and institutional constraints or personal matter contribute to exclude people from their basic rights. Another definition offered by Madanipour et al. (1998, as cited in

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Byrne 1999) considers social exclusion as 'a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined such as participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes' (ibid., p. 2).

Following the definitions given by the scholars, agencies like European Commission and the World Bank; further stated that social exclusion is prevalent due to insufficient access to services such as education, health, etc., and ethnicity and social status based discrimination. The Department for International Development (DFID 2005) also uses a working definition of social exclusion which states that 'social exclusion is a process and a state that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life, and from asserting their rights'.

Silver (1994) appears to be flexible in defining the term "social exclusion" as per the context. He asserts:

The term "social exclusion" is so evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and expansive that it can be defined in many different ways. Yet the difficulty of defining exclusion and the fact that it is interpreted differently in different contexts at different times can be seen as a theoretical opportunity. The discourse of exclusion may serve as a window through which one may view political cultures (p. 60).

Further, he elaborates 'a threefold typology of the multiple meanings of exclusion which are situated in different theoretical perspectives, political ideologies, and national discourses' (p. 61). These types are widely known as three paradigms, namely, solidarity, specialisation and monopoly. The solidarity paradigm defines the term "social exclusion" as a rupturing of the social bond between individual or group and society, and a process of declining participation, access, and solidarity. This idea is 'adumbrated by Rousseau and exemplified by Durkheimian sociology' particularly social solidarity, social order and cohesion. Sociological pedigree of social exclusion is clearly Durkheimian, as Levitas has noted (Silver 1994). It focuses attention on the exclusion inherent in the solidarity of nation, race, ethnicity, locality and other cultural or primordial ties that delimit group boundaries (Silver 1994, p. 67). The specialisation paradigm draws on Anglo-American liberalism which is based on ideas of Locke, Madison and the utilitarians. It defines exclusion as a consequence of specialisation: social differentiation,

economic division of labour, and the separation of spheres (Silver 1994). The monopoly paradigm is influential among the European Left, drawing heavily from Max Weber and to lesser extent, Marx and Marshal. It considers exclusion as a consequence of the formation of group monopoly. It reflects Max Weber's concepts of status groups and social closure[2]. Silver (1994) states that it views the social order as coercive, imposed through as set of hierarchical power relations. In this social democratic or conflict theory, exclusion entails an interplay of class, status and political power and serves the interests of the included' (p. 68). Marxists, on the other hand, prefer to use the term 'exploitation' rather than social exclusion. Regarding the Marxist approach to exclusion, Byrne (1999) states that 'the exclusion is a crucial contemporary form of exploitation, and that indeed there is nothing new about it. The battle against exclusion must be a battle against exploitation' (p. 57).

Thus, it may be noted that the concept of exclusion has existed in social science jargon in general and sociological literature in particular under several nomenclatures, which mean the same. It is used to refer to the processes where the individuals and groups are kept out of a few or all domains of social life on the basis of their ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, gender, social class identities. It is important to understand further the constituent dimensions of social exclusion derived from the literature.

Dimensions of Social Exclusion

Percy-Smith (2000) identifies seven dimensions of social exclusion i.e. economic, social, political, neighborhood, and individual, spatial and group (See Table 1.1). These dimensions with specific indicators seem more convincing rather than the five dimensions identified by Burchardt et al. (1999, as cited in Percy-Smith 2000, p. 8), namely, 'consumption activity, savings activity, production activity, political activity and social activity'. Percy-Smith considers 'nationality, ethnicity, language and religion as obvious aspects of group difference' (ibid., p. 11). This categorisation is based on the experiences of western world so that the social dimension does not entail some other cultural, caste and language related indicators as per the South Asian context.

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[2] The concept social closure was introduced by Weber and the neo-Weberians in their writings, which emerged as an alternative to Marxist theories of inequality. It is 'about mobilizing power to exclude other from privileges or rewards' Marshall (1998).

Table 1.1

Dimensions of Social Exclusion

Dimension	Indicators
Economic	• Long term unemployment • Casualisation and job insecurity • Workless households • Income poverty
Social	• Breakdown of traditional households • Unknown teen age pregnancies • Homelessness • Crime • Disaffected youth
Political	• Disempowerment • Lack of political rights • Low registration of votes • Low voter turnout • Low level of community activity • Alienation/lack of confidence in political processes • Social disturbance/disorder
Neighbourhood	• Environmental degradation • Decaying housing stock • Withdrawal of local services • Collapse of support networks
Individual	• Mental and physical ill health • Educational under achievement/low skills • Loss of self-esteem/confidence
Spatial	• Concentration/marginalisation of vulnerable groups
Group	• Concentration of above characteristics in particular groups: elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities

Source: Percy-Smith, Janie (2000, p. 9)

Citing Geddes (1995) Percy-Smith (2000) defines political exclusion as 'the isolation of poor people and communities from the mainstream of the political process, and the making of decisions about their lives elsewhere by others' (p. 148). This definition hints that if marginalised and poor people do not participate in the politics and are represented in the decision making bodies, the others will take decisions on their behalf. This obviously leads to the possibility of formation of less pro-people policies and their ineffective implementation. However, de Hann (1998) argues that social exclusion

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is better understood not as a political concept, but as an attempt to 'ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in traditions of social science analysis'.

Individual dimensions of social exclusion may occur due to mental and physical ill health of the individuals, educational under-achievement or low skills, and loss of self-esteem or confidence (Percy-Smith 2000). This is a kind of voluntary aspect of social exclusion but the root causes of this situation lie in the other dimensions. Sometimes, certain groups may want to live in isolation from the so-called mainstream groups. It is due to certain aspects of group difference such as nationality, language, ethnicity and religion. For example, *Raute,* an indigenous group in Nepal having a population of 658, still live in the jungles of the mid and the far-western region; never send their children to school and voluntarily do not want permanent settlement. Thus, it is obvious that if individuals or groups encounter difficulties in more than one dimension, they will be more vulnerable to be excluded from the opportunities. Nambissan (2007) also asserts that social exclusion is "the process of 'locking out' of groups from full participation in different spheres of social life or social relations leading to lack of justice and fairness in access to opportunities and life chances".

In the context of Nepal, social exclusion can be defined as a 'multidimensional phenomenon' (Silver 2006) which is embedded in different forms of exclusion and discrimination. Political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions are considered more relevant. The socio-cultural dimension, which includes gender, race, caste, ethnicity, culture and language, is yet to be discussed at greater length. DFID and the World Bank have jointly carried out gender and social exclusion assessment hiring a team of highly qualified and experienced experts, both Nepali and expatriates, and came up with a comprehensive document, entitled "Unequal Citizens: Gender, Caste and Social Exclusion in Nepal" in 2006. This is one of the highly cited documents especially in the area of social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal until now. The report examines 'gender, caste and ethnicity as three inter-locking institutions that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities and voice based on socially-defined identity' (DFID, World Bank 2006, p. XVI). The report gives dimensions of exclusion in Nepal as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Dimensions of Exclusion in Nepal

Social category status	Gender	Caste	Ethnicity/ Race	Language	Religion	Geo-political
Dominant	Men/boys	Tagadhari: Brahman, Chhetri	Caucasoid	Nepali	Hindu	Parbatiya (Hill dweller)
Subordinate	Women/ girls	Dalit	Janajati/ Mongoloid	Others	Non-Hindu	Madhesi (Plains dweller)

Source: DFID and the World Bank (2006, p. 5)

The categorisation of DFID and the World Bank basically belongs to socio-cultural and spatial dimensions of social exclusion, which gives insights into the proposed study that focuses on socio-cultural aspect of exclusion with particular reference to language and ethnicity. Critically speaking, the report has not reflected a strong theoretical grounding on the issues of social exclusion. The assessment is superficial and it does not undertake an in-depth study of the root causes of social exclusion including socio-cultural dimensions with critical analysis.

However, Gurung (2007a) has categorised problems of social exclusion in social, cultural, economic and political aspects and recommends the agenda for inclusion. He discusses linguistic discrimination and affirms that 'one language policy is antagonistic to the cultural right of the janajati and other cultural groups whose mother tongue is not Nepali' (ibid., p. 35). Further, he argues that 'it is essential to demolish cultural dominance of a particular group in order to establish fundamental human rights for all under a multi-cultural democratic set-up' (ibid., p. 36).

Regarding use of some terms like language based discrimination or exclusion, Neito (1992) argues that 'part of the reason for the exclusion of language issues is related to the lack of relevant terms in use. Terms that describe discrimination based on race, gender, and class, among others; are part of our general vocabulary. ... Until recently, no such term existed for language discrimination, although this does not mean that language

discrimination as such did not exist' (p. 153). This situation prevails in the context of Nepal as well. However, there has been an increasing trend of highlighting the issues of discrimination and exclusion related to language and culture during the public and policy discourses in the recent years. Gurung argues that 'linguistic exclusion' is one of the main concerns of for the Madhesi people (Gurung 2003). It is due to 'growing awareness among non-Nepali speaking people about their culture and languages as symbols of identity and recognition' (Yadava 2007). The issues of exclusion and inclusion in education of linguistic minority children are elaborated in the subsequent section.

Exclusion of Linguistic Minority Children from Educational Contexts: Review of Literature

There is a growing consensus among the stakeholders that education is a fundamental human right. This right can be ensured only in a situation when all the children despite their religion, gender, caste and ethnicity, culture and language can attend school and are retained without any drop out or chronic absenteeism. In order to create such situation, school has a crucial role to play. Across the world, in multicultural and multilingual societies, there is an evidence of exclusion of linguistic minority children from educational contexts. For instance, Cummins (1986, 2000 as cited in Baker 2006) suggests that there are 'four major characteristics of schools' which contribute children to get 'empowered' or 'disabled' in the Canadian context. The first characteristic is about inclusion of mother tongue of linguistic minority children into the school curriculum. Cummins further states:

> If a minority language child's home language and culture are excluded, minimized or quickly reduced in school, there is the likelihood that the child may become academically 'disabled'. Where the school incorporates, encourages and gives status to the minority language, the chances of empowerment are increased. Apart from potential positive and negative cognitive effects, the inclusion of minority language and culture into the curriculum may have effects on personality (e.g. self-esteem), attitudes, and social and emotional well-being (Baker 2006, p. 415).

It indicates that if a school failed to incorporate the home language of the linguistic minority children into its curriculum, they will feel that they are excluded even if they are attending the school.

It is a widely accepted fact that education is not only a human right but also a means to realise other rights. In this process, language and medium of instruction appear as central issues especially for linguistic minorities. Thus, recent discourses on linguistic human rights highlight the educational issues of linguistic minorities. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) also asserts that 'learning of mother tongue is a linguistic human right'. According to her, 'one of the basic linguistic human rights of persons belonging to minorities is – or should be - to achieve high levels of bi – or multilingualism through education. Becoming at least bilingual is in most cases necessary for minorities to exercise their fundamental human rights, including fulfillment of basic needs' (p. 137, as cited in Gracia and Baker 2007).

Children's social, cultural and linguistic background and experience could be 'positive starting point' for any school with multicultural environment (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988). She elaborates that 'the existence of minorities is seen as costly but enriching for societies and bilingualism/biculturalism is seen as beneficial and stimulating for the child' (ibid., p. 33). She believes that 'high levels of bilingualism/biculturalism benefit every child, but for minority children bilingualism is a necessity' (ibid., p. 36). Neito (2002) also suggests perceiving language diversity as 'a resource rather than a deficit' (p. 81). Discriminatory and exclusionary societies do not care about the rights of linguistic minority children which results in very negative consequences. Skutnabb-Kangas strongly spells out this reality:

> Many minority children are being forced to feel ashamed of their mother tongues, their parents, their origins, their group and their culture. Many of them, especially in countries where the racism is more subtle, not so openly expressed, take over the negative views which the majority society has of the majority groups, their languages and cultures. Many disown their parents and their own group and language. They shift identity "voluntary" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, p. 18).

The appropriate type of bilingual education programmes may help inclusion of linguistic minority children into schooling. Mohanty (1994) argues:

> In respect of the linguistic minority children, programmes of bilingual education, which begin with the initial exposure to literacy in minority mother tongue and introduces a later and gradual change to bilingual mode of instruction using both mother tongue and majority regional language as instructional media, are necessary for promotion of educational achievement and maintenance of minority languages' (p. 196).

Language use in education might restrict some children from schooling (Pattanayak 1981) and even some children with linguistic minorities who are already enrolled in schools, may feel embarrassed, inferior and de-motivated for learning in the majority language. So, Pattanayak (1981) strongly recommends the 'examination of the question of education of the minority children with care'. He further clarifies that 'the difference between the language they speak at home and the language they use in schools is one of the distinguishing features of minority children. If the language the child brings to the classroom is derided and stigmatized and no academic strategy is adopted to give the children due competence in the school language so that they may study as equals to the majority language children, then they are bound to develop an inferiority complex, which in turn will affect their personality structure (Pattanayak 1981, p. 74).

When children from linguistic minorities get enrolled in primary school with experiences of home language during their early childhood period, they encounter difficult learning environment created by the dominance of majority language in school as medium of instruction. Baker (2006) stresses on the role of school as 'an essential agent in developing home language for language minority bilingual children' (Baker 2006, p. 293). Moreover, the 'use of mother tongue in education is important for children's achievement, self-esteem, and not least for learning the majority language' (ibid., p. 294). A report of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1953) entitled 'The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education' states:

> It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his or her mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among

the members of the community to which he/she belongs. Educationally, he/she learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (As cited in Baker 2006, p. 293).

Hasnain (2001) also argues that 'in a multilingual set up, education of the linguistic minorities is a highly sensitive and politically controversial topic, although socially relevant and important. It invokes tension between minority members' cultural identity and national loyalty' (p. 58). The declaration of the rights of persons belonging to nationalities or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities was adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1992. The declaration states that "wherever possible" state measures to enable minorities to learn or have instruction in their mother tongue' (Spolsky 2004, p. 119). The Assembly of the World Conference on Linguistic Rights held in Barcelona in 1996 approved the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights. The article 23 of the Declaration states:

> Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language community of the territory where it is provided. Education must help to maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community of the territory where it is provided. Education must always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world.

Lewis and Lockheed (2006) raise some questions regarding social exclusion and education such as 'why do certain social groups become marginalised? And what are the mechanisms that relate social exclusion to children's school participation?' They argue that 'ethnic population or sub-groups whose mother tongue is distinct from a national official language often remain outside the mainstream economy and society'. Meerman (2005, cited in Lewis and Lockheed 2006) describes the historical preconditions for social exclusion. He observes that such marginalisation arises from "ethnic differences, including differences in ethnic group, language, and religion; and low status, such as caste, as excluded groups are 'ranked' or subordinated in the social hierarchy below the majority population".

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Language and culture have 'inextricable' relationships (Neito 1992) which influence education of minority children. Baker (2006) argues that 'a language divorced from its culture is like a body without soul. Therefore, developing heritage cultural awareness alongside first language teaching is an important element in minority language education (p. 298). Lack of understanding of complex and diverse cultures often leads to structures of dominance and subordination in multicultural and multilingual societies. Rao (2009) argues that the cultural subordination contributes to unequal educational opportunities for minority children:

> One or few of the cultures in a society would be occupying a position of greater importance than the other cultures and 'dominant' or 'majority' culture. Other cultures are less important and are treated as 'subordinate' or 'minority' cultures. The cultural practices of the dominant ones are visible and those of the minority groups are pushed to the background. Within the context of education, this kind of domination of the majority cultures could lead to the unequal educational opportunities among the children of minority populations (p. 248).

When discourses begin on cultural practices linking with educational context, sociological view of Bourdieu, particularly concept of 'cultural capital' occupies space to a greater extent. Bourdieu (1966) argues that 'simply stating the fact of educational inequalities is not enough. We need a description of the objective processes which continually exclude children from least privileged social classes. ... In fact, each family transmit to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain *cultural capital* and a certain *ethos*' (p. 32). In addition, Bourdieu (1966, as cited in Aronowitz and Giroux 1986) states:

> The culture of the elite is so near that of the school that children from the lower middle class (an a *fortiori* from the agricultural and industrial working class) can acquire only with great effort something which is given to the children of the cultivated classes - style, taste, wit - in short, those attitudes which seems natural in members of the cultivated classes and naturally expected of them precisely because they are the culture of that class (Aronowitz and Giroux 1986, p. 81).

Aronowitz and Giroux (1986) further elaborate Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, they state:

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A child inherits from his or her family those sets of meanings, qualities of style, modes of thinking, and types of dispositions that are assigned a certain social value and status in accordance with what the dominant class (es) label as the most valued cultural capital. Schools play a particularly important role in legitimizing and reproducing dominant cultural capital (p. 80).

In the context of Nepal, Turin (2007) presents a publication, namely, '*Linguistic Diversity and the Preservation of Endangered Languages*', which discusses the linguistic wealth of the country where many people are 'functionally tri- or quadri-lingual, speaking an ethnic or tribal mother tongue at home, a different language in the local market town, conversing in Nepali at school in dealing with administration, and often using an international language (or two) dealing with the outside world' (p. 10). However, there is lack on research of socio-cultural perspective in the study to examine the gap between home language and school language and how this gap may hinder learning of children with linguistic minorities. It is in this light, Research Centre for Educational Innovations and Development (CERID) Study Report (2005a) on '*Meeting Learning Needs of Children of Indigenous Peoples and Linguistic Minorities*' recommended to 'conduct a more focused study on the language of instruction, the extent of practical difficulties and the measure to overcome these' (ibid.).

CERID under Education for All (2004-2009) Formative Research Project carried out another assessment on *Situation of Inclusive Classroom in Nepal*. The study identified 'practices that lead to the inclusion of students from various backgrounds, (ethnicity, culture, language, etc.) and with differing characteristics including disability and disadvantaged groups' (CERID 2006). This objective gives the impression that the study not only includes children with disabilities but also other marginalized groups in terms of ethnic, cultural and linguistic subordination. It mainly focused on children with special needs and it has not captured the broader framework of inclusive approach in the study. As far as the linguistic issue is concerned, it simply states that 'the language minority children did not have a language problem in the school. For example, the study states that in Jhapa, the number of linguistic minority children is high but they understand and speak Nepali very well'. What it ignores is the need for deeper exploration and analysis regarding education of linguistic minorities.

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A private research institution called CHIRAG conducted a *Study on Bilingual Education* for Department of Education in 2001. The study examined the existing practices of medium of instruction in schools and explored the difficulties faced by non-Nepali speaking children in a Nepali medium classroom. However, this is not aligned with the essence of mother tongue-based multilingual education framework. For instance, the study has mentioned that 'teachers require pedagogical training to help non-Nepali speaking children assimilate into the Nepali speaking groups' (CHIRAG 2001, p. 64). Further, it has recommended for medium of instruction in the mother tongue where there is 'a total domination of a single language (ibid., p. 11). This view is influenced by the assimilation-oriented approach rather than multilingual perspectives. The study has not included qualitative aspects adequately in exploring learning constraints of linguistic minority children.

Awasthi (2004) through his Ph. D. thesis entitled, "Exploring Monolingual School Practices in Multilingual Nepal" comes up with very pertinent discussion related to non-Nepali speaking children's bi/multilingual learning needs in primary schools. The study has pointed out the gap between policy and practice, and lack of conceptual clarity on multilingualism among the stakeholders at different levels. He states:

> We can see signs of some multilingually oriented ideas and intentions at the educational policy level at the Centre, in legal and even educational documents and at the Ministry, whereas both much of the local administrative/implementation level (District Education Office level) and, especially, the practice level, in schools, reflects a monolingually dominated reality. At all levels, there also seems to be a lot of ambiguity about both goals and means (Awasthi 2004, p. 289).

It shows that there is a need of thorough analysis of policy documents and implementation of such policies on the ground. In addition, this need has been more urgent in the current context of the country where new constitutional provisions and educational policies have emerged after the political change in 2006. Likewise, it is obvious that the study by Awasthi focuses primarily on pedagogical aspects rather than socio-cultural though it has used the framework of Bourdieu and sociolinguistic approach. The study included only six major languages of the country after Nepali in its survey. It indicates that inclusion of any minority language with less than 100,000

speakers in another study could be worthwhile in exploring the multiple learning disadvantages faced by linguistic minority children in primary school.

The review of literature on education of linguistic minorities across the world and in Nepal clearly points out that ethnic, linguistic and cultural issues which come under social dimension of exclusion, have not been adequately attended to. Studies have also not explored the linguistic and cultural constraints encountered by non-Nepali speaking children in multilingual school contexts. They have not paid much attention to sociological and sociolinguistic explorations to understand education of ethnic and linguistic minority children. Therefore, this justifies the relevance of the present study.

The Study: Rationale, Objectives and Methodology

Rationale of the Study

The changed political context of Nepal (change from unitary to federal system, Hindu to secular state, Nepali as the language of the nation to simply official language and one of the national languages) may have tremendous impact on educational policies, curriculum, learning systems and mechanisms, because all of them are aligned with the previous contexts. Educational policies, National Plans of Action, guidelines, curriculum, and text books are yet to be revisited as per the changed context. This situation invites a thorough review of the educational policies, strategies, curriculum, mechanisms and practices from the lens of inclusive and linguistic rights perspectives. One may easily come to the conclusion from the literature review that the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion are relatively new in the context of Nepal, which require more clarity and understanding. Thus, there is urgent need for research on the issues of educational policy and exclusion of linguistic minorities within the educational contexts.

In the past, various studies were undertaken exploring the causes of exclusion relating to poverty and political participation. Studies of language and ethnicity are also evident. However, educational issues of linguistic minority children from the perspective of social exclusion have not been explored adequately. Fought (2006) highlights that 'linguistic features within a variety are key elements in the indexing and reproduction of ethnic identity, just as they are for other aspects of identity such as gender or social class' (p. 22). It indicates that exploring stumbling blocks in educational access, process, retention

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and completion in relation to linguistic and cultural constraints could add value towards developing a visionary roadmap for education in the light of the overall restructuring process of new Nepal. Against this background, understanding the educational contexts of linguistic minority children is very crucial in Nepal. The study examines the perceptions of the stakeholders on mother and other tongue issues; and multilingual education (MLE) policy framework adopted by the government. It analyzes how the MLE policy framework has addressed the educational issues of linguistic minority children.

The diagram 1.1 presents the conceptual framework for the study.

Diagram 1.1

The Conceptual Framework of the Study
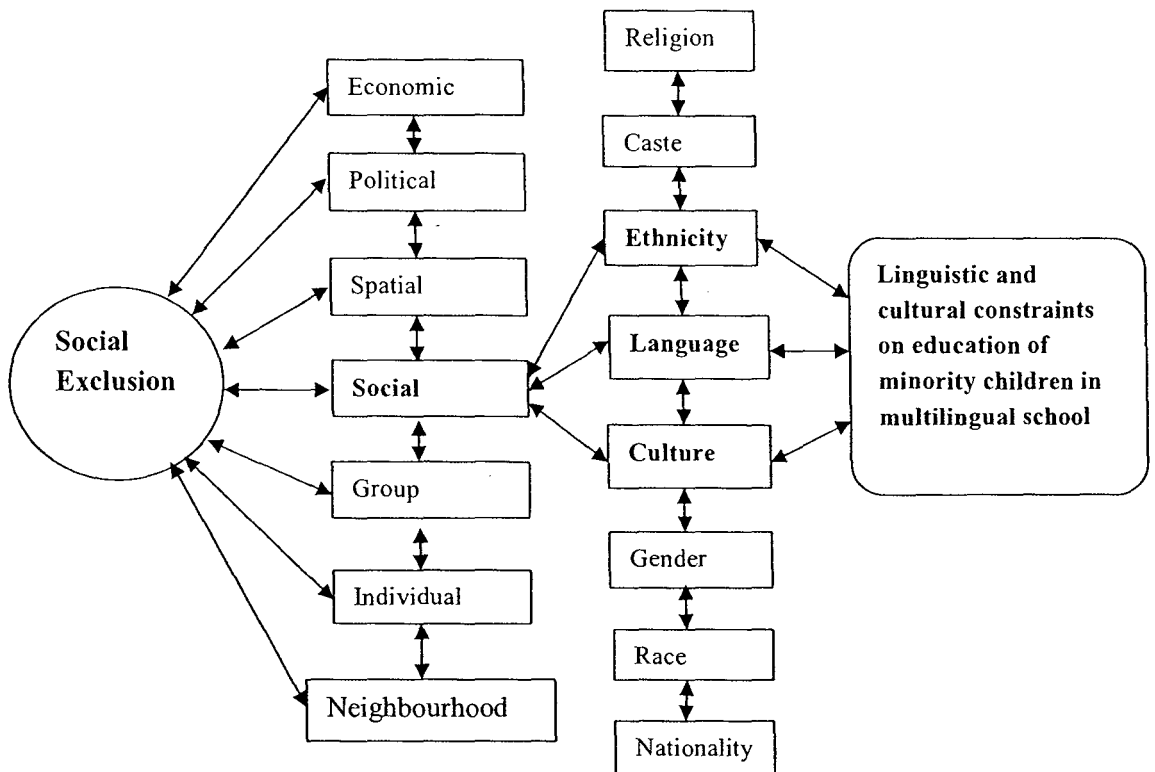
Research Questions

The study aims to explore the following questions:

- How is Nepali society linguistically diverse and how have been the linguistic groups arranged in Nepali society hierarchically and also in terms of their dominance or subordination?

- What are the linguistic and cultural constraints in schooling of linguistic minority children, and what are the problems and difficulties experienced by linguistic minority children in schooling?

- What are the perceptions of stakeholders (parents, teachers, school management committee members and government officials) with regard to underlying causes of exclusion, medium of instruction in schools, and school environment for linguistic minority children?

- What are the policy provisions and practices of MLE for inclusion of linguistic minority children? How does MLE programme in Nepal address the issue of education of linguistic minority children? What are the challenges of MLE programme implementation in Nepal?

Study Setting and the Sample Schools

Two schools, namely, Sharada Primary School, Simariya, and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, Hanshposha of Sunsari district are selected to undertake field work for the study. The communities in the two villages and schools are multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multilingual. The study intended to examine the policy interventions and existing practices in the schools.

Scanning through the list of schools[3] implementing MLE program with support of the Department of Education reveals that MLE program in Rasuwa, Dhankuta, Palpa and Kanchanpur districts include only one language in each school (See Table 3.7). So, only two out of three schools from Tarai/Madhes were left as alternatives for selection in the

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[3] DOE, MOE has been implementing MLE program in seven pilot schools in six districts (Rasuwa from the Mountain region, Dhankuta and Palpa from the Hill region and Kanchanpur, Sunsari and Jhapa from Tarai region). The program includes nine languages (Uranw, Tharu, Tamang, Maithili, Athapaharia Rai, Santhali, Magar, Rajbangsi and Nepali) representing all four language families existing in the country.

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sample. Eventually, Sharada Primary School of Sunsari was selected purposively due to two main reasons. Firstly, this school has been adopting various models in course of implementation of MLE (See table 3.8). Secondly, this school has Uranw speakers, a highly marginalized language in Nepal from the Dravidian family, and Tharu and Maithili languages in the MLE programme. Another school of Hanshposha, was selected to complement the main field work carried out in the school and communities of Simariya.

Location of the Field Setting

Nepal is a landlocked country bordering China (Tibet) in the north and India (Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand) in the east, the south and the west. Geographically Nepal has been divided into three different regions, namely, Himalayan or Mountain region, Hill region and Tarai (Plain) region (See Map 1.1). All these three geographic regions of Nepal run from the east to the west. Mountain region occupies about 15 per cent of the total land area where seven percent of the total population lives. The altitude of this region ranges from 4,877 to 8,848 metres above sea level. Altogether 16 districts out of 75 in the north fall in this region. The Hill region occupies 68 per cent of the land area with 44 percent population, which includes 39 districts from the east to the far west. Still 14 remote district headquarters in the Mountain and Hill region are not linked with motor road service. On the other hand, low-land Tarai region accounts for about 17 per cent of the land area with 49 percent population. This region includes 20 districts bordering India in the south. All district headquarters of Tarai region are linked with road and easily accessible. However, the whole Tarai (Madhes) region is distinct in terms of socio-cultural and political milieu.

Nepal is divided into five development regions. Sunsari is Tarai district which is situated in the eastern development region. It is surrounded by Morang district in the east, Bhojpur and Dhankuta districts in the north, Saptari district in the west and Bihar State of India in the south. The total area of Sunsari is 1257 square kilometers and the elevation ranges from 152 to 914 metres. This district is called after the river Sunsari. The location of the study areas includes Simariya and Hanshposha villages in Sunsari district.

Simariya is situated in the south-east and Hanshposha lies in the north-east of Sunsari (See Map 1.2).

Methodology

The study relies on both the secondary and the primary data. It has adopted methods such as observation, semi-structured interview, key informants' interview, case study and focus group discussions. The secondary data are collected from different sources such as Central Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Education, Department of Education, District Education Office, Village Development Committee, schools, and other organizations such as UN agencies, bilateral/multilateral agencies, international and national organizations, and research institutes and universities. At the national level, the key informants' interviews were conducted with the relevant individuals from different institutions and agencies such as Inclusive Education Section, DOE, MOE, National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN), National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Nepal Linguistics Society, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs), UN agencies, bilateral/multilateral agencies, Teachers' organization and four major political parties.

In order to reflect on the perceptions of children, parents, teachers, members of School Management Committee (SMC), Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and VDC, and government officials on education of linguistic minority children, the researcher visited the villages and conducted focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with the children in two schools having multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural environments. Efforts are made to capture the perceptions of out-of-school children including children dropped out (pushed out) from the school through home visit, semi-structured interviews and observation.

The study used observation as a research tool to explore children's participation in learning activities. The teaching-learning activities and extra-curricular activities inside and outside the classroom, and child-to-child interaction, and interaction between children and teachers are observed. Overall school activities are also observed from assembly (10 am) to closing (4 pm). The researcher observed teaching-learning activities

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conducted by the teachers in the classrooms using Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali language as media of instruction, and SMC and staff meetings organized in the school. He has participated in the cultural events in Simariya and Hanshposha villages. This participation and observation has helped to analyze the socio-cultural and linguistic practices of the community as well (For a detailed account of the observations and interviews, see Appendix – E and F).

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation comprises of six chapters. Chapter I introduces the study through a discussion of conceptual and theoretical understanding, literature review, rationale, objectives or research questions, methodology, and field setting and location.

Chapter II presents the socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Nepalese society. It gives a picture of hierarchical structure of the society which reproduces dominance and subordination. Chapter III provides basic background of educational status of children who speak minority languages, and examines the efforts made by MLE program in addressing the educational issues of linguistic minority children. It also discusses the constitutional provisions and policies on MLE, and assesses the gap between policies and practices.

Chapter IV focuses on exploring the complex world of learning for linguistic minority children based on school specific data. In this chapter, linguistic, cultural and pedagogical constraints experienced by the minority children are presented. It describes the overall school environment where minority children are compelled to learn in a fearful and embarrassing experiences before the implementation of MLE.

Chapter V gives an account of the contestations on mother tongue or other tongues. Some enduring debates and tensions on language issues are outlined. The last and final chapter VI presents summary and conclusions.

Map 1.1 Map of Nepal with the Administrative Districts Division
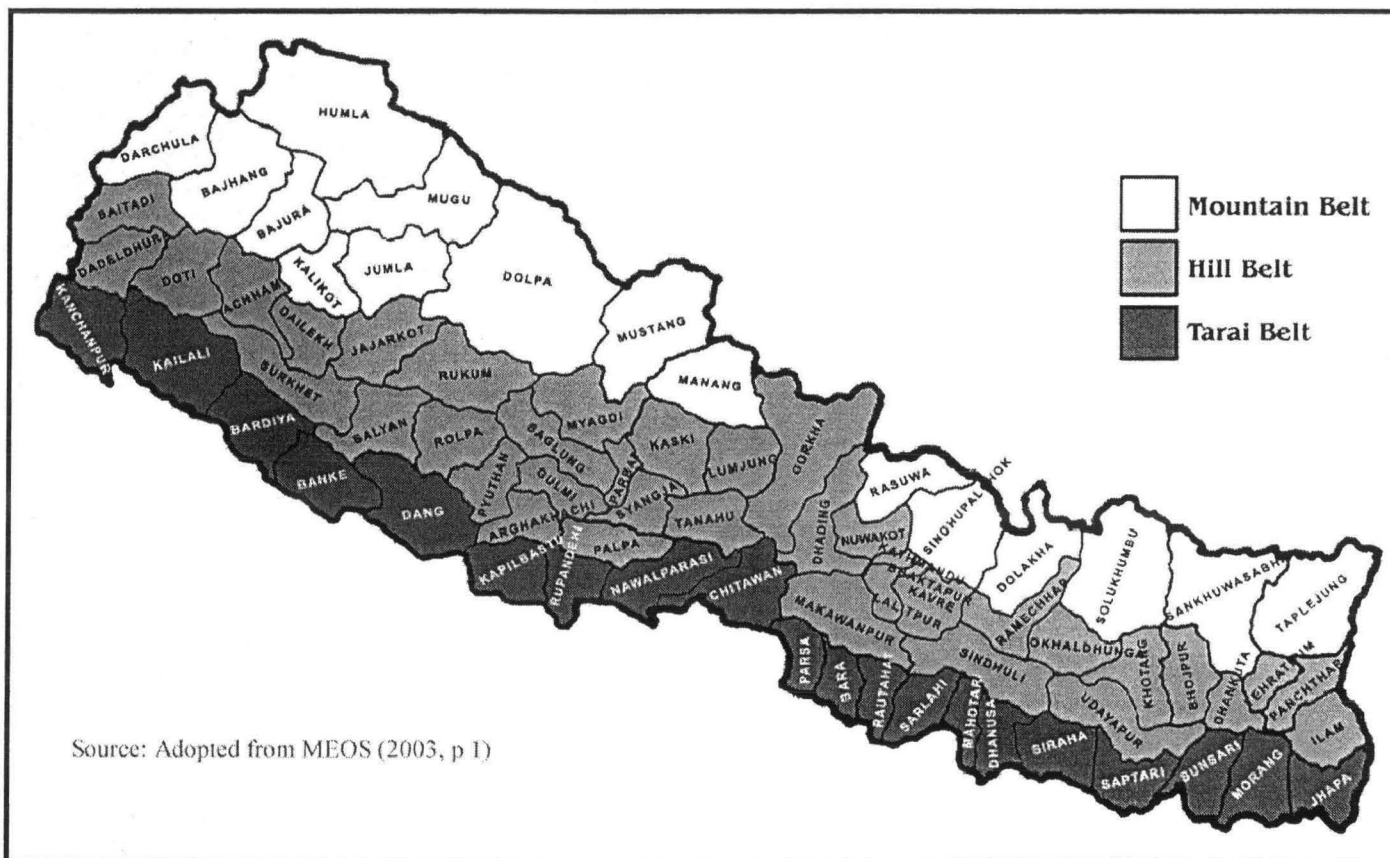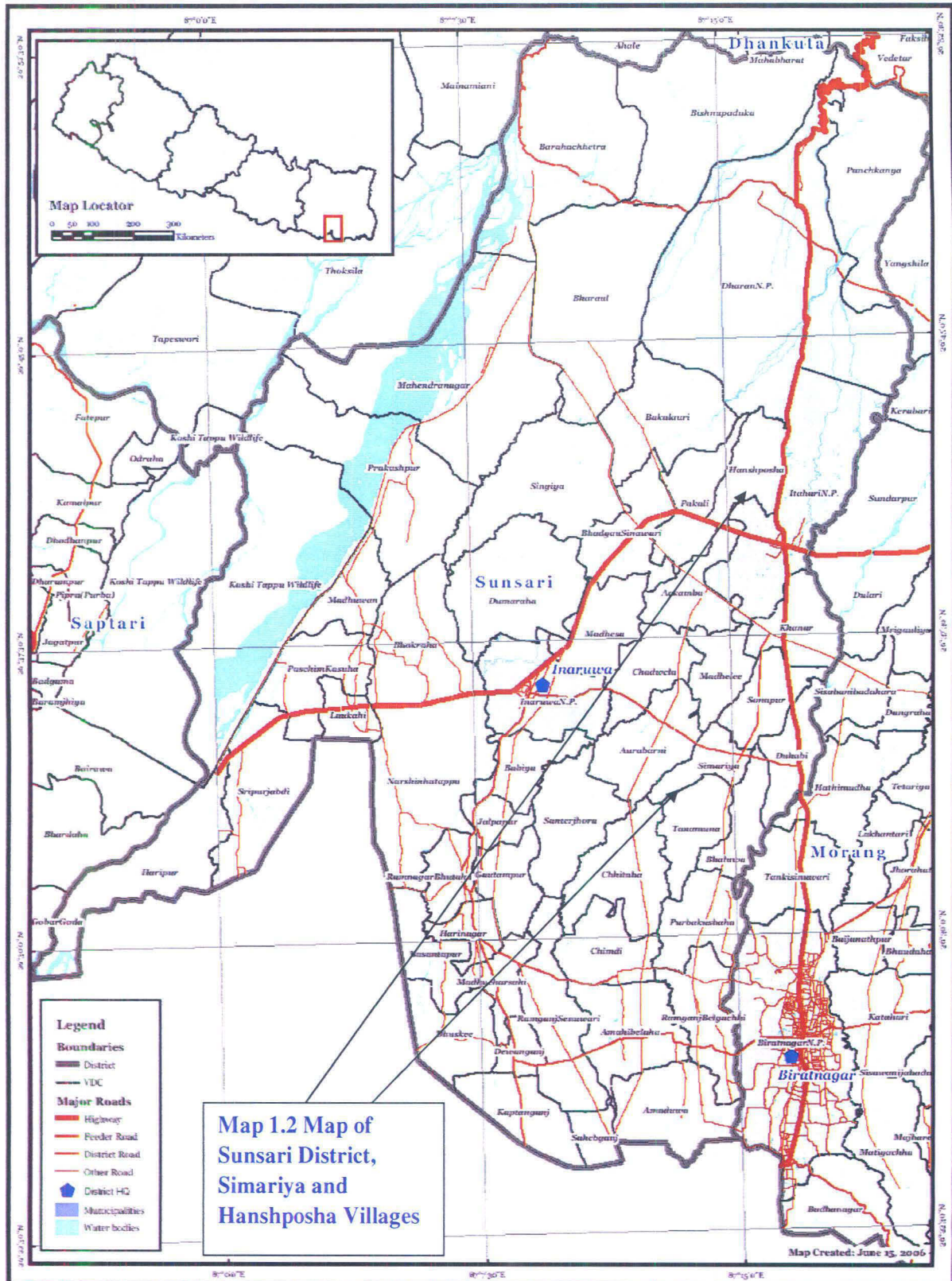
Figure 1: A Map of Nepal with the Administrative Districts Division

Source: Adopted from MEOS (2003, p 1)

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Map 1.2 Map of Sunsari District, Simariya and Hanshposha Villages

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER - II

ETHNO-LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN NEPAL

The chapter presents the socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity in Nepal. It outlines the social and geographical dimensions of caste and ethnicity, and linguistic scenario in Nepal. The chapter describes the relationship between ethnicity and language. It also describes the ethno-linguistic profile of the district visited for field work, namely, Sunsari. The ethno-linguistic diversity of the villages visited, namely, Simariya and Hanshposha is also presented. Lastly, the chapter gives the profile of three ethnic groups, namely, Uranw, Tharu and Tamang in the study area and their mother tongues.

Ethno-cultural Diversity

Nepal is a country of diversity having many religions, castes and ethnicities, cultures and languages (Bhattachan 2008, Kandel 2007, Tamang 2005, Rai 2005, Yadava 2007, Hachhethu 2003, Dahal 2000, and Neupane 2000) and has a population of 23 million. The social composition of population of Nepal entails different races and castes as social groups living in different geographical regions. According to Geiser (2005), Nepal has been a popular and even mystic destination for many foreign visitors with the world's highest mountains, spectacular scenery, ancient religions and culture and, at the same time, as another side of the coin, 'ethnicity, caste and gender inequalities are crucial aspects in the social, political, cultural and economic structures within Nepal' (p. 6).

People of Nepal are believers of various religions and cultural traditions. A majority of people believe in Hinduism. Nepal was considered as a Hindu Kingdom for about 240 years during the regime of Absolute and Constitutional Monarchy till recently. The pie chart 2.1 presents the population of Nepal by religion. It may be noted that an overwhelming majority (80.6 per cent) of Nepalese people believe in the Hindu religion. The Buddhism occupies the second place with 10.7 per cent followed by Muslims (4.2 per cent), Kirati, an indigenous religion (3.6 per cent) and Christians (0.5 per cent). A total of 86080 (0.4 per cent) people belong to "others religions", an unidentified category.

Pie Chart 2.1

Population of Nepal by Religion
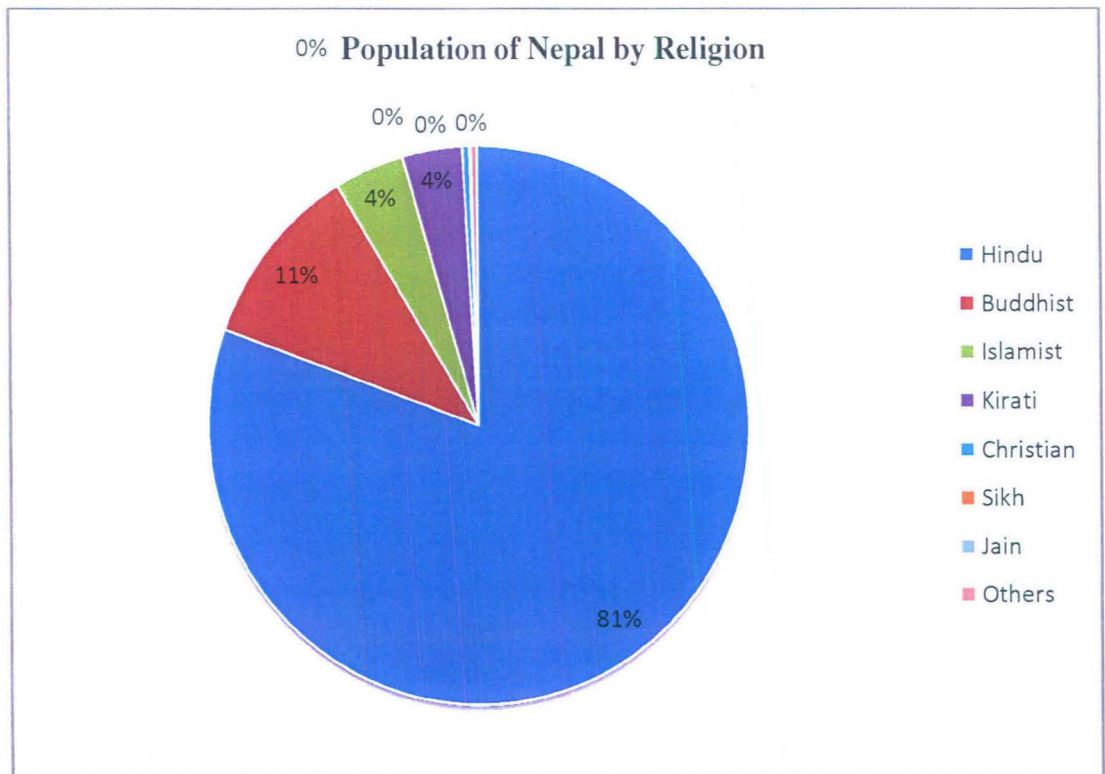
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Population Census 2001

Nepali society is also divided by caste and ethnicity. According to the Census 2001, people of Nepal are categorised into 103 social (ethnic) groups who live in diverse geographical territory such as mountain region, hill region and Tarai (plain) region. They belong to different social structure of Nepali society. Table 2.1 reveals that a majority of the groups (59) belong to janajati which comes under the non-Hindu and non-hierarchical category[1] living in Mountain (0.84 per cent), Hill (27.66 per cent) and Tarai/Madhes (7.86 per cent). However, this table includes only 44 ethnic groups. The mountain janajati includes Sherpa, Bhote, Byasi, Marphali Thakali, Tingaunle Thalaki, Dolpo, Larke, Lhomi, Lhopa, Chhairotan, Bara Gaunle, Mugali, Siyar, Tangbe, Thadum, Topegola, and Walung. The hill janajatis occupy the highest percentage (27.66) of janajatis which

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[1] It refers to caste/ethnic groups which do not fall under Hierarchical Hindu caste group which refers to Varna system (Brahman, Kshyatriya, Vaishya and Sudra).

Table 2.1

Social and Geographical Dimension of Caste and Ethnicity

Geographical Dimension						
Aspects			Himal/ Bhot (Mountain)	Hill (including inner Tarai)	Tarai (Madhes)	Others	Total population
Social structural dimension	Non-hierarchical non-Hindu	Janajati	Bhote, Byasi, Sherpa, Thakali, Balung (5 Groups), 190,107 (0.84%) population	Baramu, Bhujel, Bote, Chepang, Chhantel, Danuwar, Darai, Dura, Gurung, Hayu, Hyolmo, Jirel, Kusunda, Lepcha, Limbu, Magar, Newar, Pahari, Rai, Sunuwar, Tamang, Thami, Yakhkha,	Dhimal, Gangai, Jhangar/Uranw, Kisan, Koche, Kusabaha, Meche, Munda, Rajbansi, Satar/Santhal, Tajpuriya, Tharu (12 Groups, 1,787,538 (7.86%) population	Unidentified janajati 5259 (0.02%)	8,272,551 (36.38)
	Hierarchical Hindu Caste Group	Other Castes	-	Brahman, Chhetri, Sanyasi, Thakuri (4 Groups), 7,023,220 (30.89%) population	Badahi, Baniya, Barahi, Bhediyar, Bin, Tarai Brahman, Dhanuk, Dhuniya, Hajam, Halwai, Jain, Kahar, Kalwar, Kamar, Kanu, Kayastha, Kewat, Koiri, Kumar, Kurmi, Lodha, Mali, Mallah, Marwadi, Nuniya, Nurang, Rajbhar, Rajput, Sudi, Teli, Yadav, Sonar, Lohar, (33 groups), 3,545,477 (15.59%) population	-	10,568,697 (46.48%)
		Dalit	-	Badi, Damai, Gaine, Kami, Sarki (5 Groups, 1,615,577 (7.11%) population	Bantar, Chamar, Chidimar, Dhobi, Dum, Dusadh, Halkhor, Khatwe, Musahar, Tatma (10 Groups, 886,204 (3.90%) population	Unidentified Dalit 173,401 (0.76%)	2,675,182 (11.77%) 16 Groups
	Others		-	-	Bangali (0.04%), Churaute (0.02%), Punjabi (0.01%), Muslim (4.27%) total 988,863 (4.35%)	Unidentified 231,641 (1.02%)	1,220,504 (5.37%) 5 Groups
Total population			190,107 (0.84%), 5 Groups	14,928,444 (65.66%), 36 Groups	7,208,082 (31.70%), 59 Groups	410,301 (1.8%), 3 Groups	22,736,934 (100%), 103 Groups

Source: Sharma (2008, p. 11) based on classification of Gurung (2003), Population Census 2001

include Newar, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Hyolmo, Gharti/Bhujel, Kumal, Sunuwar, Baramu, Pahari, Yakkha, Chhantel, Jirel, Darai, Dura, Majhi, Dunuwar, Thami, Lepcha, Chepang, Bote, Raji, Hayu, Raute, Kasunda and Bankariya. The share of Tarai janajatis is 7.86 per cent that entails Tharu, Tajpuriya, Rajbanshi, Dhanuk, Gangai, Dhimal, Meche, Kisan, Munda, Santhal/Satar, Jhangar, Koche and Kusabaha. Each of this ethnic group has distinct linguistic and cultural characteristics (Rai 2007), which reflect diversity. The 'linguistic styles, cultural and religious values and traditions

influence the behaviour, cognitive styles, attitudes and values of groups of people in a given society (Verma 1989, cited in Verma et al. 2007).

Pie Chart 2.2

Population of Nepal by Caste/ethnicity
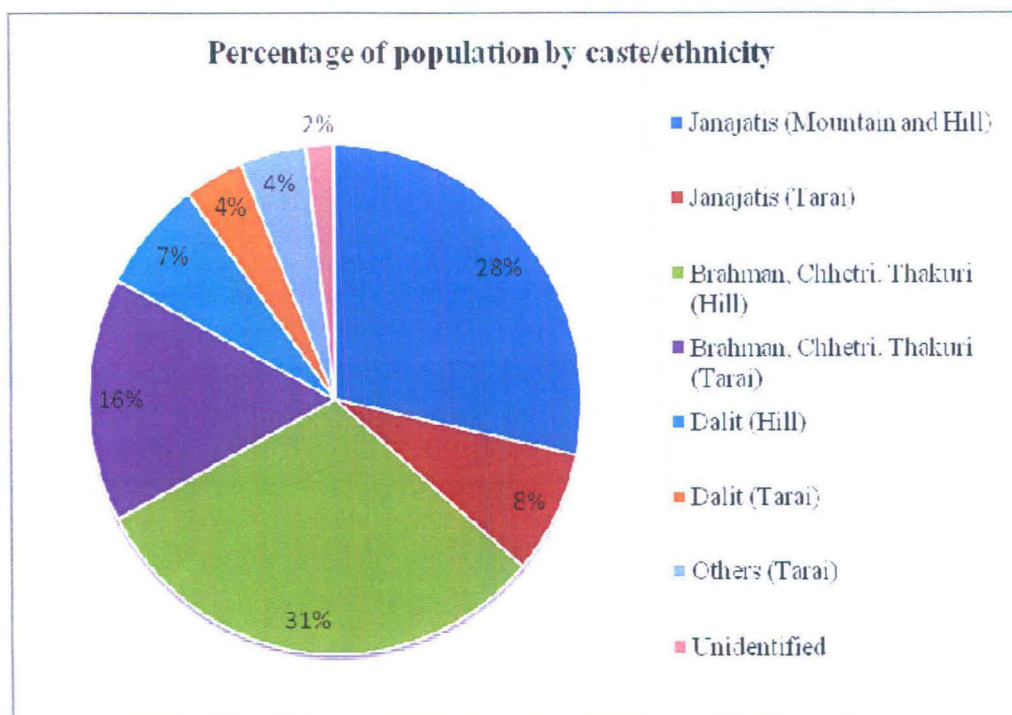
Source: Census 2001

Pie chart 2.2 reveals the proportion of population in terms of caste/ethnicity, social and spatial dimensions. Altogether 36.8 per cent of the total population of the country belongs to *janajatis* who are dwellers of mountain, hill and Tarai regions. The pie chart also reveals that none of the social groups have been able to form an overwhelming majority of the total population. Hence, Nepal is also described as a country of minorities (Sharma 2008).

National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN[2]) has categorized 59 indigenous nationalities into the following five different groups on the basis of their land ownership, income, literacy and status of education. Table 2.2 shows that 10 indigenous

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[2] NEFIN was formed in 1991 as an autonomous and politically non-partisan, national level umbrella organization of indigenous peoples/nationalities. NEFIN currently consists of 48 indigenous member organizations widely distributed across Nepal. NEFIN is a member of the United Nation's Working Group of Indigenous Population.

nationalities belong to endangered group whereas the number of highly marginalized group is 12. A total of 20 janajatis fall under marginalized group and 12 under the

Table 2.2

Classification of Indigenous Peoples or Nationalities of Nepal

Endangered Group	Highly Marginalized Group	Marginalized Group	Disadvantaged Group	Advanced Group
1. Kusunda	11. Majhi	23. Sunuwar	43. Chhairotan	58. Newar
2. Bankariya	12. Siyar	24. Tharu	44. Tangbe	59. Thakali
3. Raute	13. Lohmi	25. Tamang	45. Tingaunle Thakali	
4. Surel	14. Thudam	26. Bhujel	46. Bargaule	
5. Hayu	15. Dhanuk	27. Kumal	47. Marphali Thakali	
6. Raji	16. Chepang	28. Rajbansi	48. Gurung	
7. Kisan	17. Satar (Santhal)	29. Gangai	49. Magar	
8. Lepcha	18. Jhagar (Uranw)	30. Dhimal	50. Rai	
9. Meche	19. Thami	31. Bhote	51. Limbu	
10. Kusbadiya	20. Bote	32. Darai	52. Sherpa	
	21. Danuwar	33. Tajpuriya	53. Yakkha	
	22. Baramu	34. Pahari	54. Chhantyal	
		35. Topkegola	55. Jirel	
		36. Dolpo	56. Byansi	
		37. Free	57. Hyolmo	
		38. Mugal		
		39. Larke		
		40. Lohpa		
		41. Dura		
		42. Walung		

Source: NEFIN, 2004 (NEFIN Website: http://nefin.org.np/)

disadvantaged group. Only Newar and Thakali are considered as advanced groups.

Linguistic Diversity

From the language perspective, Nepal is one of the top 22 most diverse countries in the world having over 100 languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). The Census 2001 states that the inhabitants of Nepal are divided into 59 janajatis and 103 social groups speak 92 different languages. However, languages of 0.74 per cent of the total population are lumped into "unknown" category, which still needs to be clearly identified (Yadava 2003). This situation invites debate about the exact number of languages in Nepal. According to the Ethnologue[3], 125 languages are spoken as mother tongue in Nepal. The

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[3] The Ethnologue updates the record of world's languages (See web://www.sil.org/ethnologue).

languages spoken in Nepal belong to four language families, namely, Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian.

Pie Chart 2.3

Distribution of Population by Language Families of Mother Tongue in Nepal

Distribution of Population by Language Families of Mother Tongue in Nepal

- Indo-Europen
- Sino-Tibetan
- Austro-Asiatic
- Dravidan
- Not stated

0% 0% 2%
19%
79%
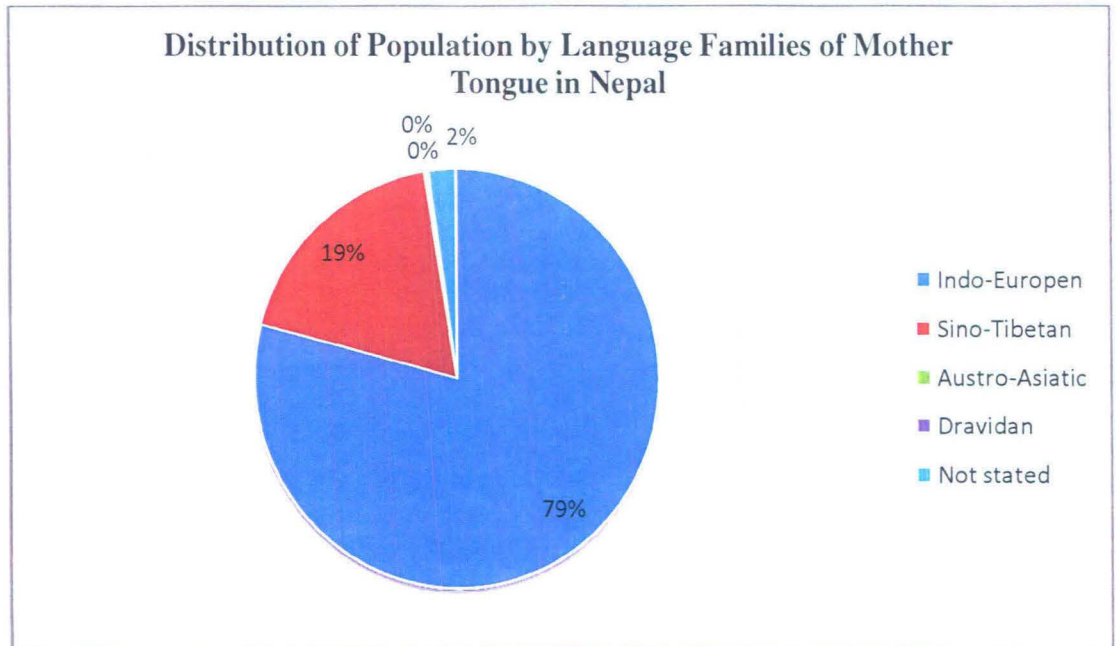
Source: Census 2001

Pie chart 2.3 reveals that a majority of people (79 per cent) speak Indo-European languages. Sino-Tibetan languages occupy 19 per cent of their share of total population whereas percentage of people who speak Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages is negligible. Yonjan-Tamang (2006) has developed the following table categorizing Nepalese mother tongues into different language families based on Census 2001. Table 2.3 shows that Sino-Tibetan language family has the largest number of languages (52 out of 92) spoken in Nepal. The number of Indo-European languages is only 12. However, this language family has nearly 80 percent of the total population as speakers of those languages (Yadava 2008). Austro-Asiatic language family includes only two languages, namely, Satar/Santhali and Khadiya (Munda). Dravidian language family comprises Uranw/Jhagar and Kisan. The table also reveals that 64 languages are spoken by janajatis. It is interesting to note that Kusunda language is not included in any category of the language families. According to Census 2001, Kusunda language has only 87 speakers. It

has been claimed to be extinct or dead (Gurung 2005, Yadava 2007). However, this is a debatable issue which requires attention of sociolinguists and researchers.

Table 2.3

Language Family based on Census 2001

SN	Language Family		Languages based on Census 2001
1	Sino-Tibetan Languages (52)	janajati language (52)	Tamang, Newari, Magar, Limbu, Gurung, Sherpa, Chepang, Dhimal, Thami, Thakali, Jirel, Byasi, Sunuwar, Lapchhe, Meche, Pahari, Hayu, Yakkha, Bhujel, Chhantyal, Dura, Kaike, Raute, Koche, Kagate, Hyolmo, Baramu, Lhomi, Raji, Ghale and 22 Languages from Rai Group: Bantawa, Chamling, Kulung, Thulung, Sangpang, Khaling, Dumi, Bambule/Umbule, Puma, Nachhiring, Bahing, Koyu, Yamphu/Yamphe, Chhiling, Lohorung, Mewahang, Tilung, Jerung, Dungmali, Lingkhim, Sam and Chhingtang
2	Indo-European Languages (12)	janajati language (7)	Tharu, Rajbanshi, Danuwar, Majhi, Bote, Darai and Kumal
3		Non-janajati language (5)	Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi and Churaute
4	Austro-Asiatic Languages (2)	janajati language (2)	Satar/Santhali and Khadiya (Munda)
5	Dravidian Languages (2)	janajati language (2)	Jhagar/Dhangar (Uranw) and Kisan
6	Not stated (1)	janajati language (1)	Kusunda
7	Others (23)	-	Chinese, Tibetan, Dzonkha, Mizo, Assamese, Nagamese, Kuki, Urdu, Hindi, Bangla, Marwadi, English, Magahi, Punjabi, Oriya, Sindhi, Hariyanwi, Kurmali, Angika, Sadhani, Bajjika, Sanskrit and Nepali Sign Language
	Total 92 languages		

Source: Yonjan-Tamang (2006, p. 29)

As far as the total number of mother tongues spoken in Nepal is concerned, various sources give the different picture over the period of time. Yonjan-Tamang (2006) has developed a table (See Table 2.4) which gives the status of language identification in Nepal over the period of past 55 years and the languages that belong to janajati and non-janajati.

Table 2.4
Status of Language Identification in Nepal

SN	Source	Year	Total number of languages	Non-janajati languages	Languages of Indigenous Nationalities (janajatis)	Other Languages
1	Population Census Report	1952-54	44	4	23	17
2	Population Census Report	1961	33	4	25	4
3	Population Census Report	1971	16	4	12	0
4	Population Census Report	1981	16	4	12	0
5	Panchayat Smarika (Souvenir) -2043 BS	1986	75	4	71	0
6	Population Census Report	1991	32	4	23	5
7	National Languages Policy and Recommendation Commission	1994	71	4	65	2
8	Population Census Report	2001	92	6	63	23
9	Grime's Ethnologue	2002	125	4	108	13
10	Dr Yadava et al	2005	0	0	87	0
11	Study by Amrit Yonjan-Tamang	2005	143	4	116	23

Source: Yonjan-Tamang, Amrit (2006, p. 21)

Table 2.4 shows that the number of languages is significantly reduced in the three Censuses undertaken in 1961, 1971 and 1981 whereas the number of languages has increased significantly in Census 2001. On the other hand, the table shows that the number of janajati languages were very high in each Census from 1952-54 to 2001. The

decline in the number of languages is due to 'one nation – one language' policy during Panchayat Regime (Gurung 2005, Yadava 2007). In addition, lack of understanding about the difference between language and dialect may also be one of the contributing factors for the variation in language identification.

According to Census 2001, only 12 languages are spoken as mother tongue by more than one percent of total population in Nepal. The distribution of these languages by district and VDC/Municipality is presented in table 2.5.

Table 2.5
Distribution of Major Mother Tongue by District and VDC/Municipality

Major Mother Tongues	% of MT Speakers	Number of Districts[4]		Number of VDC/Municipality[5]	
		Having highest % of population with MT	Having majority of population with MT	Having highest % of population with MT	Having majority of population with MT
Nepali	48.6	56	49	2076	1853
Maithili	12.3	6	5	505	476
Bhojpuri	7.53	3	3	324	312
Tharu	5.86	1	1	128	96
Tamang	5.19	2	1	197	161
Newar	3.63	1	1	32	29
Magar	3.39	0	0	115	101
Awadhi	2.47	2	1	99	91
Rai Bantawa	1.63	0	0	55	31
Gurung	1.49	1	1	69	54
Limbu	1.47	2	0	76	39
Bajjika	1.05	1	0	51	50

Source: Sharma (2008, p. 64) based on 2001 Census

The data reveals that the major languages spoken in Nepal are Nepali (48.61 per cent), Maithili (12.30 per cent), Bhojpuri (7.53 per cent), Tharu (5.86 per cent), Tamang (5.19

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[4]   The total number of districts is 75.

[5]   The total number of VDCs/Municipalities is 3971(3912 VDCs and 59 Municipalities).

per cent), Newari (3.63 per cent), Magar (3.39 per cent), Awadhi (2.47 per cent), Rai Bantawa (1.63 per cent), Gurung (1.49 per cent), Limbu (1.47 per cent) and Bajjika (1.05 per cent). In 56 districts and 2076 VDCs and municipalities, Nepali is spoken by highest percentage of population. Nepali is spoken as mother tongue by a majority of population in 49 districts, and 1853 VDCs and municipalities. Nepali speech communities are spread all over the country whereas some other languages have remained restricted to only some districts. It indicates the numerical gap between Nepali and other languages and indicates the dominance of in terms of linguistic supremacy.

It is also interesting to note that castes/ethnic groups are also spread across the country. For instance, the number of districts which have more than 50 castes/ethnic groups is 66 out of 75. Kalikot is the smallest district in terms of number of caste/ethnic groups where 34 castes/ethnic groups live (Rimal 2007, p. 21). Likewise, the number of languages ranges from 9 in Kalikot to 70 in Morang. It reflects that Nepal is an assortment of diverse ethnic and linguistic composition.

Table-2.6

Number of Languages in the Districts

Number of Languages	Number of Districts	Name of the Districts
9-20	13	Kalikot, Salyan, Jajarkot, Jumla, Rukum, Dolpa, Humla, Mugu, Bajhang, Arghakhanchi, Dailekh, Bajura and Achham
21-30	22	Manang, Gulmi, Pyuthan, Dadeldhura, Darchula, Rolpa, Myagdi, Parbat, Syanja, Mustang, Surkhet, Doti, Dolakha, Baglung, Baitadi, Palpa, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, Lamjung, Kapilvastu and Bardiya
31-40	22	Sindhuli, Kavre, Nuwakot, Bhaktapur, Taplejung, Dhanusha, Sindhupalchok, Bara, Banke, Siraha, Mahottari, Dang, Saptari, Rautahat, Dhankuta, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Kanchanpur, Panchthar, Terathum, Nawalparasi and Rupandehi
41-50	10	Makwanpur, Tanahun, Solukhumbu, Sarlahi, Sankhusabha, Bhojpur, Parsa, Kailali, Chitwan and Khotang
51-60	4	Udaypur, Kaski, Ilam and Lalitpur
61-70	4	Morang, Jhapa, Sunsari and Kathmandu

Source: Rimal (2007, p. 23) based on Census 2001

Further, Table 2.6 shows that 9 to 20 languages are spoken as mother tongue in 12 districts. In another 22 districts, the number of languages ranges from 21 to 30. All of these districts, except Kapilvastu and Bardiya belong to mountain and hill regions where there are comparatively less number of ethnic groups. In 10 districts, 41 to 50 languages are spoken as mother tongue. Morang, Jhapa, Sunsari and Kathmandu districts occupy higher status in terms of the number of languages which ranges from 61-70 (See Appendix – M).

Ethnicity-Language Linkages

Yadava (2008) argues that 'ethnic and religious diversity of Nepal is coupled with its linguistic plurality' (p. 95). At the national level, this relationship has been evident in five different ways. Firstly, one caste/ethnic group has its own language. For instance, some languages such as Uranw, Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Sherpa, Chepang and Thakali have been named referring to the caste/ethnic group who speak those languages as mother tongue. Secondly, one caste/ethnic group speaks several languages. Rai–Kirati is an ethnic group that speaks various languages such as Bantawa Rai, Chamling Rai, Thulung Rai, etc. Thirdly, various castes/ethnic groups speak one language. There are various caste groups in Newar community. However, all of them speak the same language which is called Newari or Nepal Bhasha. Fourthly, one caste/ethnic group speaks different languages based on territory where they inhibit. For example, especially in Tarai region, Yadav, Mehata, Mandal, Teli, Chamar, Kurmi, etc. speak the same language i.e. Maithili in the eastern part of the Tarai whereas the same caste/ethnic group speaks Bhojpuri in the central Tarai and Awadhi in the western Tarai. Lastly, several castes/ethnic groups such as Brahman, Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi, hill Dalits, etc. speak Nepali as mother tongue (NLPRC 1994). On the other hand, some other ethnic groups may also speak Nepali as their mother tongue due to language shift. It is very interesting to note that most of the above mentioned scenarios are also found in two villages of Sunsari district, namely, Simariya and Hanshposha, during the field work. This indicates that ethnic, cultural and linguistic characteristics are very much intertwined.

According to Turin (2004) the close relationship between linguistic and cultural identity is reflected in the three situations (Turin 2004, p. 5):

- Situation in which a one-to-one correspondence exists between an indigenous community and their language, such as Magar, Tamang, Gurung, Limbu, Sherpa, Rajbhanshi, Sunuwar, Kumal, Majhi, Danuwar, Chepang, Thami, Thakali, Bhote, Dhimal, Lepcha, Byansi, Raute and Raji.
- Situation in which a single indigenous people speak several languages, for example the Rai-Kiranti are considered to constitute a single ethnic group, but they speak a range of at least 15 mutually unintelligible languages such as Bantawa, Puma, Chamling, Thulung, Kulung, Sampang, Dumi and Athapaharia.
- Situation in which several indigenous peoples speak what is seen to be a single language, such as Newari.

Ethno-linguistic Diversity in Sunsari District

Examination of the district specific information regarding socio-cultural and ethnic diversity reveals that Sunsari, the district selected for the study has a large number of diverse castes/ethnic groups. It has 96 castes/ethnic groups and ranks the second among the 75 districts in the country. The major caste/ethnic groups in the district include Rai (39.55 per cent), Tharu (13.99 per cent), Muslim (10.95 per cent), Chhetri (8.38 per cent), Brahman hill (7.94 per cent), Newar (4.43 per cent), Yadav (4.36 per cent), Koiri (4.27 per cent) and Uraw/Jhagar/Dhangar (3.61 per cent).

Sunsari is one of the highly linguistically diverse districts in Nepal, where 68 languages are spoken as mother tongue. Most of the languages are directly related to the identity of ethnic groups such as Tharu, Bantawa Rai, Limbu, Uranw, Newari, Tamang, Magar and Gurung. Pie chart 2.4 presents population by mother tongue in Sunsari district. It is observed that 32 per cent people of the district speak Maithili language. Sunsari is one of the six districts where highest percentage of the population speak Maithili as mother tongue. Some other languages spoken in Sunsari are Nepali (26 per cent), Tharu (16 per cent), Bantawa (5 per cent), Urdu (four per cent), Limbu (three per cent), Newari (two per cent) and Tamang (two per cent). The category 'others' refers to the unidentified number which may include many languages with insignificant number of speakers.

Population by Mother Tongue in Sunsari District

Population by mother tongue in Sunsari district

Legend:
- Maithili
- Nepali
- Tharu
- Bantawa
- Urdu
- Limbu
- Uranw (Jhagar)
- Newari
- Tamang
- Bangla
- Magar
- Hindi
- Bhojpuri
- Gurung
- Others
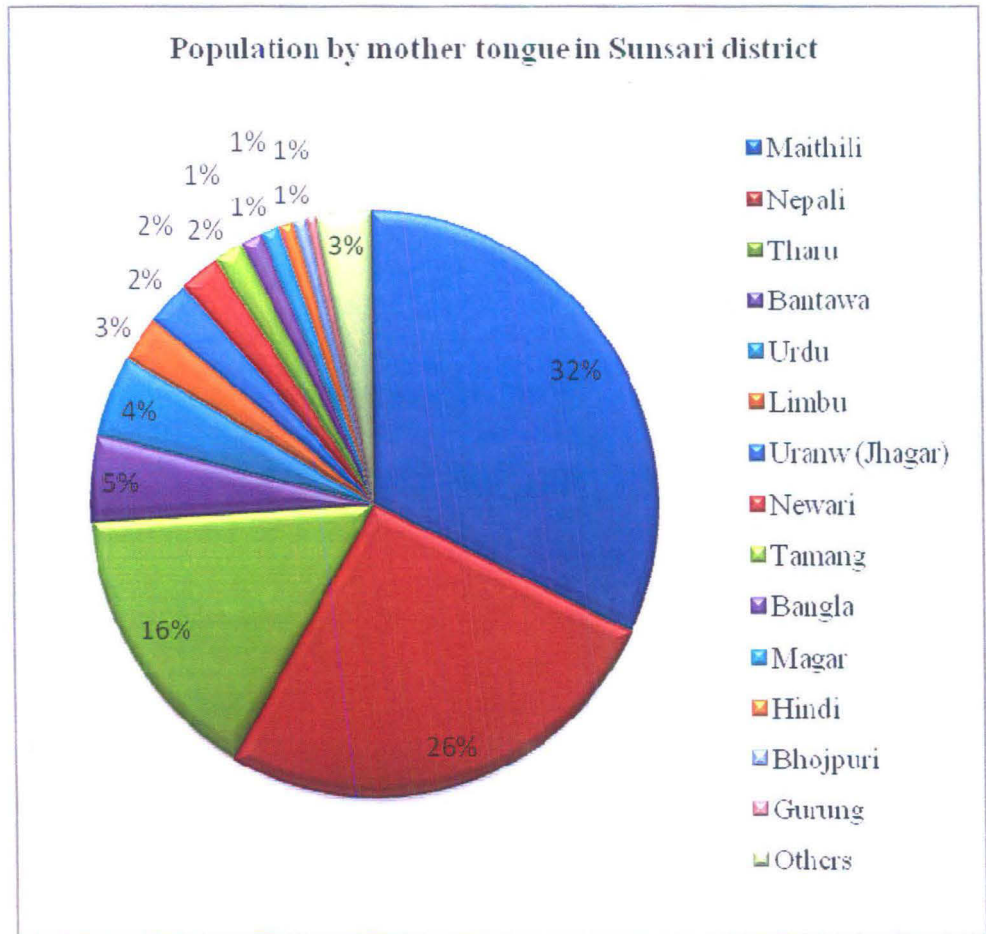
Source: CBS, GoN and UNFPA, 2002

Ethno-linguistic Diversity in Simariya and Hanshposha Villages

In Simariya, a total of 2524 people are janajatis which include 1545 Tharu, 654 Uranw, 142 Newar, 91 Dhanuk, 80 Gharti/Bhujel, six Magar and six Limbu members. Altogether 1037 Dalits comprising of Mushar, Chamar/Harijan, Dom and Kami live in Simariya. The number of hill migrant Brahmans and Chhetris, and Muslims is only 244 and 166 respectively. A total of 425 people are lumped under the unidentified castes. In terms of proportions, a 54 per cent people in Simariya belong to indigenous nationalities (janajatis), including Tharu, Uranw, Newar, Dhanuk, Gharti/Bhujel, Magar and Limbu. They are followed by Dalits (22 per cent), Brahman/Chhetri (five per cent), Muslims

Table 2.7

Population by Caste/ethnic Group in Simariya and Hanshposha

Caste/ethnic Groups	Simariya		Hanshposha	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
janajatis	2524	54	9993	57
Dalits	1037	22	1118	6
Brahman/Thakuri/Chhetri	244	5	5995	34
Muslims	166	4	209	1
Others	281	6	179	1
Unidentified castes	425	9	206	1
Total	4677	100	17700	100

Source: CBS, GoN and UNFPA, 2002

(four per cent) and other Tarai castes (six per cent). In terms of population of individual caste/ethnic group, Tharu and Uranw/Jhagar stand in the first (33 per cent) and the second (14 per cent). Around nine per cent unidentified castes indicate that Census 2001 has not captured the information of all people in terms of their castes and ethnicity who are dwellers of Simariya (See Appendix–G).

Hanshposha has more castes/ethnic groups than Simariya due to the migration of hill people such as Brahman, Chhetri, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, etc. However, Tharu, the indigenous ethnic group of Tarai is in the first position within the village. In Hanshposha, majority of people (57 per cent) belong to janajatis which include Tharu, Rai, Newar, Tamang, Gurung, Limbu, Danuwar, Majhi, Magar, Gharti/Bhujel, Sunuwar, Dhanuk, Dhimal, Meche and Yakkha. The percentage of Brahman/Chhetri and Dalits is 34 and six respectively whereas percentage of Muslim and others is negligible (one per cent of each). Most of these ethnic groups are hill migrants. All of these caste/ethnic groups have their own distinct culture and language (See Appendix–H).

Ethno-cultural diversity observed at national, district and village level is also reflected at the village cluster level. For instance, caste and ethnic composition of specific Ward (no. 8) of Simariya is presented in the table 2.8. This is the place where MLE school (a sample school for the study) is situated.

Table 2.8

Caste/ethnic Composition of Simariya, Ward no. 8

Caste/Ethnicity	Household	Population		Total	Percentage
		Female	Male		
Uranw (janajati)	32	88	81	169	36
Tharu (janajati)	27	72	74	146	31
Magar (janajati)	1	5	3	8	2
Dalit (Rishidev)	1	1	3	4	1
Brahmin/Chhetri	6	24	19	43	9
Others (Yadav, Mandal, Sah, Thakur, Mehata)	16	44	58	102	21
Total	83	234	238	472	100

Source: Participatory Planning of Simariya, Plan Nepal Sunsari/Morang Programme, 2004

The data reflects caste/ethnic diversity in Simariya with significant presence of janajatis (69 per cent) comprising of Uranw, Tharu and Magar.

Pie Chart 2.5

Proportion of Population by Mother Tongue in Simariya
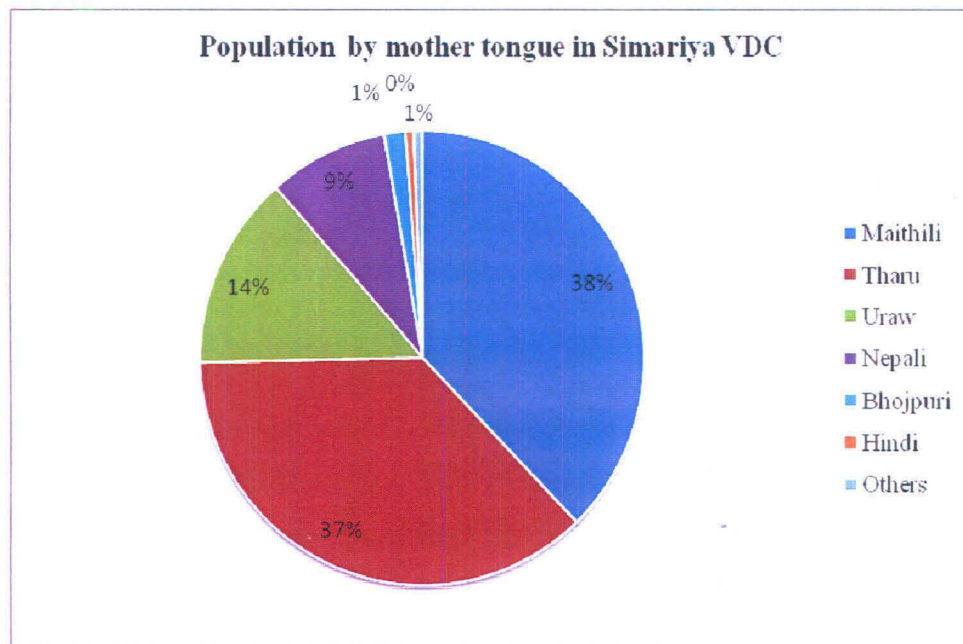
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with UNFPA, 2002

The diverse characteristics of Nepali society in terms of the use of mother tongue are evident at village level as well. Even within a small territory, people speak various languages. The diverse linguistic scenario of Simariya and Hanshposha may be seen in Pie chart 2.5 and Table 2.9. The data shows that only six languages are spoken in Simariya. They are Maithili (38 per cent), Tharu (37 per cent), Uranw (14 per cent), Nepali (nine percent), Bhojpuri (one per cent) and Hindi (0.57 per cent). The mother tongue of one per cent population has not been identified by Census 2001. Table 2.9 presents population by mother tongue in Hanshposha.

Table 2.9

Population by Mother Tongue in Hanshposha

SN	Mother Tongue	Population	Percentage
1	Nepali	8447	47.72
2	Tharu	4804	27.14
3	Bnatawa	1363	7.70
4	Tamang	668	3.77
5	Limbu	482	2.72
6	Maithili	420	2.37
7	Gurung	308	1.74
8	Others	289	1.63
9	Newari	252	1.42
10	Hindi	158	0.89
11	Magar	136	0.76
12	Chamling	121	0.68
13	Sanpang	70	0.39
14	Urdu	56	0.31
15	Kulung	35	0.19
16	Thulung	30	0.16
17	Lohorung	22	0.12
18	Dumi	15	0.08
19	Nachhiring	14	0.07
20	Khaling	10	0.05
	Total	17700	100

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with UNFPA, 2002

On the contrary, people of Hanshposha speak 20 different languages. The major languages spoken are Nepali, Tharu, Bantawa, Tamang, Limbu, Maithili and Gurung. A total of 289 people (1.63 per cent) are lumped into the category of "others". This kind of vagueness has raised questions of reliability of the Census 2001 procedures. This issue is also raised in one of the manifestos of a political party, namely, Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum, to ensure proper representation and reflection of all kinds of caste/ethnic groups and speech communities (MJF 2007).

Uranws, Tharus and Tamangs of Sunsari District: Ethno-linguistic Profile

The study purposively includes three languages, namely, Uranw, Tharu and Tamang which are spoken by Uranw, Tharu and Tamang ethnic groups. These languages represent three different language families out of four available in Nepal. Uranw and Tharu belong to Dravidian and Indo-European language family respectively whereas Tamang belongs to Sino-Tibetan language family. Uranw and Tharu languages are selected from Sharada Primary School and Tamang from Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School. It is interesting to note that Tharus are indigenous inhabitants of Sunsari whereas Tamangs have migrated from the hill districts and Uranws basically came from India many years ago. Table 2.10 presents the profile of Uranw, Tharu and Tamang ethnic groups in Nepal, Sunsari district, Simariya and Hanshposha villages and the two schools selected for the study. According to Census 2001, only 0.18 per cent of the total population of Nepal is Uranw. But Sunsari district has the highest number of Uranw people (54 per cent) out of total Uranw population in the country. However, the share of Uranws is only 3.93 per cent of the total population of Sunsari. In Simariya, Uranws constitute around 14 per cent and Sharada Primary School within the village has the highest number of Uranw children (60.37 per cent).

Table 2.10 reveals that Tharu is the fourth largest (6.75 per cent) caste/ethnic group in Nepal in terms of population after Chhetri, Brahman hill and Magar. In case of Sunsari district, it is ranked in the second position (15.25 per cent of total population) and numerically dominant (33.03 per cent of total population) in Simariya village. Only 39 children from Tharu linguistic community are enrolled in Sharada Primary School.

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Table 2.10

Population by Uranw, Tharu and Tamang Ethnic Groups

Area	Uranw		Tharu		Tamang		Remarks
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	
Nepal	41764	0.18	1533879	6.75	1282304	5.64	of total population of Nepal
Sunsari	22592	3.93	87523	15.25	13330	2.32	of total population of Sunsari
Simariya VDC	654	13.98	1545	33.03	0	0	of total population of Simariya
Hanshposha VDC	0	0	4161	23.50	743	4.19	of total population of Hanshposha
Sharada Primary School	163	60.37	39	14.44	0	0	of total students of school
Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School	0	0	4	2.57	30	15.46	of total students of school

Source: Census 2001 and School Record 2008

It may also be noted that the share of Tamang population in Nepal is 5.6 per cent. Tamang stands as the fifth largest ethnic group in the country. Altogether 2.32 per cent of people are Tamangs in Sunsari district and 4.19 per cent in Hanshposha. In addition to Tamang, other janajatis such as Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Tharu, Magar, Gharti/Bhujel, Newar, and Dalits, Brahman, Chhetri, etc. inhibit in Hanshposha. Altogether 30 Tamang children (15.46 per cent of total students) attend Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School.

Table 2.11 presents the profile of Uranw, Tharu and Tamang mother tongues in Nepal, Sunsari district, and Simariya and Hanshposha villages and the two schools. One may also see that only 28615 people (0.12 per cent) of Nepal speak Uranw language as mother tongue. The percentage of Uranw speakers in Sunsari and Simariya is 2.50 and 13.98 respectively. Sharada Primary School has the largest number of students (60.37 per cent) from Uranw speech communities.

Table 2.11

Population by Uranw, Tharu and Tamang Mother Tongues

Area	Uranw MT		Tharu MT		Tamang MT		Remarks
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	
Nepal	28615	0.12	1331546	5.85	1179145	5.15	of total population of Nepal
Sunsari	15626	2.50	87523	15.25	5967	0.70	of total population of Sunsari district
Simariya VDC	654	13.98	1545	33.03	0	0	of total population of VDC
Hanshposha VDC	0	0	4161	23.50	668	3.77	of total population of VDC
Sharada Primary School	163	60.37	39	14.44	0	0	of total students of school
Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School	0	0	4	2.57	29	14.94	of total students of school

Source: Census 2001 and School Record 2008

Table 2.11 also shows that Tharu stands as the fourth (5.85 per cent) major speech community in Nepal, the third (15.25 per cent) in Sunsari and the second (33.03 per cent) in Simariya. A total of 39 students (14.44 per cent of total students) with Tharu MT are attending Sharada Primary School. There are only four children from (2.57 per cent) Tharu speech communities in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School.

The data indicates that Tamang is the fifth largest language of Nepal in terms of number of MT speakers (5.46 per cent of total population). But in Sunsari, the percentage of Tamang MT speakers is significantly low (0.70 per cent). Tamang language occupies the fourth (3.77 per cent) and the third (14.94 per cent) position in Hanshposha and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School respectively.

Uranw People and their Mother Tongue

Uranw is one of the highly marginalized ethnic minority groups in Nepal (Ukyab and Adhikari 2000), As mentioned earlier, Uranw people live in eastern and central Tarai,

particularly in Sunsari, Morang, Siraha and Dhanusha districts. Uranws are also called as Jhagars in the east of Koshi river whereas they are known as Dhangars in the west (Yadava 2001). The Census 2001 refers to them as "Jhagar or Dhangar" instead of "Uranw". However, Uranws consider "Jhangar or Dhangar" as exonym (name given by others) and what they prefer to be called is "Uranw" (endonym). They do not prefer the word "Jhagar and Dhangar" (Pokharel 2004, as cited in Bhandari and Bhandari 2004). During interaction with the researcher Uranw people including school teachers clearly stated that the word "Jhangar"or "Dhangar" undermines their self-integrity and respect. They feel proud to be called as Uranw and argued that their language must be Uranw or Kurukh or Kudux rather than "Jhagar" or "Dhangar". In response to the question regarding the use of the word "Jhangar" or "Dhangar" in the documents of the government such as National Census 2001, they strongly argued that the word "Uranw" must be used in the forthcoming Census[6]. Uranws came from West Bengal, Orrisa and Madhya Pradesh states of India to eastern Tarai of Nepal searching for employment (Bhandari and Bhandari 2004). However, nobody has been able to document the exact date of their migration. In India, they are called as Oraons, one of the main tribes in Jharkhand (Toppo P. 2007). In addition, they inhabit in Bihar, Maharastra and Tripura as well (Bose 1971). As far as their occupation is concerned, they are mainly agricultural workers and wage labourers. For example, a household survey[7] carried out by Pragati Syasthya Samaj shows that in ward no. 8 of Simariya, 70 households belong to agriculture. A total of 54 households are involved in daily wages and only four households in business. But only 32 household have food sufficiency for a year. This situation suggests that the economic condition of Uranws is miserable.

According to Census 2001, the total population of Uranw is only 41764 (0.18 per cent of total population). However, only 28615 people speak Uranw language as mother tongue. That means, a large number of Uranw people do not speak their mother tongue and this suggests the influence of dominant language Nepali or Maithili. Census 2001 included Uranw as one of the ethnic groups' category. Before this, they were treated as

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[6] The next Census will be conducted in 2011 AD.
[7] Pragati Syasthya Samaj is a community-based organization (CBO) working for community development in Simariya. The CBO has recently carried out household survey in Simariya. The data belongs to the official record of the same survey.

'untouchables' in the Hindu hierarchical caste system (Bista 2000). Uranws themselves do not hesitate to share that they are very 'simple, honest and cooperative' people who are sometimes reluctant to mix up easily with outsiders. Most of the Uranw teachers and parents noted that the members of castes such as Brahman, Chhetri, Yadav, Mehata and Mandal may take advantage of this kind of honesty and simplicity, and they are treated differently in school and everyday social life.

Uranws celebrate festivals like *karmadharma, durgapooja, Bhadau purnima pooja, kalipooja, holi, Dashain and Tihar. Karmadharma* is one of most popular festivals of Uranws which is celebrated worshiping the god of wisdom. Uranws are fond of singing, dancing and drinking domestic liquor during the festivals. Sacrificing goats and chickens is very common among Uranws during festivals. Chickens, new beaten rice and newly harvested crops are offered during the harvesting time.

Tharu People and their Mother Tongue

Tharus are one of the oldest indigenous inhabitants of Tarai region in Nepal (Bista 2000). They are considered Mongoloid as per their physical features and facial appearance. Tharu settlements are pervaded from the far west to the eastern Tarai and the Inner Tarai districts such as Dang, Chitwan and Udayur districts. Tharus are called by different names like Rana Tharu, Dagaura Tharu, Chitauni Tharu, Saptariya Tharu and Rajgariya Tharu based on their settlements in the particular place. There are some differences among the cultures, rituals and even accents among the Tharus of different places. The territory where Tharus have been living from the very beginning is called Tharuwan or Tharuhat (ibid.). In Sunsari, mostly Rajgariya and Saptariya Tharus inhibit in different villages. In some places, they prefer to be called as Chaudhari rather than "Tharu" but all the official documents of the government mention them as "Tharu". They have their own ethnic identity, language and socio-cultural traditions. In the ancient times, they used to believe in Buddhism. After the 13th Century, they changed their religious belief to Hinduism, it was due to the unpopularity of Buddhism in the North India (Pyakuryal 1982). The main occupation of Tharus is farming. Practice of joint family is very common among them. Father, mother, eldest son and eldest daughter-in-law have to play

key role to maintain family harmony and cohesiveness among the family members. They celebrate the Hindu festivals more particularly *maghi* and *chhath*.

Tharu, one of the languages under Indo-European family, has 1,331,546 speakers out of 1,533,879 Tharu population in the country. Tharu language speakers are spread out from the eastern to far western Tarai including inner Tarai districts (See Appendix – N). So, Tharu people themselves have given different names to their language based on areas where they inhibit which include Kochila Tharu, Saptariya Tharu, Mahottari Tharu, Kathoria Tharu, Chitwania Tharu, Deokhuri Tharu, Dangaura Tharu and Rana Tharu (Awasthi 2004). The Tharus of Sunsari consider their language as Rajgariya Tharu and Saptariya Tharu. All the individuals who participated in the study said that they belong to Rajgariya Tharu.

Tamang People and their Mother Tongue

Tamang people have migrated to mountain and hill regions of Nepal from Tibet many years ago (Bista 2000). The major settlements of Tamangs are in some districts of central region, namely, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Makwanpur, Kavre, Sindhuli, and Sindhupalchok (Sharma 2008). Tamangs belong to hill indigenous nationalities and they practice Buddhism. As far as the Tamangs of Sunsari district are concerned, they are migrants from eastern hill districts such as Bhojpur and Dhankuta. They speak Tamang language as mother tongue which comes under Sino-Tibetan language family. Their common festivals are *Lhosar, Maghe Sankranti, Baisakh Purnima and Shravan Purnima*. They perform *poojas* (worship) at Gumbas as per Buddhist rituals.

The total population of Tamnag is 1,282,304 in Nepal but only 1,179,145 people speak Tamang as mother tongue which is the largest language under the Sino-Tibetan family of language in Nepal. It has rich oral tradition. However, literate tradition of Tamang is yet to be developed since process has been already started in this connection (NLPRC 1994, Tamang 2006). What emerges clearly from the discussion of Uranw, Tharu and Tamang linguistic communities, is that not all their community members speak their mother tongue and that some of them speak other languages as well. For instance, a numerically less represented and socio-culturally marginalized group like Uranw experiences decline of their language use. In other words, 13449 Uranws (31.48

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per cent of total Uranw population) do not speak Uranw language as mother tongue. The proportion of the speakers of other two linguistic groups, namely, Tharu and Tamang are considerable in number and the threat appears to be less severe in comparison to Uranw.

Hierarchical Structure of the Society

Thus, it appears from the facts and figures and discussions above that ethno-linguistic diversity exists not only at national and district levels but also at the village level and schools. It shows that Nepali society is rich in terms of cultural and linguistic resources. However, these resources are not adequately and properly utilized due to prevalence of domination or subordination caused by the hierarchical structure of the society. Bhattachan (2008) further elaborates dominant and minority groups based on different criteria (See Table 2.12).

Table 2.12

Dominant and Minority Groups based on Different Criteria

Categories	Dominant	Minority Groups
Caste/ethnicity	Bahun-Chhetri	Indigenous peoples, Dalits, Madhesi, Muslims and people with European origin
Language	Khas/Nepali	Tibeto-Burman, Other Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic (Munda) and Dravidian
Religion	Hindu	Animism, Bon, Kiranti, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikh and Bahai
Region	Kathmandu Valley	Mountain, Hill, Tarai
Development Region	Central	Far-Western, Mid-Western, Western and Eastern

Source: Minorities and Indigenous Peoples of Nepal (Bhattachan 2008)

According to Bhattachan (2008), the Hindu Bahun (Brahmans) and Chhetris who speak Nepali as mother tongue are called a dominant group in terms of religion, caste/ethnicity and language. It reveals that it is due to hierarchical structure of the society, some castes are considered as dominant, and many other castes such as Dalits, and indigenous nationalities are regarded as subordinate and less represented or excluded (Jaiswal and Dahal 2003, Paudel 2007). The same situation prevails in the context of language. In

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other words, Khas/Nepali is the only dominant language whereas all the other national languages are considered as minority languages (Gurung 1997). It is the context that the exclusion of linguistic minority children with reference to the context of education is discussed in the subsequent section.

Sum Up

Nepali society embraces diversity and pluralism as the major characteristics which create tremendous scope for flourishing multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual groups. However, the society in Nepal is hierarchical and there is a clear monopoly of 'higher castes' in public spheres in socio-cultural affairs and hegemony of Nepali language as a dominant medium of instruction in education, and as an official language in the judiciary and government offices persists. The hierarchical structure of the society produces dominance and subordination using the discriminatory and exclusionary tools and techniques, and extending positive attitude and behavior towards some groups and negative attitudes and behavior towards some others based on their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities. This kind of domination pushes the minority groups to further marginalization. The policies and practices that address the multilingual school contexts and society are elaborated in chapter three.

CHAPTER - III

CHAPTER – III

EDUCATION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES: THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

The chapter describes the contemporary situation of the education of linguistic minority children in Nepal. It tries to examine the past and current policy frameworks within education and analyzes how far these policies and strategies have addressed the issues related to education of linguistic minority children. It also examines the gap between policies at the national level and practices on the ground. The chapter assesses the on-going multilingual education programme in Nepal and its contribution to ensure educational rights of linguistic minority children.

Educational Status of Linguistic Minorities

According to Human Development Report (2006), Nepal stands at 136th among 177 countries in terms of Human Development Index that includes life expectancy, educational attainment and living standards of the people. Only 53.7 per cent of the Nepalese above 6 years of age (female 42 per cent and male 65.1 per cent) are literate (Census 2001). The Flash I Report[1] (2007) shows that out of the total enrolled children in primary education, the shares of Dalits and janajatis are 19.2 per cent and 40.9 per cent respectively. The overall percentage of janajati teachers is 15.1 per cent, 11.4 per cent and 9.3 percent at primary, lower secondary and secondary levels respectively. The Flash I Report mentions that 'the percentage of janajati teachers is lower at all levels than the previous school year, namely, 2006-07' (p. 31). Table 3.1 presents the Gross Enrollment Rate[2] (GER) and Net Enrollment Rate[3] (NER) at the national level.

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[1] Department of Education, Ministry of Education (MOE) regularly collects and updates educational data (two times in every year) with the help of District Education Offices, Resource Centres and Schools, and publishes the Flash Report. The data in some selected indicators is collected through easier and quicker way. Thus, the report is called 'flash'.

[2] Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

[3] Net Enrolment Rate (NER): Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

Table 3.1

Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and Net Enrollment Rate (NER) at the National Level

Level	GER			NER		
	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Total (%)	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Total (%)
ECCD centres/Pre-Primary Class (PPC)	56.8	63.4	60.2	NA	NA	NA
Primary	139.6	137.6	138.5	87.4	90.7	89.1
Lower Secondary	75.9	81.6	78.8	49.6	56.1	52.9
Secondary	52.4	59.3	55.9	32.8	37.7	35.3

Source: The Flash I Report (DOE 2007)

It may be observed that GER and NER at primary level are 138.5 per cent and 89.1 per cent respectively. That means out of primary school aged children (5 to 9 years-of-age) in the country, only 89.1 per cent are attending primary education. In other words, around 10.90 per cent of the children from the same age group are deprived of their right to education. However, the higher gross enrollment ratio above 100 per cent is mainly due to the inclusion of under-aged and over-aged children at the primary level of education. What the data clearly points out is that there is a clear gender disparity in terms of gross as well as not enrollment ratios at all levels of school education.

The data in terms of gender, caste/ethnicity and mother tongue are not available in the Flash Report. However, it has data in terms of broad ethnic categories. The proportion of enrollment (out of total enrolled children) at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and secondary levels in terms of caste/ethnicity is presented in Table 3.2. The share of janajati children out of total enrolled in ECCD/pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and secondary is 38.2 per cent, 40.9 per cent, 40.3 per cent and 37 per cent respectively. In comparison to the proportion of Dalit children in pre-primary (12.9 per cent), primary (19.2 per cent), lower secondary (9.8 per cent) and secondary (6.4 per cent) are appalling. The Dalit children are found to be dropping out as they move up the educational ladder. On the other hand, if we look at the proportion of some of the so-called forward caste

Table 3.2
Share of Enrollment at Different Levels by Social Groups

Social groups	ECCD/pre-primary (% of total enrolled children)	Primary	Lower secondary	Secondary
Dalit	12.9	19.2	9.8	6.4
janajati	38.2	40.9	40.3	37
Other forward castes (Brahman, Chhetri, etc.)	49.0	39.9	49.9	56
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: The Flash I Report (DOE 2007)

groups like Chhetri, Brahman, etc, it is found that they are way ahead of both Dalits and janajatis. Their proportion in pre-primary is 49 per cent; lower secondary 49.7 per cent and in secondary 56 percent. If we look at the data carefully, we find that janajatis' enrollment at primary level is higher than that of other forward castes and Dalits.

The Flash I Report has included only the information of children who are already enrolled in school. However, it does not provide the data of out-of-school children who are eligible for schooling. In other words, it does not give information about the percentage of janajati children attending primary school out of total primary school age children of the same group in the country.

On the other hand, there is no any other data collection mechanism which includes the information of excluded children. In order to bring the excluded children to the mainstream of education, it is very important to know who the excluded children are, where they live, what are causes of exclusion. Kabeer (2006) argues that 'the absence of disaggregated data has helped to invisibilize the problem of social exclusion'. This situation is reflected in the educational data-base of Nepal. The Flash Report includes the data regarding share of enrollment at primary level by social groups (See Table 3.2). However, it does not give the picture of excluded children from the linguistic minorities.

As far as the data on excluded children is concerned, let's take example of Uranw, one of the least known and highly marginalized minority ethnic groups of Nepal. The total population of Uranw is 41764 as per Census 2001. They speak their own distinct

language, namely, Uranw or Kurukh. It is very important to know that out of total school aged Uranw children, how many of them are enrolled in school and what is the number of total out-of-school children. And, are there any linguistic and cultural causes of educational deprivation of Uranw children? This situation calls for disaggregated data at both school and the community level. The Flash Report claims that an Education Management Information System (EMIS) is used at school level to derive the data. EMIS is also considered as an integral part of School Improvement Plan (SIP). However, it appears at the school level that EMIS itself has been exclusionary due to lack of inclusive perspective while designing. In other words, the forms and formats developed for EMIS do not have space for collection of data in terms of mother tongue. The schools teachers and SMC members are not adequately aware about the importance of disaggregated data in terms of language, caste/ethnicity, disability, etc.

What one may note from the available documents and research is that the educational status of linguistic minority children is far from satisfactory due to several reasons. One of the pertinent reasons is language constraint in the classroom. Turin (2007), further elaborates it citing a government's study that 'high rate of school absenteeism and drop-outs are evident among the youngest students from non-Nepali speaking backgrounds. This situation is 'correlated to the challenges they face in a culturally and linguistically alien classroom' (GoN 2003, as cited in Turin 2007). Turin argues that 'some government funded mother tongue initiatives have simply translated the Nepali language primary school books into minority languages, without any regard for cultural the differences. Such schemes are doomed to fail, since the content of a school book must reflect the cultural values of its students' (Turin 2007, p. 24).

CERID Study Report (2005a) on '*Meeting Learning Needs of Children of Indigenous Peoples and Linguistic Minorities*' observes that "though use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level was found to be politically, emotionally, and pedagogically correct, several practical issues emerged in the field. In the three schools and their communities visited by the CERID research team, there was general consensus for using mother tongue in the classroom for the purpose of supporting children's learning when he/she is unable to understand the word or term in Nepali. There was opposition in general for using textbooks only in terms of the mother

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tongue and using only the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (CERID 2005a, p. viii). This finding reveals that the use of mother tongue is essential to address the linguistic constraints that exist in the classroom. On the other hand, the report denies the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction. This contradiction shows that the study has not adequately concentrated its efforts in exploring the learning difficulties of the linguistic minority children especially in class one.

Likewise, CERID study report (2005b) on *Access of Disadvantaged Children to Education* reiterates that non-Nepali speaking disadvantaged children were facing language problem in the grade one due to their unfamiliarity to Nepali language. On the other hand, it also states that 'in the school, Bhojpuri is used as the medium of instruction for all subjects. This has been a major obstacle in teaching-learning' (CERID 2005b, p. 38). The report reflects linguistic constraint from the perspective of Nepali language learning, which fails to recognize the essence of MLE.

Ministry of Education has taken initiatives to provide education in mother tongue for non-Nepali speaking children. As a result, mother tongue education is implemented as a 'transitional language support' in around 7550 primary schools of the country. More than 18 mother tongues are used as media of instruction for this purpose (See Table 3.3).

The data reveals that transitional language support focuses basically in the early grades of primary education (class one to three). Maithili and Bhojpuri languages are used more than 2000 schools whereas 13 languages are limited to less than 20 schools. This does not include the schools of Sunsari district. It is part of mother tongue education programme but not as MLE programme interventions.

Overall it may be noted that there is a general belief that the lower literacy rates, enrollment and retention rates at different levels of school education may be a consequence of lack of a full-fledged recognition of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. A child is generally not transacted education in his/her mother tongue to a greater extent among various districts and ethnic groups in Nepal. However, the past couple years of evolution of "new" Nepal has included this as an important element in the policy debates and discourses, though none of these policies have taken final shape and implementable action frameworks. The next section discusses the past and the present

policy coverage and discourses in terms of language and education of linguistic minorities in Nepal.

Table 3.3

Number of Schools with Transitional Language Support

SN	Languages	Primary Level Grades						
		1	2	3	4	5	Total	percent of language used in total
1	Newari	67	47	37	27	26	204	2.7
2	Maithili	508	499	477	415	394	2293	30.4
3	Tamang	792	535	349	148	117	1941	25.7
4	Bhojpuri	476	467	440	388	379	2150	28.5
5	Awadhi	5	5	5	5	5	25	0.3
6	Hindi	8	9	8	6	7	38	0.5
7	Tharu	11	10	10	10	8	49	0.6
8	Magar	5	4	4	3	2	18	0.2
9	Bajjika	114	107	100	91	90	502	6.6
10	Sherpa	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.0
11	Urdu	1	1	2	2	2	8	0.1
12	English	2	2	2	2	2	10	0.1
13	Majhi	3	2	2	1	1	9	0.1
14	Nepali	48	48	56	52	50	254	3.4
15	Danuwar	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.0
16	Sunuwar	3	2	0	0	0	5	0.1
17	Thami	3	1	1	1	0	6	0.1
18	Tibetan	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.1
19	Pahari	1	1	1	0	0	3	0.0
20	Mewahang	2	2	2	2	2	10	0.1
21	Tilung	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.0
22	Magahi	5	3	3	2	2	15	0.2
Total		2059	1748	1500	1155	1088	7550	100

Source: The Flash I Report (DOE 2007)

The Policy Framework

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), which was endorsed after the political change in the country with success of the historic People's Movement II (2006), spells out that

Nepal is an 'independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive and a fully democratic State' (Article 4), having multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual characteristics (Article 3). All these characteristics were not included in the previous Constitutions of Nepal (1990 and 1962). The Article 13 (Right to Equality) of the Interim Constitution states that 'the State shall not discriminate among citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these' (GoN 2007, p. 6). The new Constitution gives high priority to 'language and origin' as well, which were not included earlier. Moreover, the Interim Constitution makes a very progressive change in its language related Article 5 which asserts that:

- All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal.

- The Nepali Language in Devnagari script shall be the official language.

- Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2) it shall not be deemed to have hindered to use the mother language in local bodies and offices. State shall translate the languages so used to an official working language and maintain record thereon' (Article 5, p. 1).

In a way, the Interim Constitution has democratised its constitutional provisions regarding the language with full respect to linguistic diversity of the country. It rejects the proposition of 1962 Constitution, which promoted 'language hegemony' making Nepali the only national language of the country without recognizing the existence and importance of other languages. In 1990, the Constitution of Nepal took a progressive move by recognising all mother tongues spoken in Nepal as national languages. However, it provided special honour to Nepali as 'the language of the nation' in addition to its status as an official language.

However, the Interim Constitution considers mother tongue as indispensable means for exercising right to free basic education. Additionally, each community has been recognised as a rights holder not only for receiving basic education in the mother tongue but also for preserving and promoting language and culture. The Article 17 (Education and Cultural Right) states:

(1) Each community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law. (2) Every citizen shall have the right to free

education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law. (3) Each community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civility and heritage (GoN 2007, p. 8).

The Interim Constitution also focuses on maintaining cultural diversity in the country. It recognises the state as a duty bearer to promote national unity in diversity. However, ethnic and linguistic minority issues have not been well articulated in the Constitution. Further, the Constitution mentions cursorily these issues under the heading of 'responsibilities, directive principles and policies of the State' that 'the State shall pursue a policy of making special provision based on positive discrimination to the minorities, indigenous tribes, and etc' (ibid., p. 17). It does not mention specific policies that will be adopted as part of its positive discrimination policies. Prior to the endorsement of the Interim Constitution in 2007, several attempts were made by the Government of Nepal to address the issues of inclusion and concerns of minority groups through several Plan documents. For instance, the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) is one of the major medium-term strategic planning documents of the Government of Nepal which is also regarded as Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSP includes "social inclusion" as one of the four pillars for development. The paper states:

> The Tenth Plan's poverty reduction strategy is built on of four pillars: (i) Broad based economic growth; (ii) Social sector development including human development; (iii) Targeted programs including social inclusion, in order to bring the poor and marginalised groups into the mainstream of development, together with targeted programmes for the ultra poor, vulnerable and deprived groups (who may not adequately benefit from the first two pillars); and (iv) Good governance. All four pillars are essential for improving the lives of the poor, and for mainstreaming the very poor deprived groups, and thus for promoting inclusive development (NPC 2003, p. 41).

The PRSP built on these four pillars basically focuses on improving economic aspects of marginalised people. However, social dimension of exclusion received very less attention in the document. It has briefly mentioned the new programmes of the Government for providing education in mother tongue. The socio-cultural and educational issues of ethnic and linguistic minorities have not been well-captured.

Considering the current transitional period of the country, the Three Year Interim Plan (2007/08 – 2009/10) for development has been prepared instead of the 11th Plan for another five years. This Plan which is aligned with the Interim Constitution and Minimum Common Programmes of the Interim Government of Nepal, aims to 'address the issues raised by the people by adopting an inclusive development process and carrying out targeted programmes' with a special focus on excluded groups (NPC 2007, p. 28). The Plan states:

> Mother language to be the medium of education protects the right of indigenous children and the opportunities to enjoy the human right to language. Success that comes about with an orderly implementation of multilingual education system will help increase the enrollment rate of indigenous children in the schools and reduce their drop-out rates as well (ibid., p. 121) ... In education, a tri-lingual policy will be formulated and implemented, and multilingual education will be promoted (ibid., p. 122).

The Plan gives high emphasis to linguistic human rights in education through a tri-lingual policy and a multilingual programme. A trilingual policy includes Nepali as a link language, English as an international language and mother tongues of *Adibasi janajatis* as the media of instruction. A policy to this end will be formulated and applied (ibid., p. 123).

Besides, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been implementing EFA National Plan of Action (NPA 2001-2015) since 2003. This NPA is aligned with EFA Dakar Framework of Action (2000) which considers education as a fundamental human right and aims to achieve six EFA goals by 2015. One of the goals related to primary education intends to ensure all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO 2000, p. 8). It states that 'education programmes should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and all ethnic and religious groups; and they should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic identities and respectful of diversity and reinforce a culture of peace (ibid.)'. The EFA Assessment (2000) has suggested addressing the learning needs of children of ethnic minorities, adopting bilingual education and making the education system more inclusive for the excluded children.

The NPA (2001-2015) aims to bring the disadvantaged and deprived child labourers into the fold of formal schooling through alternative and flexible schooling system (MOES 2003, p. 31). Some programme activities have been included from the economic exclusion perspective on piece meal basis. However, this Plan does not clearly focus on social exclusion as a priority issue. But it has been very instrumental in capturing the educational issues of linguistic minorities. It added one more goal on top of six EFA goals which intends to ensure "the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue" (ibid., p. 12). The Plan has adopted strategies to ensure the right of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue in the five different phases (ibid., p. 54). In the phase I (2003-2005), it is envisaged to 'boost up the teaching of the 11 minority languages with literate traditions and textbooks as the media of instruction and as subjects in multilingual context at the primary level'. In the second phase (2006-2008), it was decided to 'design curricula and textbooks for teaching the minority languages inclined towards developing their writing system and to introduce them as medium of instruction and as subject'. The third phase (2009-2011) aims to 'develop the writing system for the minority languages which have no literate tradition, design curricula and textbooks for teaching such languages and introduce them as medium of instruction and as a subject in multi-lingual context'. In the fourth phase (2012-2013), curricula and textbooks will be designed and prepared to 'introduce all minority languages as media of instruction'. Finally, in the fifth phase (2014-2015), mother tongue schools for endangered languages are opened at least one in each electoral constituency.

The strategies adopted in phase wise manner sound interesting from the perspective of education of linguistic minorities. It shows that the NPA has stepped into the third phase at present. As far as the progress of the first and second phases are concerned, expressions of the stakeholders who participated in this study give an encouraging impression in terms of policy formulation, but discouraging account in terms of implementation on the ground. The major problem lies in the document itself which does not give attention towards identifying ethnic and linguistic minorities and their needs through Education Management Information System (EMIS) and/or linguistic survey with full participation of the stakeholders at the community level.

Similarly, the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2015) focuses on anti-discrimination and gives attention to the marginalised groups instead of using the term 'social exclusion'. The Plan emphasizes on inclusive approach in education as a programme activity rather than including it in policy and strategy (MOWCSW 2004, p. 66). It does not focus adequately on the educational issues of minority children. It simply states that the Plan aims to 'encourage the provision of primary education in mother tongues through support for teachers and appropriate textbooks' (ibid., p. 27). It is worthwhile to note that both the National Plans of Action (EFA and children) claim that they are aligned with the Tenth Plan. But one of the major pillars of the Tenth Plan i.e. social inclusion has not been clearly mentioned in these Plans. It appears that the issue of social exclusion itself has been excluded from the major documents of the Government.

To examine the team composition of EFA National Plan of Action critically, it appears that all the coordinators and members of the thematic groups (MOES 2003, p. 91) are professional educationists. It indicates that the responsible body which formed the groups for developing the National Plan of Action is not adequately sensitised about the need and importance of sociologists, economists and gender and human rights experts as team members. Thus, the documents also do not pay much attention towards inter-disciplinary approach in addressing educational issues.

Ministry of Education and Sports developed Vulnerable Community Development Plan (VCDP) for Education for All Programme (2004-2009) in 2004, which aims to address social exclusion in primary education focusing on indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, etc. VCDP states that 'janajati children face a linguistic barrier and often suffer from low enrolment and high drop out rates because of their unfamiliarity with Nepali as the medium of instruction' (MOES 2004). To address this problem, VCDP identifies the need of 'mother tongue medium education programme'. However, it fails to adopt multilingual education framework. It has given emphasis on conducting social mapping in the school catchment areas and collection of disaggregated data by gender, disability, castes and ethnicity. However, it does not spell out the need of the disaggregated data in terms of the mother tongue of the children.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education of Nepal (2006) spells out that curriculum will be developed as per inclusive education policy. It has

made the provision that the mother tongue will be the medium of instruction for basic education. Mother tongue is made mandatory as medium of instruction in the first step only (grade 1-3). In this step, Nepali and English are also included as compulsory subjects. English was included in the first grade as one of the major compulsory subjects only since 2003. Sanskrit remained as compulsory subject at the lower secondary level from 1981 to 2003 whereas it was made optional since 2003. Mother tongue can be included in the second and the third steps as optional subjects as per the local needs. The government policy has been flexible to accommodate subjects such as mother tongue, subjects related to local context, profession and skill, etc. However, the definition of inclusive education and overall framework does not adequately reflect the socio-cultural and right-based perspectives. This framework was prepared before the Interim Constitution of Nepal was adopted, consequently it does not follow strongly the essence of the Constitution in terms of ensuring right of education of linguistic minority children. NCF considers a mixed society with socio-cultural and linguistic diversity as a challenge (CDC 2006, p. 13) but this situation may be taken as opportunity to flourish multilingual education.

NCF still gives high priority to Nepali and English languages rather than mother tongue. Mother tongue obtains lower status in terms of credit (See Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Curriculum Framework for Grade 1-3

SN	Subjects	Credit	Full Marks
1	Nepali	8	100
2	English	5	100
3	Mathematics	6	100
4	Social Study and Creative Art	6	100
5	Science, Health and Physical Education	5	100
6	Local subject/Mother Tongue	4	100
	Total	34	600

Source: Curriculum Development Centre (2007)

On the other hand, it is observed in some schools under Duhabi and Ithari Resource Centre in Sunsari district that English is also included as an optional subject instead of

the mother tongue/local subject. According to teachers, some parents have started to demand additional English in Sharada Primary School and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School due to the influence of decision taken in Duhabi and Ithari Resource Centres. The mother tongue versus other tongues issue is elaborated in the chapter V.

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), MOE is a key player in developing curriculum, textbooks and reference materials in close coordination with other concerned bodies at national level. The Centre has developed text books in 16 different mother tongues (See Table 3.5). CDC has proposed to add more mother tongues in this list in future. But one has to seriously think about the use and effectiveness of these textbooks. On the other hand, as part of the Multilingual Education Programme, Inclusive Education Section, Department of Education has provided technical and financial support to

Table 3.5
List of the Textbooks Developed in the Mother Tongues: CDC

SN	Languages	Text Books/Materials		Class
		Curriculum	Textbook	
1	Limbu	Primary level	Aanipaan	Class 1-5
2	Tamang	Primary level	Hyanla Gyot	Class 1-5
3	Newari	Primary level	Lunhiti	Class 1-5
4	Maithili	Primary level	Hamar Maithili Pothi	Class 1-5
5	Bhojpuri	Primary level	Hamar Bhasha Bhojpuri	Class 1-5
6	Awadhi	Primary level	Hamar Bhasha	Class 1-5
7	Tharu	Primary level	Hamar Tharu	Class 1-5
8	Rai (Bantawa)	Primary level	Aan Yung	Class 1-5
9	Magar	Primary level	Kanung Magar Dhut	Class 1-5
10	Gurung	Primary level	Tamu Kyoy	Class 1-5
11	Sherpa	Primary level	Sherpa Bhasha	Class 1-5
12	Rai (Chamling)	Primary level	Chamling La	Class 1-5
13	Rajbanshi	Primary level	Haamaar Kitab	Class 2
14	Rai (Sunuwar)	Primary level	Sunuwar Bhasha	Class 2
15	Yakkha	Primary level	Yanka Yakkha Chhettap	Class 1
16	Tharu (Central Region)	Primary level	Mor Kitab	Class 1

Source: Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education (2008)

develop the textbooks in the mother tongues shown in Table 3.6. For instance, textbooks of class one to three are now available in languages such as Rasuwa Tamang, Palpa

Magar, Athapaharia Rai, Rana Tharu, Uranw, Tharu/Maithili, Santhali, and Rajbanshi. It is very interesting to note that there are basic differences between the two lists (Table 3.5 and 3.6). For example, textbooks mentioned in Table 3.5 were developed at national level with the help of some experts in related language. The textbooks from Table 3.6 were developed by the local parents, teachers and community members. Therefore, the list of the Table 3.5 does not recognise the different varieties of the same language or dialects except the varieties of Rai language. Table 3.6 mentions "Rasuwa Tamang" considering the fact that Tamang language spoken in Rasuwa may be slightly different than Tamang

Table 3.6
List of the Textbooks Developed in the Mother Tongues: DOE

SN	Languages	Text Books/Materials		Class
		Curriculum	Textbook	
1	Rasuwa Tamang	Primary level	Jyogle	Class 1-3
2	Palpa Magar	Primary level	Bair a Majha	Class 1-3
3	Athapaharia Rai	Primary level	Hombarak	Class 1-3
4	Rana Tharu	Primary level	Munka Kanya Bangai	Class 1-3
5	Uranw	Primary level	Karam Khiri	Class 1-3
6	Tharu/Maithili	Primary level	Purna Khisa	Class 1-3
7	Santhali	Primary level	Sarna Dharam	Class 1-3
8	Rajbanshi	Primary level	Bagla Pakhi	Class 1-3

Source: Inclusive Education Section, Department of Education, Ministry of Education (2008)

spoken in Sunsari. Likewise, Tharu spoken in Sunsari is different than Rana Tharu spoken in Kanchanpur district in the far western Nepal. Thus, from the sociolinguistic point of view, the textbooks developed as part of MLE progamme appear to be more progressive, which recognise language varieties and dialects. All these text books are developed by the community members who are 'indigenous knowledge holders' in a participatory way with the technical support and facilitation from expert team of Inclusive Education Section of the Department of Education. The process of textbooks development under MLE programme is discussed in the subsequent section.

In 2007, Ministry of Education has developed a School Sector Reform (SSR), a core document for policies and strategies. The document captures the spirit of the Interim

Constitution of Nepal. SSR has adopted social inclusion policy as an overarching framework in education which states:

> The government will ensure the inclusion of children from socially disadvantaged groups in education. The policy for social inclusion will be an overarching framework for equitable access to quality education for all (MOES 2007, p. 47).

From the sociological and right-based perspectives, the SSR is one of the advanced documents in the field of education till now, which envisions that a child will 'understand and appreciate bio-diversity, cultural diversity and linguistic diversity at local and wider levels, and makes efforts to harmonise them' (ibid., p. 21). It aims to make school as 'child friendly and inclusive' place where children's rights to education are fully respected. The school and teachers are expected to recognise and appreciate local languages and cultures. The SSR further states:

> A child's mother tongue will be employed as the medium of instruction up to grade three. English will be taught as a subject from grade one onwards. ... In secondary education, the medium of instruction will either be Nepali or English as determined by the SMC in consultation with the local government (ibid., p. 38).

The SSR has proposed new fixed structure of basic education with grades 1-8[4] and secondary education with grades 9-12. The SSR does not spell out the transitional strategy for medium of instruction from grades 4 to 8. It has not adequately captured the policy and strategies adopted by the Three Year Interim Plan regarding multilingual education in the primary school.

The policies of Nepal in recent times are also triggered by some of the international commitments. In fact, the Government of Nepal has endorsed the global declarations and commitments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and EFA Dakar Framework of Action (2000). These documents reiterate basically the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and rights-based perspectives. Children's right to education has appeared in all the documents as a cross-cutting issue. Many educational policies related

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[4] There will be three stages at the basic education level (Foundation with grades 1-3, Primary with grades 1-5, and Upper Primary with grades 1-8) (MOES, 2007)

documents of Nepal also refer to the linkage between those declarations and commitments, and policies at the national context. For instance, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article two states that 'everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'. Similarly, the Article 26 asserts that 'everyone has the right to education'. It means that any kind of discrimination and exclusion based on ethnicity, culture, language, etc. will be a violation of human rights. If any eligible children for schooling compelled to remain out-of-school or pushed out from the school due to whatsoever reasons, they will be deprived of their right to education.

Nonetheless, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) also states that all children are entitled to the same rights, regardless of the child's, or their parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. This further reiterates that 'education is right of every child. States recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular make primary education compulsory and available free to all' (Article 28).

It is, however, important to note that the policy related documents sound poor in reflecting consistency and linkage with one another. For example, School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a major policy and strategy document at school level which does not show the consistency and linkage with global declarations and commitments of the government, constitutional provisions, national policies and NPAs, District Education Plan (DEP) and Village Education Plan (VEP). It reveals that there has been a very negligible public discourses on policy making issues, existing policies and implementation of such policies in the ground. Consequently, community members do not think that those policies are their own property.

It is evident that there is a gap between policies at national level and district level, and between school/community level plans and ground realities. Likewise, gap between policies and practices at school level is much wider. Most of the individuals at the administrative/implementation level (District Education Office/Resource Centre) and

practice level (school) are not well aware about the new provisions in the Interim Constitution and recent policy documents developed at the national level. Even the already disseminated policy documents to the district level appear to be 'good looking documents' kept in the shelves instead using them as live and useful documents.

Multilingual Education Programme in Nepal

Department of Education, MOE has been implementing 'Multilingual Education Programme for all non-Nepali speaking students of primary schools of Nepal' since January 2007. The programme aims to enhance quality education for all through the provisions of MLE. It recognizes that indigenous education and knowledge systems are a part of quality education (DOE 2009). Table 3.7 presents the pilot languages, schools, districts, geographical across development regions.

Table 3.7

Pilot Languages, Schools and Districts for MLE

Mother Tongue	Language Family	School	District	Geographical Region	Development Region
Uranw, Tharu/Maithili	Dravidian and Indo-European	Sharada Primary School, Simariya-8, Charaiya	Sunsari	Tarai	Eastern
Santhali, Rajbangsi	Austro-Asiatic	Rastriya Ekata Primary School, Kajali	Jhapa	Tarai	Eastern
Rana (Tharu)	Ind-European	Rastriya Primary School, Dekhabhuli	Kanchanpur	Tarai	Far-Western
Athapaharia Rai	Sino-Tibetan	Deurai Lower Secondary School, Sangtang	Dhankuta	Hill	Eastern
Palpa Magar	Sino-Tibetan	Nawajagrit Primary School, Thulobarkhu	Palpa	Hill	Western
Rasuwa Tamang	Sino-Tibetan	Saraswati Primary School, Thade	Rasuwa	Mountain	Central

Source: Inclusive Education Section, Department of Education, Ministry of Education

The MLE program has included so far nine languages in seven pilot schools of six districts. It has included at least one language from all four language families existing in

Nepal and at least one district from each geographical region (DOE and MLE Technical Assistance Team 2007). However, it does not include any school from the Mid-Western development region.

The MLE program has adopted different models as per socio-cultural and linguistic contexts of the local schools which are presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8
Models of MLE Programme

Model	Main Feature of Classrooms	Languages Used	Status of the School
Model I	Monolingual, Mono grade, Subject teaching	Rana Tharu in grades I, II and III in Kanchanpur, Tamang in Rasuwa, Magar in Palpa	All teachers speak the MT of the students, enough MT teachers, enough classrooms
Model II	Monolingual, Mono grade, Grade teaching	Athapaharia (Rai) in grades I, II and III in Dhankuta	Some teachers cannot speak the MT of the students–MT teachers for first three grades only, enough classrooms
Model III	Monolingual, Multi grade, Grade teaching	Santhal in class I and II in Jhapa	Some teachers cannot speak the MT of the students – lack of MT teachers (only one), lack of classrooms for MLE purposes
Model IV	Monolingual, Multi grade, Subject teaching	Uranw in class II and III in Sunsari	All teachers are multilingual in the students' MTs – enough MT teachers, lack of classrooms for MLE purposes
Model V	Multilingual, Mono grade, Subject teaching	Tharu/Maithili, Uranw and Nepali in class I in Sunsari	All teachers are multilingual in the students' MTs – enough MT teachers, lack of classrooms for MLE purposes
Model VI	Multilingual, Multi grade, Grade teaching	Tharu/Maithili and Nepali in class II and III in Sunsari, Rajbansi and Nepali in class I and II in Jhapa	Lack of classrooms for MLE purposes, not enough MT speaking teachers (Jhapa)

Source: Inclusive Education Section, Department of Education, Ministry of Education (2008)

There are seven models of MLE programme[5]. Sharada Primary School, a sample school of this study in Sunsari district has adopted the model IV, V and VI. Only these three models are described here in the context of Simariya based on field observations. In Model IV, all Uranw children of class II and III sit in the two separate rows in the same classroom. Uranw language is used as a medium of instruction while teaching Uranw language as a subject and other subjects such as Science, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics and Social Studies. School has enough Uranw MT teachers but doesn't have adequate classrooms for MLE purposes. In Model V, all 85 children in the grade one participate in the learning activities sitting in the same room. Those children speak Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali as mother tongue. In the classroom, it is found that teachers use all these languages as media of instructions in the same period with special attention to Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages. This model appears to be quite interesting due to availability of more than two languages in a class as resources but very complicated in terms for conducting teaching-learning activities (See interview with teachers in chapter IV). In Model VI, all Tharu, Maithili and Nepali speaking children from grade two and three attend classes in the same room but sit in two different rows. Teachers use Tharu, Maithili and Nepali languages for the teaching.

It is found in the field that there are some similarities and differences between MLE school[6] and non-MLE school. Both the sample schools are government supported community-schools and they are practising similar rules, regulations and management styles. But, difference remains in the composition of caste and ethnicity among children enrolled in the school and their mother tongues as well. In other words, in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, the students belong to several caste and ethnic groups who speak eleven different languages as mother tongues whereas only four languages are spoken by the students of Sharada Primary School. Ethno-linguistic composition of

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[5] These models were not developed before implementation of MLE programme in the pilot schools. MLE programme has adopted flexible approach as per the local context of these schools. MLE Technical Team of DOE put the models in a matrix after launching MLE programme in all schools and shared in a national level workshop.

[6] MLE School refers to the school where Department of Education has officially launched multilingual education programme. There is difference between multilingual school and MLE School. Each school which has students from various speech communities can be considered as multilingual school but if that school does not 'use multiple languages for teaching school subjects (medium of instruction) other than the languages themselves', that is not multilingual education (Mohanty 2009).

students in both the schools is elaborated in chapter IV later. It is interesting to mention that historical background of Bal Bahubhasiya School tells us that the name of school i.e. "Bahubhasiya" (multilingual) was coined keeping in mind the spirit of multilingualism. However, actual practice in the school reveals a different reality. In this school, Limbu language is included as one of the subjects in the name of multilingual education but not as the medium of instruction. On the other hand, Limbu language is made compulsory to all other non-Limbu speakers as well. Thus, DOE has not recognised this as a MLE school. Therefore, it is obvious that only teaching of one more language cannot be characterized as multilingual education programme (Mohanty 2009). According to UNESCO, 'bilingual and multilingual education refer to the use of two or more languages as media of instruction' (UNESCO 2003b)[7].

It may be emphasised here is that medium of instruction is the major determinant to differentiate between MLE School and non-MLE School. After implementation of MLE programme in 2008, Saharada Primary School has included three languages, namely, Uranw, Tharu and Maithili as media of instruction and also as subjects from grade one to three. For instance, Uranw children are not only enjoying the opportunity to learn Uranw language as a subject but also exercising their right to get education in their mother tongue. In other words, they are learning other subjects such as Mathematics, Social Study, Health and Physical Education, and Science in their own mother tongue. Likewise, Tharu and Maithili speaking children are also having a chance to get education in their own mother tongue simultaneously.

In non-MLE school, curriculum and textbooks prepared at the national level by Curriculum Development Centre, are used whereas in the MLE School, initiatives are taken to develop curriculum and textbooks at the local level. As a result, Sharada Primary School has developed local curriculum and textbooks in Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages for class 1-3 involving children, parents, teachers, SMC members and community members. Children's (same school) drawings are included in the textbooks in

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[7] 'UNESCO adopted the term 'multilingual education' in 1999 in the General Conference Resolution 12 to refer to the use of at least three languages, the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education' (UNESCO 2003b).

Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages. Local indigenous knowledge and culture have been captured in the locally developed textbooks.

However, only three lessons are developed within a period of one year which is not sufficient for teaching as remarked by children and teachers during the interviews. MLE School teachers claim that school is extending a positive and respectful attitude and behaviour towards linguistic minority children which was not experienced before. Moreover, they shared that they have significantly reduced unfavourable treatment and behavior such as ridicule and harassment towards linguistic minority children. According to the teachers, children are very enthusiastic to learn in their mother tongue (Uranw, Tharu and Maithili) and they do not hesitate to have interaction with teachers. This situation has contributed to increase regular attendance of children in class.

It is noteworthy to mention something about the process of the programme and perceptions of children, teachers and parents. One of the parents narrates his experience of MLE programme:

> One day school invited me for a meeting. I was not confident whether I could contribute in the meeting or not. There was a gathering in school. Some Nepalese and foreigners from Kathmandu were also present in the meeting. They talked about importance of *Bahubhashi Shikshya* (multilingual education) and asked parents and community members to tell the real story of the local contexts. I told a story in Uranw language and some teachers wrote in the copy. My other colleagues also added some points to make the story interesting. Then, children were asked to make drawings based on the stories. I became very happy as no outsider had asked me to tell the story in my mother tongue before. After couple of months, I could see the same story and drawings of children in a textbook in Uranw language. This is really a nice experience (Interview, November 2008).

This reveals that MLE programme has been mobilizing children, parents, teachers and other senior citizens to develop textbooks and learning resources/materials at the local level incorporating various indigenous knowledge, skill and practice, and culture in Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages. Children's drawings are published as part of the lessons in the textbooks. These lessons and stories are very much sensitive towards local identity, culture and language of janajatis. This process has enhanced a sense of

belongingness and ownership among the children, teachers, parents, SMC and PTA members and other community members. Thus, the programme has gained momentum in the pilot schools due to its flexible models and participatory approach and process for making the curriculum and textbooks at the local level. Especially the linguistic minorities, who were desperately waiting for promotion of their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity, are now actively participating in this process. Thus, all concerned stakeholders are very much hopeful for expansion of the MLE programme in future to ensure the educational rights of linguistic minority children.

Sum Up

Thus, various policy related documents formulated at national level spell out the commitment towards achieving education for all goals especially related to primary education which aim to ensure by 2015 that 'all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality' (MOES 2003). These documents also mention that they will adopt inclusive strategy on how to include the excluded or how to reach to the unreached. But, these policies do not have strong foundations of the baseline information. In other words, disaggregated data of children (both school attending and out-of-school) in terms of gender, caste, ethnicity, mother tongue, disabilities, religion, region, etc. does not exist at school, community and district level, and eventually at national level. This situation invites some serious questions. How can a policy be realistic without knowing who are excluded, where are they? When, how and why are they excluded? Thus, educational policy framework seems to adopt a top down approach which does not reflect the realities of the grassroots.

Moreover, it is evident that policies are giving too much emphasis on educational access and quality related goals of EFA, and less priority to non-discrimination and equality related goals. Further, EFA goal related to mother tongue (ensuring the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue) has not been adequately articulated in the policy documents compared to other goals.

Thus, it appears from the documents, interview and discussion with many concerned individuals at the different levels (policy making, administrative/implementation and practice in the ground) that there is need of joint efforts by the concerned stakeholders (policy makers, politicians, academicians, researchers, rights activists, implementers, teachers, SMC/PTA members, community people including children) for designing policies and effective implementation in the ground. A culture of having discourses on policy issues needs to be established to enhance common understanding and commitments for implementation respecting diversities and disagreements. The next chapter discusses the complexities and constraints in the education of linguistic minority children in multilingual school contexts.

CHAPTER - IV

CHAPTER - IV

COMPLEX WORLD OF LEARNING IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS

The chapter explores the complex world of learning for linguistic minority children in the two sample schools with multi-ethnic and multilingual environments. It examines the relationship between schools and communities from the socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic perspectives. The chapter specifically outlines linguistic and cultural constraints in schooling of the linguistic minority children. The main focus of the chapter is to address the question: how do children and teachers perceive ethno-linguistic diversity and complexity of overall learning environment in school?

Multi-ethnic and Multilingual Context of the Schools

As mentioned earlier, two schools, namely, Sharada Primary School, Simariya and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, Hanshposha are selected for the study. The aim is to understand the issues relating to the learning of linguistic minority children in the schools. One of the schools, namely, Sharada Primary School is designated as a multilingual education school, where linguistic minority children are offered education in their mother tongues and the other school, Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, though it is called multilingual by its name, it does not transact MLE in true spirit of the programme. This section provides a profile of both the schools.

Sharada Primary School is a government supported community school which was established in 1991. This school is situated in Simariya village, where the Uranw and Tharu ethnic communities live in good numbers. The catchment areas of the school include some clusters of Chhitaha and Tanmuna villages as well. This situation has contributed to make the school multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual. Considering the context, multilingual education programme was launched in this school in April 2008. In terms of multi-ethnic environment in classrooms, the school data shows that the classrooms are multi-ethnic in composition. For example, it is found that 270 children (144 girls and 126 boys) are attending Sharada Primary School. The children belong to

different caste/ethnic groups which include janajatis 202 (106 girls and 96 boys), Dalits 13 (five girls and eight boys) and others 55 (33 girls and 22 boys). Janajatis constitute two ethnic groups i.e. Uranw and Tharu. Rishidev, which is also known as Mushahar, comes under Dalits. The 'others' include Brahman and Chhetri (hill origin), and Yadav, Mehata, Mandal, Koiri, Teli, Thakur, etc. (Tarai/Madhes origin). The grade one consists of 31 per cent of total children who represent various caste/ethnic groups. It shows that ethnic diversity exists within the classroom. The percentage of students by caste/ethnicity in Sharada Primary School is presented in the pie chart 4.1.

Pie Chart 4.1

Students by Caste/ethnicity in Sharada Primary School

Students by Caste/ethnicity in Sharada Primary School

5%

20%

75%

- Janajatis
- Others
- Dalits
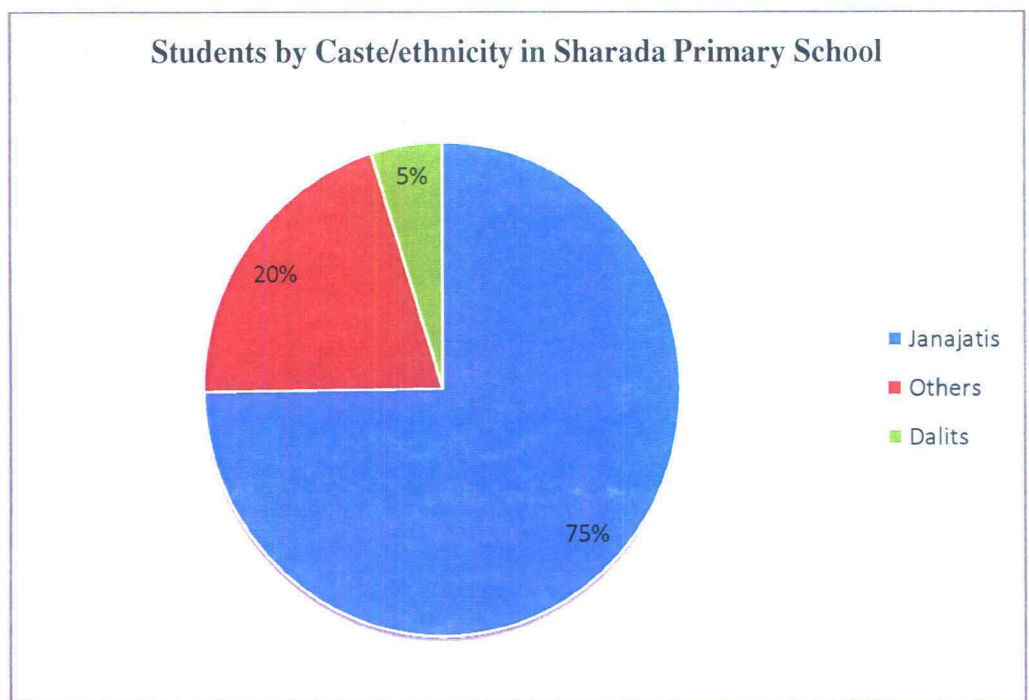
Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic Year 2008/2009)

It shows that a huge majority (75 per cent) of the students are from janajatis which include Uranw and Tharu. These ethnic groups have their own mother tongue with their unique ethnic identity. The percentage of other castes and Dalits is twenty and five respectively (for detailed information of children by castes/ethnic groups, See Appendix – I).

As far as number of languages spoken by the children is concerned, it is recorded that Sharada Primary School embraces multilingual environment in terms of their

composition though members of one group are predominantly represented in comparison to the other groups. For instance, Sharada School has the highest number of children (84 girls and 79 boys) who speak Uranw language as their mother tongue. Maithili is the second largest language in the school in terms of the number of speakers (30 girls and 19 boys). A total of 39 children (22 girls and 17 boys) belong to Tharu speech community. Only a few children (eight girls and eleven boys) speak Nepali as their mother tongue. It shows that class three and five do not have single student with Nepali mother tongue. However, Nepali was the only medium of instruction till April 2008. Overall, the school composition reveals a very strong multilingual scenario comprising of Uranw (60.37 per cent), Maithili (18.15 per cent), Tharu (14.44 per cent) and Nepali (7.04 per cent) languages (See Pie chart 4.2). The presence of an overwhelming majority of children (92.94 per cent) from the non-Nepali speech communities calls for mother tongue-based multilingual education in order to ensure their right to education (See Appendix - J).

Pie Chart 4.2

Students by Mother Tongue in Sharada Primary School

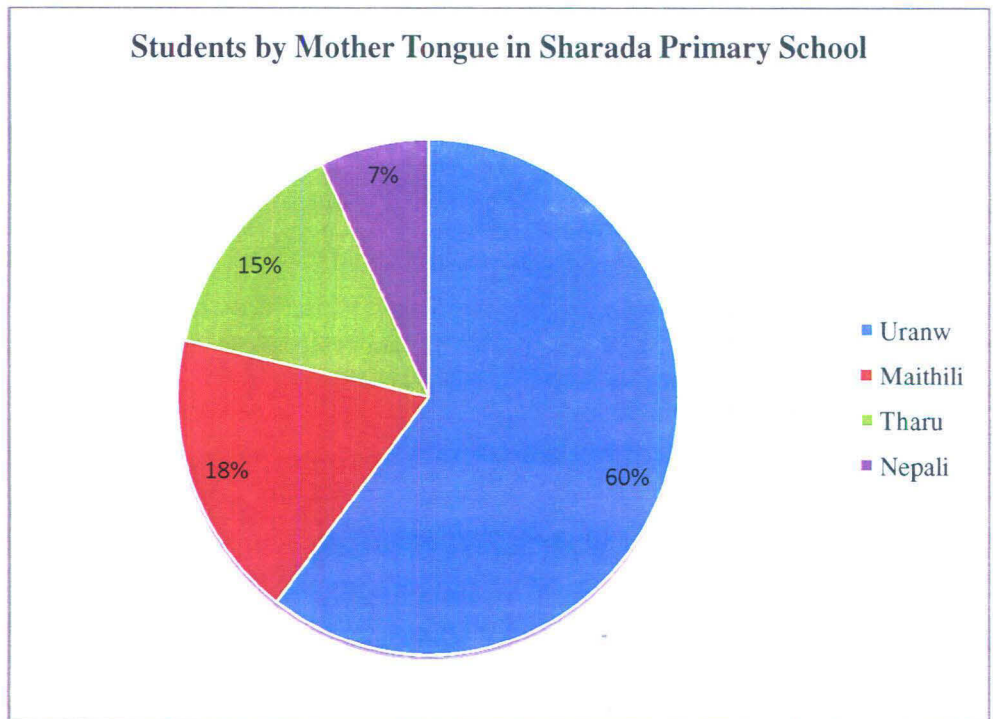Source: Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic Year 2008/2009)

Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School was established in 1994 in Tarahara of Hanshposha. Hanshposha lies between Dharan Municipality and Ithari Municipality. The dominant inhabitants of this village are hill migrants such as Chhetri, Rai, Brahman, Newar, Tamang, Gurung and Limbu, and Tharu, indigenous dwellers. The growing trend of internal migration and rapid expansion of the local markets have contributed to make the village more multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual. Considering this kind of diversity, local leaders and social workers played a vital role to establish this school as multilingual (*Bahu Bhashiya*) school. Local resident Mr. Prem Bahadur Thapa gave three *katthas* of land and Rs. 25000 for construction of school building in the name of his late mother Mrs. Balkumari Thapa.

The school was inaugurated by former Prime Minister late Mr. Manmohan Adhikari in 1994. The school itself claims that this is the first multilingual school in the country. It is due to the popularity of the name of the school as "Bahubhasiya" (multilingual), former Prime Minister Mr. Adhikari, parliamentarians from Sunsari and some other districts, government officials, and representatives from various national and international organizations visited the school and expressed their commitment to extend financial and other supports. After eight months, a delegation led by Mr. Maniram Giri and Mr. Surya Kumar Rai, coordinator and secretary of the School Building Construction Committee met another former Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba in presence of nine parliamentarians who were in favour of multilingual education. The team requested to provide financial support for the school. However, school has not received adequate support financially and technically from the concerned authorities (Bal 2007).

In the beginning, Rai, Tamang, Magar and Limbu languages were taught as subjects in the school. In spite of active involvement of SMC and PTA members, parents and local people, and evidence of resource mobilization, the momentum of this initiative could not continue. Consequently, Rai, Tamang and Magar languages were dropped from the list despite the fact that more students speak these languages than Limbu. Till date Limbu language is being taught as a subject from class one to five for all children as an optional subject but not as a medium of instruction. School teachers shared that this school has not received any technical support from government authorities except providing two teachers from District Education Office and supply of textbooks in Limbu

language from Curriculum Development Centre. According to the school teachers, it has been very difficult for them to justify the name of "bahubhasiya" (multilingual) school. Some non-Limbu speaking students and their parents shared that they do want their own mother tongue as medium of instruction rather than Limbu language. On the other hand, concerned educational authorities of Government of Nepal are reluctant to call this school as MLE School. Thus, for the purpose of the current study, this school is considered as non-MLE school as there is no official programme of MLE implemented.

In Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, there are a total of 126 janajati children (73 girls and 53 boys) janajatis include Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Majhi, Limbu and Tharu. The number of Brahman and Chhetri students is 48 (23 girls and 25 boys). Altogether, there are sixteen Dalits (eleven girls and five boys) and only four Muslim children (two girls and two boys) attend the school. All these caste/ethnic groups except Tharu and Muslims are hill migrants. Pie chat 4.3 shows that a majority (64.94 per cent) of the students belong to janajatis in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, Hanshposha. The percentage of Brahman/Chhetri and Dalits is 25 and 8 respectively. Presence of Muslim children is very negligible (two per cent) in the school (See Appendix – K).

Pie Chart 4.3

Students by Caste/ethnicity in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School
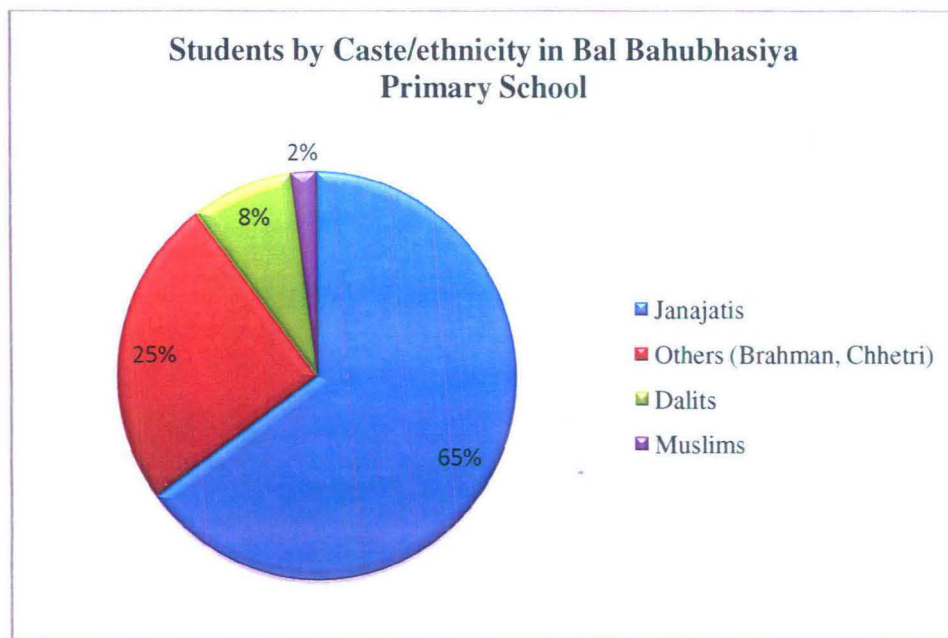
Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic Year 2008/2009)

As mentioned earlier, Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School has less number of students (106 girls and 88 boys) than Sharada Primary School. However, it has more number of languages spoken as mother tongue in comparison to Sharada School. The students of Bal Bahubhasiya school speak 11 different languages as mother tongue which include Nepali (37 girls and 35 boys), Rai (27 girls and 15 boys), Tamang (14 girls and 15 boys), Gurung (seven girls and four boys), Magar (seven girls and three boys), Newari (three girls and three boys), Limbu (three girls and two boys), Tharu (one girl and three boys), Maithili (three girls and two boys) and Urdu (two girls and two boys). It indicates that top three dominant languages are Nepali, Rai and Tamang in terms of number of speakers. Nepali has been the dominant language which has power of official status and medium of instruction. Children with Nepali, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Newari and Magar mother tongue are spread out from grade one to five. However, Maithili, Tharu, Majhi, Limbu and Urdu speakers are only in some grades, for example, Tharu children are in only grade one and five. Further, the table reveals that there are 47 children in the grade one who represent ten different speech communities.

This situation explicitly reflects rich linguistic resources in the grade one. As another side of the coin, it indicates the complex learning environment as well. According to the teachers, Tarahara is a new settlement so various caste/ethnic groups live together after internal migration. Especially castes/ethnic groups like Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar, Newar, Brahmin and Chhetri have been migrated from hill districts. Tharus are indigenous dwellers of this village. The children of class one and five were found more interactive during informal interaction, interview and focus group discussions. It is due to language competence in Nepali. It is also found that most of the non-Nepali children of the grade one could communicate in Nepali though they had different mother tongues.

Pie chart 4.4 presents the percentage of students by mother tongue in this school. It may be seen that 194 students from the diverse linguistic background are studying in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School. They speak Nepali (37 per cent), Rai (22 per cent), Tamang (15 per cent), Gurung (six per cent), Magar (five per cent), Newari (three per cent), Majhi (three per cent), Limbu (three per cent), Tharu (two per cent), Maithili (two

Pie Chart 4.4

Students by Mother Tongue in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School

Students by Mother Tongue in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School
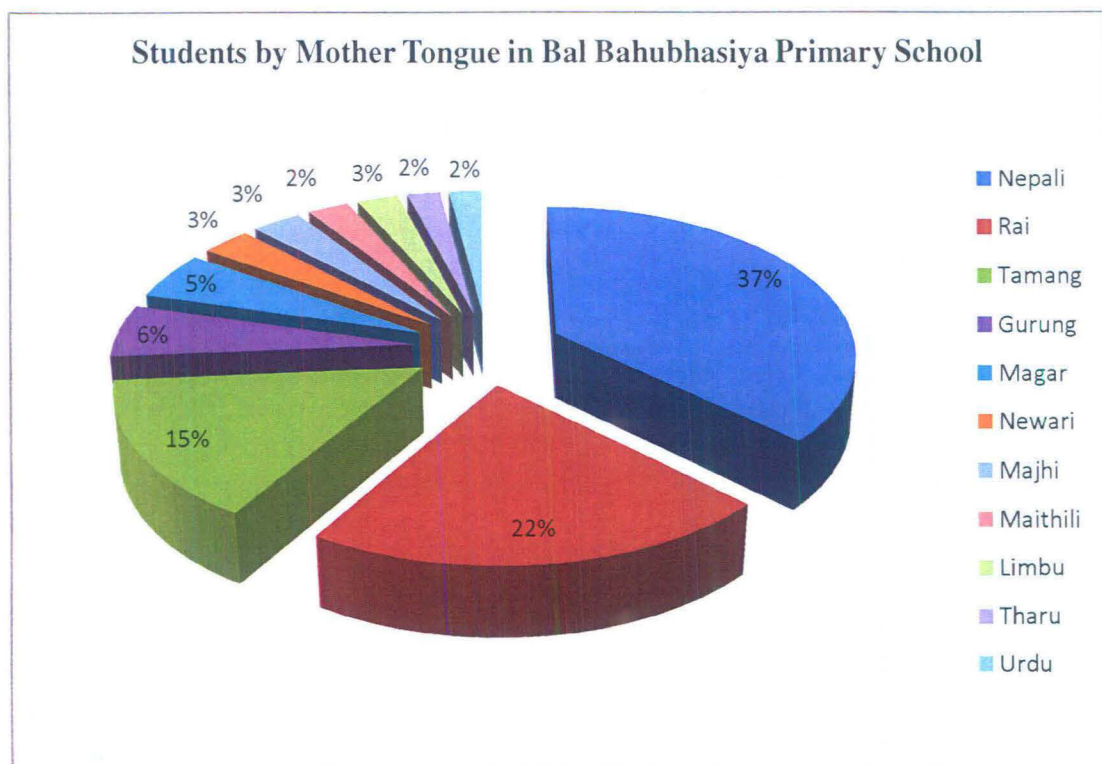
Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic Year 2008/2009), teachers and students[1]

per cent) and Urdu (two per cent). It reveals that some janajati children from Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar and Majhi speech communities do not speak their mother tongue. It is found that their parents speak in their mother tongue with adults but they do not transmit home language to the new generation (See Appendix – L).

Children's first Encounters with Multilingual School Contexts

It is a common practice that children encounter different linguistic and cultural environments in the pre-school or Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centres when get enrolled there in the early childhood stage. After spending couple of years in pre-school or ECCD centres, they enter to the first grade in the primary school. However, this is not the case for these two sample schools where there is no such pre-

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[1]The source of the data is the school registers. However, the number of students by mother tongue was recorded after verification with teachers and students.

school education facilities till date. Thus, grade one is the main home-school transition point for linguistic minority children of Simariya and Hanshposha. So, children as new comers in the grade one bring their linguistic and cultural resources from home to school (Nambissan 1994). According to UNESCO, 'bringing the home language into schools means that formal learning is no longer just for the dominant groups, but for all children' (UNESCO 2005). It reveals that use of home language in the early years of primary schooling is very important to ensure education for all. For example, in Sharada Primary School, 85 children (49 girls and 36 boys) are studying in the grade one. They belong to different caste/ethnic groups (61 janajatis i.e. Uranw and Tharu, 22 others comprise of Brahman, Chhetri, Mehata, Yadav, Mandal and Thakur, and two Dalits) which embody their own culture and languages. The children of grade one participated in interaction during the field work. However, they could not express their feeling and the first school experiences of life easily. Therefore, children of grade five are asked to reflect about their past experiences when they were in the first grade. Then, they expressed that they found school and classroom as a different world where they could not communicate in their own language due to rules of school such as use of Nepali language as medium of instruction and compulsion to answer questions in Nepali in the classroom. Thus, the classroom is a 'social system in miniature' (Parsons 1959) which reflects socio-cultural diversity. This situation reminds us what Parsons had said about half a century ago regarding socialization in school class. He stated that 'in the period extending from entry into the first grade until entry into the labour force and marriage, the school class may be regarded as the focal socializing agency.' Further, education is a social process that takes place in school, which is known as social institution (Saxena 1975, Bhattacharya 2006). Home language of children during the early grades play crucial role in the process of interaction and socialization.

Linguistic and Cultural Constraints in the Classroom

In Sharada Primary School, the presence of four languages, namely, Uranw, Maithili, Tharu and Nepali in the grade one indicates the multilingualism, which is on the one hand, considered as resource, on the other hand, regarded as complex situation for teaching and learning. Uranw language is spoken by a majority of children (60.37 per

cent). In the context of this particular school, Uranw language has the highest number of speakers but it receives a subordinate status socially. Paradoxically, Nepali language having seven per cent of the total speakers in a school has been playing a dominant role as an official language and as a medium of instruction in the classrooms. The case study one reflects the complex scenarios of a multilingual classroom.

Case Study-1:

Muna Kumari Uranw (name changed) is eleven years old girl who is studying in grade five in Sharada Primary School. She lives in a village where Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali speakers reside. Her father is a literate farmer who can speak five languages i.e. Uranw, Maithili, Hindi, Tharu, and Nepali. Her mother also can understand and speak four languages like her husband except Hindi. This situation has helped her to learn three more languages in addition to her mother tongue. Since Uranw is her mother tongue, the medium of communication at her home is the same language. In spite of Uranw, she can speak Nepali language which she learnt in formal schooling from grade one to five and having informal communication with non-Uranw communities. She can speak Tharu and Matithili to some extent. She is learning English as an international language which has been included in the curriculum as compulsory subject from the grade one. She shared that teacher speaks at least 50 per cent Nepali even in the English class. It means that practically English has not been used as a medium of instruction even while teaching it in the classroom. She uses Uranw and Nepali languages as means of communication inside and outside the classroom. Though there is no student with Nepali mother tongue in her class, she has been using Nepali as a link language for communication with Tharu and Maithili MT children. Responding to the question related to her close friends in the class, she took the name of five Uranw girls. She further described the reasons behind her preference to only Uranw girls. The main reason was use of mother tongue. She also shared her experience regarding learning difficulty she had to face when she was in the first grade in the school. She says, "I feel comfortable to share everything with girls

rather than boys. Our mother tongue, namely, Uranw makes it easy for me. It is easy to have informal conversation in our own language. Mother tongue brings us very close. Nowadays, I can speak Nepali as well. But when I was in grade one, I could not understand and speak Nepali and other languages. Teachers used to teach in Nepali language and suggest us not to talk in Uranw language in the classroom. I could not follow the instruction of teachers during the early days of my primary schooling. So I could not perform well" (Interview, December, 2008).

The above expression of Muna reveals that how linguistic constraints have restricted her from better performance and making friendship with non-Uraw speakers. The question of mother tongue is central during the focus group discussions with children of class five in Sharada Primary School. All of them were non-Nepali speakers as mother tongue. They revealed that they had terrible experiences regarding language difficulty during their early months in class one. All of them strongly argued that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in the early grades of the primary school. In addition, they further reinforced the need and importance of Nepali and English as well to compete with Nepali mother tongue students in the exams and to get jobs in future.
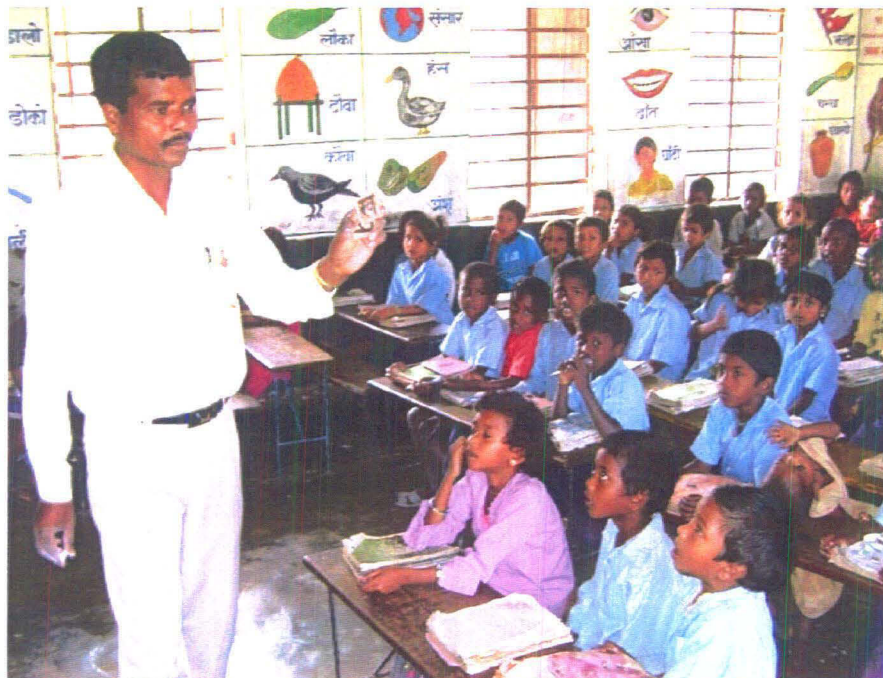
Children enjoying mother tongue as medium of instruction in Simariya

One of the SMC members with Nepali MT also raised the issue of medium of instruction and difficulty faced by Nepali speaking children in the multilingual education classes. He narrates:

I am proud of sharing that our school has been applying multilingual education in the classrooms. This will definitely help to promote local language and culture. Children will learn easily if teacher taught using their mother tongue. We want to demonstrate this school as model. But some of the children (class one and two) with Nepali mother tongue, who are few in numbers, have started to complain that most of the times they are facing difficulty in learning. It is because most of the times, teachers are using Uranw and Tharu or Maithili languages while teaching Social Study, Mathematics and even English. How to address this issue? (Interview, November 2008).

It appears that there has been a tendency among the children to sit together based on the mother tongue. In addition, class one has been divided into several groups on the basis of their mother tongues in Sharada Primary School. Multi-grade classroom has been arranged keeping all Uranw MT children of grade two and three in one room and all Tharu, Maithili and Nepali MT children in another room. This kind of sitting arrangement of the classroom has hindered interaction and relationship between dominant and minority linguistic groups to some extent. On the other hand, most of the children stated that their close friends belong to the same speech community. It is because they feel comfortable to sit together so that they can talk in their own home language.

Another experience tells us that even the talented children of grade one face linguistic and cultural constraints in the classroom. For instance, one day, during a singing and dancing event in the class, a teacher asked Uranw and Tharu children to come in front of the class and to sing a song in their own mother tongue and dance as well. Uranw and Tharu children were looking at each other. Meanwhile, Nepali and Maithili speaking children rushed towards in front of the class for performance whereas teacher had not asked them to do so. Actually teacher had to face difficulty to control Nepali and Maithili speaking children at that point in time. Eventually, he could manage it providing opportunity to Uranw and Tharu children first.

A drawing competition in the class one was observed another day. A teacher asked all children to select any theme for the drawing as per their preference. All 82 children who were present in the class that day participated in the competition very enthusiastically. After collection, teacher selected top ten drawings and finalised five drawings for first, second, third and consolation prizes. As announced by the teacher, Uranw children won the first, the second, the third and one consolation prize. This was a surprising result for children from dominant groups i.e. Nepali MT and Maithili MT[2]. Teacher asked the winning children to come in front of the class to receive the prize and take photos holding the drawings. Actually the winning Uranw children almost got nervous. On the other hand, Nepali MT and Maithili MT children were guiding them to go in front of the class.

Winners of the drawing competition (grade one)

Uranw children who won the prize reflected the socio-cultural images of every day life in the drawings instead of simply making drawings of flower, animal or building in isolated manner, raised the question that why are such talented Uranw children shy in the class? So, efforts were made to explore whether it was just a coincidence or it was

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[2] Maithili is a dominant language in the eastern Tarai (Mishra and Singh 2002).

their usual behaviour. Some teachers told that those children are very good in answering the questions in writing but they are usually shy in responding quickly. Some parents told that 'Uranws are very simple, honest and innocent people who usually do not react quickly. They usually do not want to be proactive and expressive openly with outsiders as well as teachers'. The teachers who conducted that drawing competition stated that these children usually are afraid of giving expression in the class despite their very good performance in the studies. It may be observed that language and cultural factors are also responsible for this situation.

The group activities in the class were observed for several days. It is found that Uranw and Tharu children were following the instructions of the teachers honestly and they were sitting quietly in their seats even after finishing their group work and individual class works. But Nepali and Maithili MT children were moving around the class after completion of their tasks. Some of them got punishment also due to breaking the norms of the classroom. Nepali and Maithili MT children were in minority in terms of the number but they were influencing the whole class as a dominant group.

Children realise that school culture is different from their home culture where they can easily get affection, care and love. They can speak their own mother tongue. But school culture is dominated by the dominant groups and languages. In case of Sharada School, as mentioned earlier, dominant languages are Nepali and Maithili. Likewise, only Nepali language falls under the dominant language group in Bal Bahubhasiya School. Sometimes, this relationship of dominance and subordination demands loss of mother tongue among the linguistic minority children. Instead of learning their own mother tongue, some children are forced to learn the dominant language of the neighbourhood and school. For instance, in Sharada Primary School, no Uranw and Tharu children stated that they cannot speak their own mother tongue. But case of Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School is different. For instance, some children belong to janajati but they cannot speak their own language.

Case Study-2:

Prabhat (name changed), an 11 year old student who is studying in the fifth grade of Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School stated: "My surname is Gurung. But

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I cannot understand and speak Gurung language. It is because, my father is Gurung but he cannot speak Gurung language at all. My mother is Rai. She can speak Rai language with other Rai people but she never uses Rai language at home. So, I never had opportunity to learn Rai language at home. Now my mother tongue has been Nepali. I want to learn both Gurung and Rai language but it not possible now (Interview, December 2008).

Likewise, Asmita, another girl of twelve years-of-age from the same class told that she belongs to Rai ethnic group but she cannot speak Rai language. She did not have opportunity to acquire Rai language as mother tongue. It is because her parents also cannot speak their mother tongue. These two cases indicate that there is prevalence of language shift[3] among hill migrants and people who got inter-caste or inter-ethnic group marriage

Children also realize that curriculum and textbooks do not reflect their culture. Uranw, Tharu and Tamang children were compelled to attend school during some important local festivals related to their ethnic groups. Because school remained open during those days. It means that school schedule excluded their festivals from the holiday list. The dominance of dominant groups and languages are explicit not only in the government policy and curriculum but also in the schedule of school. It reflects that school has been reproducing the culture of dominance and subordination existing in the society.

Complexities in Multilingual Transactions

It is discussed that Uranw language is influenced by Indo-European languages (Abbi 1995, Gordon 1976, Bose 1971). Most of the Uranw children of grade five said that they can understand Tharu and Maithili as well. But Tharu and Maithili MT children stated that Uranw language is very difficult to understand. It may be because Uranw is under Dravidian language family whereas Tharu, Maithili and Nepali are under the Indo-European language family. For instance, Table 4.2 presents an example of language

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[3] Language shift refers to reduction in the number of speakers of a language, a decreasing saturation of language speakers in the population or a decreasing use of that language in different domains (Baker 2006).

similarities and differences with a comparison in five different languages, namely, Uranw, Tharu, Maithili, Nepali and English, which are used in the classroom transactions of Sharada Primary School in Simariya.

Table 4.1

Language Similarities and Differences: an Example

Uranw	Tharu	Maithili	Nepali	English
aulta chero	tershu	parshu	asti	The day before yesterday
chero	kail	kail	hijo	Yesterday
inna	ai	aai	aaja	Today
nela	bihan	bihan	bholi	Tomorrow
nelbenja	parshu	parshu	parsi	The day after tomorrow
Nin bidhyalay ekane kadar bardar?	En bidhyalay ekdamki kadam?	Aha bidhyalay kena jaichhi aawaichhi?	Timi bidhyalay kasari jane aaune garchhau?	How do you go to school and come back?

Source: School teachers, Sharada Primary School, November 2008

Some words and a sentence cited in the table in Uranw, Tharu, Maithili, Nepali and English languages, are semantically related words because they give the same meaning in different languages. For instance, the meaning of the words "aulta chero" in Uranw is 'the day before yesterday' in English. Likewise, "asti", "tershu" and "parshu" are equivalent words in Nepali, Tharu and Maithili languages respectively. Further, the same word "kail" is used in Tharu and Maithili languages which means "yesterday" in English and "hijo" and "chero" in Nepali and Uranw languages respectively. It seems that there are lexical resemblances between Tharu and Maithili languages to some extent. For instance, the same words such as "kail", "bihan" "parshu" are used in Tharu and Maithili languages which means "yesterday", "morning" and "the day after tomorrow" in English. The same word "bidhyalay" (school) is used in Nepali, Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages. This is also used in Sanskrit and Hindi as well. In other words, it may be observed that Uranw language has borrowed the word "bidhyalay" from Indo-European

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languages such as Sanskrit, Nepali and Hindi. However, there might be slight differences while pronouncing the word "bidhyalay" by different speech communities[4].

There may be rare similarities between English and other languages mentioned above. Likewise, it may be seen that Uranw language is quite distinct than other languages. Some teachers told the researcher that Uranw teachers can speak Tharu, Maithili, Nepali and English languages as well whereas Tharu and Maithili speaking teachers cannot speak Uranw language. Uranw teachers said that when they were studying in the primary school, they had hard time to learn other languages including Nepali. However, now it has been an advantage for them due to their capacity to speak more languages than other teachers.

Children and the Pedagogical Constraints

In Sharada Primary School, all children irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds have to study English and Nepali as compulsory subjects and mother tongue as an optional subject as well as medium of instruction for learning Science, Mathematics, Social Study and Creative Art, and Health and Physical Education. During early days of the field work, it was observed that desks and benches of the children were put in rows. After inputs from DOE officials, face to face sitting arrangement was made in each group. Children are divided into the four groups based on their mother tongue. Face-to-face sitting arrangement is made to make the pedagogical process more interactive. However, desks available in the class are not suitable for such sitting arrangement. Large number of students in one classroom demanded for splitting of class into two sections but school authority expressed that this demand cannot be fulfilled due to unavailability of classrooms or scarcity of funds for constructing additional rooms. Pedagogical process is undertaken in the multilingual education contexts despite such unfavourable situation. One can easily imagine how a teacher can handle such a large and diverse class any training.

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[4] Fishman (1976) defines that 'a speech community is one, all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use' (p. 232)

Children of grade one enjoying in the groups despite the unfriendly desks

It may be observed that an Uranw teacher who can speak Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali starts to teach using these languages in the same classroom while teaching Social Study and Creative Arts and some other subjects. First, he starts saying something in Uranw language looking towards the groups of Uranw children. Most of the other children do not understand Uranw language, so they start to do something else with the classmates within the same group. Teacher observes this situation and gives some instructions in Tharu, Maithili and Nepali languages to maintain discipline. On the other hand, after teaching for five to seven minutes in Uranw language, teacher starts teaching in Tharu language and after a while in Maithili language as well. Some children with Nepali mother tongue ask the teacher to tell in Nepali as well. This scenario invites a situation of code switching[5]. Sometimes 'absolute shifting' from one language to another is not possible. Thus, teacher mixes the words of the other languages in the middle of a sentence of the language started in the beginning.

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[5] Richard (1985, as cited in Rai 2005) defines code switching as "a change by a speaker (or writer) from one language to another.

Consequently, code mixing[6] is also prevalent in the classroom. From the sociolinguistic view point, code switching and code mixing are quite normal phenomena in the multilingual environments. However, this situation may confuse the children of the first grade during their early months in school. On the other hand, MLE teacher says that using different languages in the same class is really time consuming. This may hamper completion of the course in time. It is worthwhile to mention that a teacher, who has not got any pedagogical and multi-grade teaching training, is playing the role of MLE teacher in such situation. This may lead to further complexities of learning for children of linguistic minority if MLE teacher remains untrained for longer period. Teachers also face difficulty in handling such kind of complex classroom environment. As another side of the coin, it may be observed that children are very happy when teacher switches the code in their own mother tongue.

Teachers and the Pedagogical Constraints

Linguistic diversity among the teachers has been considered as one of the strengths of Sharada Primary School to take forward MLE initiatives. Two teachers speak Uranw language as mother tongue. They can speak four other languages such as Tharu, Maithili, Nepali and English. Other two teachers speak Tharu as mother tongue and subsequently Maithili, Nepali and English as well. Maithili is the mother tongue of a teacher who can speak Tharu, Nepali and English. All of them are local. However, three of them have not received any kind of pedagogical training. Even the trained teachers do not have any kind of training exposure in mother tongue-based multilingual education. As suggested by the officials of the Department of Education, they have started multilingual teaching without receiving any specific training. Hence, teachers are facing methodological constrints.

However, Sharada School has adopted multi-grade teaching in course of implementation of MLE programme. Students of grade two and three are divided into two groups. The first group belongs to children with Uranw MT which is comprised of 30 children from grade two and 35 children from grade three. Altogether 65 children participate in the learning activities sitting in the same room but in two different rows in the classroom grade wise. Uranw is the medium of instruction for this group. The second

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[6] It refers to mixing of the two codes in the same sentence (Rai 2005).

group is comprised of 26 children (ten Maithili, eight Tharu and eight Nepali MTs) from grade two and 17 children (nine Maithili and eight Tharu) from grade three. Tharu and Maithili languages are used as media of instruction for this group.

Children (grade two and three) with locally developed textbooks in Uranw, Tharu/Maithili MTs

In course of applying MLE, complexities of pedagogy arise in three aspects from this situation. Firstly, there is presence of three mother tongue speakers but only two languages are used as media of instruction. This decision is taken considering the less number of Nepali MT students. In other words, there is no Nepali MT student in grade three and only eight students of the same speech community in grade two. However, these children may argue that they have a right to get education in their own mother tongue Nepali. While Uranw, Tharu and Maithili speaking children enjoyed their classroom, some Nepali speaking children could not understand Tharu language so they demanded Nepali medium of instruction particularly while teaching subjects like Mathematics, Science and Social Study. This situation has made the teaching-learning process more complicated. The untrained teachers themselves have realized that they are

not capable enough to tackle this issue without training. Secondly, teachers feel difficulty in handling students from two different grades at a time without having any kind of training on multi-grade teaching. Lastly, as stated earlier in chapter III, within a period of eight months only three lessons of the mother tongue related textbooks are developed in Tharu/Maithili at local level. Teachers have to translate the textbooks of other subjects written in Nepali which is a cumbersome work. Teachers share that they are using Devnagari script for teaching Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages. For them it is easy to pronounce the words in local languages but very difficult to write the words correctly. Teachers' experiences indicate that the words written by different teachers might be different to some extent. This may create further confusion among the children.

When one observes from the lens of critical pedagogy perspective to the teaching methodologies adopted by the untrained teachers in MLE school, he or she may find the different picture that teaching is suffering from 'narration sickness' (Freire 1972) in which teachers work as narrators and students become passive listeners. This situation is evident while untrained teachers teach students translating the lessons into local language from the textbooks written in Nepali. Notwithstanding the good intention of teaching students by translating the textbooks written in the dominant language, it may not serve the purpose of MLE. Eventually, linguistic minority children may suffer from the pedagogical process itself.

Ridicule and embarrassment as constraints in learning

The children are also asked whether they are learning without fear or not. If they are learning with fear, do the children include linguistic difficulty as well in the list of contributing factors for creation of such fearful environment? About 86 per cent of children who participated in interview and interaction stated that they are learning in a fearful environment in their school. Most of Uranw and Tharu children shared their experience that they encountered horrible situation while they were in class one. The most common source of fear is the use of mother tongue in the class by them against the norms of the school which always used to promote Nepali language as medium of instruction. In many cases, they had to face corporal punishment due to their weak performance in verbal communication and writing answers in Nepali language. On the

other hand, some Nepali speaking children from class one said that they were enjoying Nepali as their classroom language. They never experienced any punishment from teachers as a result of their language difficulty.

It is also observed by the researcher that teachers were using stick not only in the classroom but also in the assembly and playground intending to 'control' the class. It was found that neither the teachers nor parents took this issue seriously. In their opinion, teachers usually use stick and give punishment with good intention. They want to maintain the discipline in the school. However, students do have very negative impression with the use of stick and prevalence of corporal punishment. One of teachers says:

> It is really difficult to control 85 children in one class with different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We are using the stick and giving light punishment for their improvement. As far as the language issue is concerned, we tried to implement the government policy i.e. Nepali as the language of the nation and medium of instruction honestly. If we had not followed that policy, people could have blamed us as 'communal Madhesi' teachers who taught children in their own languages (Uranw, Tharu and Maithili) instead of Nepali. Actually it is not our fault (Interview, November 2008).

Thus, the multilingual society also raises the question of politics that may place teachers and school authorities in a position of helplessness, which may drive them to follow certain national policies related to language issue. What is happening in this case is that the teacher uses punishment as a mechanism to enforce language related policies in the classroom, which may be detrimental to the overall perception of students towards the school. Such kinds of experiences are evident, for instance, Dinesh Uranw (name changed), an adolescent boy shared his experience:

> When I was studying in class one, I was very much embarrassed due to my weakness in Nepali language. When a teacher asked me to say "ka" (the first letter of Nepali alphabet), I said "kaa". It was not my fault but because of pronunciation difficulty. In Uranw language "Kaa" is use instead of "Ka". All non-Uranw students laughed. Then some of them started to tease me saying "kaa". I felt so bad at that time. I recall another event as well. One day, one of my Nepali speaking classmates started to slap me when I

asked him not to tease me. Then, I complained to a teacher talking in Uranw language: *yangan aas lau chas* (he slapped me). But teacher scolded me because I used Uranw language instead of Nepali. At that time, what I felt is that school is not favourable place for Uranw children like us (Interview, November 2008).

Another boy shared his experience when he was studying in class six in a local secondary school. He completed class five from Sharada Primary School and joined Janta Secondary School in Simariya, where there was overwhelming majority of Tharu students. He states:

I was new comer in the sixth grade. During the early days, many Tharu students both seniors and classmates used to tease me and my other Uranw friends using some Uranw words with bad sense. For example, *Jhagad wohorke Inja lyachal* (bring Jhagad here). Likewise, they used some ridiculous words such as *mandi mokha* (chew rice), *ijgu bara* (come here) (Interview, November 2008).

Many students and parents realize that embarrassing and ridiculing environments prevail in one form or the other. However, they are confident that these kinds of behaviour and treatment have reduced significantly after political change in Nepal. Evidences of ridiculing behaviour from Nepali and Maithili speaking children to Uranw children in the classroom are especially found during playing games and walking on the way to school and back home. Some of them used the word "Jhagad" instead Uranw during the interview and informal communications as well. Some of them preferred to use the surname "Jhagad'/Uranw instead of the first name. But all the Uranw children told that they prefer to be called by their first name but not the surname.

Parental Participation in MLE

SMC is formed out of the community members in the village, is a responsible body for school governance. PTA is an organization of parents and all teachers of a particular school which has role and responsibilities to improve quality of education and conduct interaction on educational activities of school. Table 4.2 presents the caste/ethnic composition of SMC, PTA and teachers in Sharada Primary School and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School.

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Table 4.2

Caste/ethnic Composition of SMC and PTA Members, and Teachers

Caste/Ethnic Group	SMC Members		PTA Members		Teachers	
	Sharada	Bal Bahubhasiya	Sharada	Bal Bahubhasiya	Sharada	Bal Bahubhasiya
Uranw	5	0	4	0	2	0
Tharu (Chaudhari)	2	0	3	0	2	0
Rana (Magar)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Yadav	0	0	2	0	1	0
Dalit	0	0	2	0	0	0
Rai	0	3	0	2	0	3
Tamang	0	1	0	5	0	1
Gurung	0	1	0	0	0	0
Newar	0	1	0	0	0	0
Limbu	0	0	0	1	0	1
Brahman/Chhetri	0	1	0	3	0	1
Total	8[7]	7	11	11	5	6

Source: School Records 2008

It may be observed that all of the SMC members including Chairperson and Member Secretary (Head Teacher) belong to janajati (five Uranw, two Tharu and one Magar). There is no any representation of Maithili speech communities in SMC of Sharada Primary School. There are eleven PTA members, which include four Uranw (including Chairperson), three Chaudhari, two Yadav and two Dalits. Altogether five teachers (two Chaudhari, two Uranw and one Yadav) are teaching in the school. In Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, all the members of SMC except one Brahman/Chhetri represent janajati (three Rai, one Tamang, one Gurung and one Newar). PTA is represented by two Rai, five Tamang, one Limbu and three Brahman/Chhetri. There are six teachers (three Rai, one Tamang, one Newar and one Brahman/Chhetri) in the school.

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[7] One seat is still vacant.

A meeting of teachers and SMC/PTA members in Sharada Primary School

It is interesting to note that there is a weak link between the parents and the school despite the existence of a formal PTA in both the schools. It is worthwhile to note that an overwhelming majority of children (80 per cent) from class one and class five involved in the interview and interaction said that their parents never visited schools to know about their academic progress and to discuss the difficulties faced by them. Aiming to strengthen the relationship and interaction between teachers and parents, PTA has been formed in the both schools. However, PTA members themselves did not feel any hesitation to share that PTA has not been functional enough to fulfill its responsibilities except attending some meetings and gatherings as rituals.

According to Education Regulations (2002), PTA meeting should be organised at least once within three months. The members of the PTA themselves realise that it is not happening as stated in the Education Act. Socio-cultural and linguistic constraints in primary school have not been a priority agenda for them. It means that the PTA members themselves have raised serious questions regarding the roles played by them. Hira Dev Chaudhari (name changed), a grand parent of Baran Chaudhari (class one), stated, "My son is a driver so he cannot attend education related meeting in school. Head Teacher

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invited me for meeting once as a grand parent but I could not go to school due to my urgent work related to agriculture. We are poor people. We cannot attend meeting time and again. SMC members and other leaders have been participating on our behalf. I do not go to school to ask for the progress of my grand children. I do not know how to ask and what to ask. I think it might be okay. I have heard that teaching in Tharu language has been started in school. *Apan apan bhasha sabko bujhte, badhiya lagat* (All students can understand their own language. This is very good.) But our children should learn Nepali and English languages as well. These languages are very important for getting job in future" (Interview, November 2008).

As far as home-school relation is concerned, children's home and school are physically very near but culturally distant. Inadequate parental education and awareness in the issues may contribute to decrease the willingness of parents on school affairs. Moreover, role of SMC and PTA also may be responsible in this connection. The case study three presents the experience of Juni and Banilal Uranw, an illiterate couple who dream for better education of their children.

Case Study-3:

During the home visit, Juni Uranw and her husband Banilal Uranw (name changed), illiterate residents of Simariya, shared an experience regarding their visit to district headquarters particularly District Administration Office. Some government officials scolded and misbehaved them when they were not able to sign in the document. They had to face very embarrassing treatments due to their illiteracy. Learning lesson from that experience, they have been dreaming for educating their children up to bachelor level so that they will be able to get government job at the district headquarters. They have two children, daughter Sarita (nine years old) and son Prakash (five years old) who are currently studying in grade three and one respectively in Sharada Primary School. However, Juni and Banilal are concerned whether they can achieve their mission due to their poor economic status. They speak Uranw language as mother tongue and can understand Tharu and Nepali languages

to some extent. But they cannot communicate easily in Nepali and Tharu languages. Their son Prakash cannot speak Nepali.

The school is very close to their home (not more than two minutes walking distance). However, they have never visited school and asked about the performance of their children. Juni said: "We are illiterates. So, we cannot contribute much in the meeting organized in the school. School does not invite us for the meeting". Her husband added: "I cannot read and write, so I do not know what to ask and how to ask about the progress of our children. I think teachers are teaching our children well". Both of them are not aware of the multilingual education program running in the school. Couple of days back when their children came back from the school with the books written in Uranw language and started to read loudly at home, they came to know that those books were written in their home language. Anyway, they are happy listening that children are learning Uranw language. When parents are interacting, Prakash went inside the home and came back with his new book written in Uranw language and gave to the researcher. He said, "I am so happy receiving this book in my own language". Some other parents from the Uranw communities also shared same kind of feeling and experience regarding their participation in the school meetings and gatherings, and school visit for making enquiry about the progress of their children (Interview, November 2008).

Further, there are only three Uranw students including one girl, who have been able to join intermediate level or higher secondary level of education till date. They expressed their views that they are neither consulted nor invited by the school in course of MLE programme and in the school meeting. According to them, school invites only SMC and PTA members and some local leaders of the political parties for the meeting. However, they as educated youth at the local level are very much willing to contribute to new educational initiatives. They are interested to be involved in the process of mobilising local people for raising awareness on the right to education for linguistic minorities.
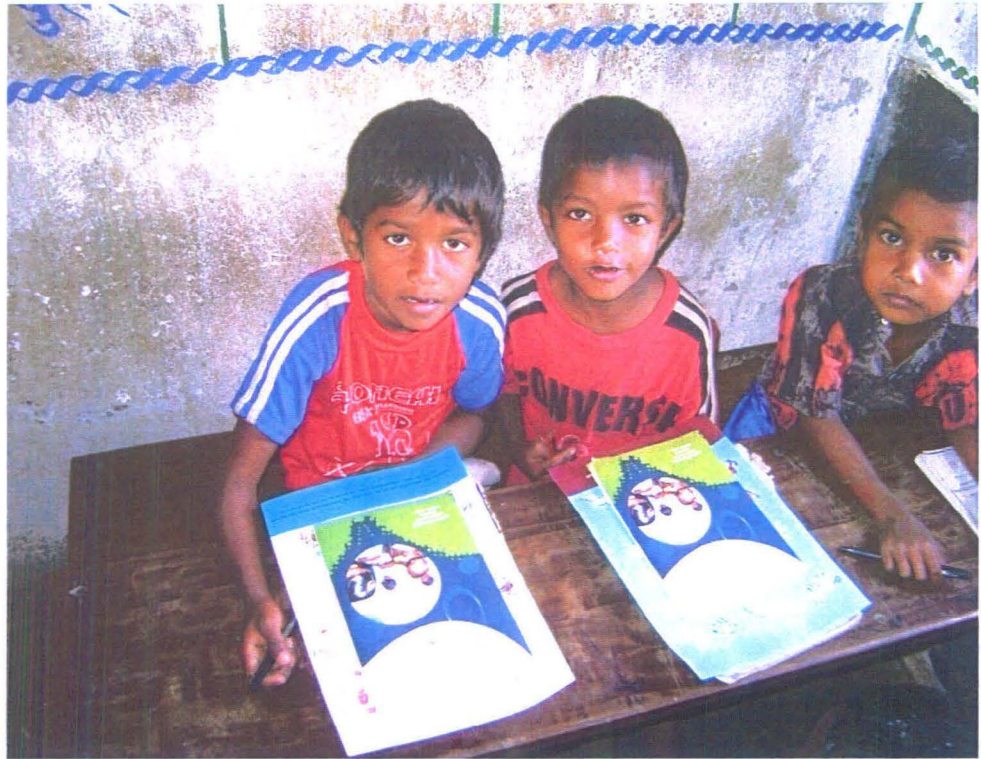
Karam Khiri (Worship to *Karam* Tree), children of grade one with textbook in Uranw MT

Sum Up

Thus, it may be noted that the schools comprise children from diverse ethno-linguistic and cultural groups. They come to school with their own ethnic and linguistic identity, and cultural capital. In the early days of schooling, children found to have encountered hostile environment where they had to talk with peers whom they never met before and did not understand their language. They had to interact with senior students and teachers who are like strangers for them. Thus, multilingual socialization process begins in the school with the help of the language which is not only a means of communication but also a bridge between society and school. A language cannot exist without society and its people who speak it. Social norms and values also influence language structure.

It may be observed that data from the two schools reflects the two major issues regarding education of linguistic minority children. Firstly, in non-MLE school, children are deprived of their rights to education in their mother tongue despite their keen interests. Nepali language is dominant as the medium of instruction in the classroom. On

the other hand, parents are found to be reluctant for transmitting their home languages to their children due to growing influence of the dominant languages such as Nepali and English. As a result, language loss and language shift are evident. This situation may hinder the process of preservation and promotion of all mother tongues in the country as spelt out in the Interim Constitution.

Secondly, in MLE school, Uranw, Tharu and Maithili speaking children are learning the subjects such as Maths, Science, Social Studies, etc. in their mother tongues. This has addressed the issue of language related difficulty in learning for linguistic minority children. However, use of Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali languages as media of instruction in the same period by the untrained teachers has created learning complexities in the classroom.

Further, it is also evident that both the schools could not realise ethno-linguistic diversity and cultures as positive resources and strength for teaching and learning process and activities (Nambissan 2000). School is found to be not offering a welcoming and caring environment for new comers in the class by encouraging them to use mother tongue (Appelbaum 2002). Monolingual practice continued to be mandatory in classrooms without considering children's linguistic difficulties. This situation has been prevailing for long, except in MLE School, which pushed the linguistic minority children towards language based discrimination and exclusion. This situation raises contestations of various kinds between and among the speakers of different languages, which is discussed and elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - V

CHAPTER - V

The Contestations: Mother Tongue or Other Tongues?

The chapter presents the contestations on mother tongue or other tongues in the context of Nepal. It records some enduring debates and tensions on language use and language policy, and attempts to analyze the accentuating factors of such tensions. The chapter also reviews the manifestos of four major political parties in the light of language policy and multilingual education. It focuses on documenting ongoing mother tongue versus English debate as well.

Enduring debate on language policy and use

More than 6800 languages are spoken as mother tongue in 228 countries of the world (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008). The Constitutions of about 125 countries in the world spell out something about language policy. About 100 of them give recognition for 'one or more official or national languages with special privileges of use' and 78 countries consider 'a single official or national language' (Spolsky 2004). On the other hand, there are many countries which do not have any written Constitution and even the written Constitutions of some countries do not 'mention about language, apart from some human rights clauses saying that persons arrested or tried are entitled to interpreters, or that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of a list of characteristics including language' (ibid., p. 13). Ferguson asserts that 'all language planning activities take place in particular sociolinguistic settings, and the nature and scope of the planning can only be fully understood in relation to the settings' (Ferguson 1977, as cited in Spolsky 2004).

Language does not exist without society in general and its speech community in particular. So, some domains of sociolinguistics are taken into account during policy making and language planning. The domains include language varieties (national language, official language, lingua franca, vernacular language, etc.), language use and language user (speech community[1] and linguistic situation of a country or society), language and state, and language usage and use. It is obvious that 'language and state' is one of the most important domains of sociolinguistics which 'tries to explore inter-relationship between the state of the language or languages in a

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[1] According to Fishman (1976) a speech community is one, all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use.

country and the attitude of government towards them. This domain deals with such topics as language policy and planning' (Rai 2005, p. 108). According to Fishman (1976) 'the latter concern of the sociology of language - overt behaviour towards language and toward language users - is a concern shared by political and educational leaders in many parts of the world and is an aspect of sociolinguistics that frequently makes headlines in the newspapers' (Fishman 1976, p. 217). Thus, there have been so many controversies and debates in the world regarding language policy, planning and use. The domains of language use entails use of language in education (language as medium of instruction and as a subject), media, administration (language of official use including language in judiciary), religious and cultural programs and literature (NLPRC 1994).

It is relevant to discuss in this background that how changes are occurring in language policy in Nepal. As it is obvious to anyone familiar with at least half a century of the history of Nepal; feudal, authoritarian and unitary political system that existed, had discouraged the concept of secularism, federalism, decentralization and regional variations, and diversities in the name of 'national unity' by hegemonic control (Neupane 2000, Hachhethu 2003) which eventually contributed to social exclusion and denial of rights to some people. Socio-cultural and linguistic diversity aspects could not remain untouched from that regressive approach. The Panchayat Regime (1960-1989) gave emphasis on a policy of 'one nation, one culture and one language' which was intolerant of minority languages (Turin 2004, Dahal 2000). The Constitution of Nepal (1962) provided the status of the national language to only Nepali excluding other mother tongues. Some political slogans were made so popular during the party-less Panchayat Regime[2] which state:

> "Hamro raja hamro desh, hamro bhasha hamro bhesh! Praan bhanda pyaro chha!! (Our King and country, our language and our dress - are dearer than our life). Sabai Nepali Pancha[3] and Sabai Pancha Nepali! (All Nepalese people are Pancha and all Panchas are Nepali).

'Our language' refers to only Khas/Nepali as stated in the Constitution. It is the mother tongue of especially former Royal Family (Thakuri), Khas/Chhteri, and Brahman and some hill Dalits. 'Our dress' indicates a set of dresses which include *Daura, Suruwal, Topi* and coat for men and *Choli*

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[2] The Panchayat Regime refers to party less, undemocratic political system which was exercised in Nepal for about three decades under the leadership of the Absolute Monarch.

[3] The word Pancha refers to the follower of the party-less Panchayat system under the leadership of the Absolute Monarch (1960-1989) in Nepal.

and *Sari* for women, 'Nepali national dress' during that time. In the name of nationality, it was prohibited to use all other languages of the country and traditional dresses of the indigenous nationalities in the Parliament. However, it must be mentioned that contestations on language were going on in one or the other form even during that period. Some of the parliamentarians who tried to speak in other languages than Nepali were forcefully expelled from the Parliament. It was a burning example of social exclusion based on language and culture. This doctrine contributed to reduce the number of languages from 52 in 1952/54 to 36 in 1961 to 18 in 1981 (Gurung 2005, p. 11), which later increased to 31 in 1991. After one decade of the reinstatement of multi-party democracy in 1990, the number on languages increased significantly from 31 in 1991 to 92 in 2001. In this context, Shakya (2007) argues that the language policy of the state has marginalized the janajati people in education, government jobs, and judiciary (p. 17).

As time went on, some changes kept occurring in the area of language policy along with the political change in the country. After reinstatement of multi-party democracy in 1989, the Constitution of Nepal (1990) was endorsed one year later. The absolute monarchy was changed into constitutional monarchy but "Hindu State" had remained as it is, despite some positive steps in language policy such as inclusion of all mother tongues as national languages and commitment towards ensuring children's rights to education in mother tongue at basic level. Gurung states that 'the political ideology of Nepal as a Hindu State was highly exclusionary which had religious, linguistic and cultural dimensions' (Gurung 2007b). 'Thus, educational policies, curriculum and textbooks were highly influenced by the concept of 'Hindu state' and Nepali obtained a 'price position' (rajbhasa) and received patronage of the state as the language of the nation. Hangen asserts that 'state published textbooks, the backbone of national education curriculum delivered nationalist ideology to children. These books excluded the culture, histories and languages of ethnic groups (Ragsdale 1989 & Tamang 1999, as cited in Hangen 2007). Consequently, non-Nepali speaking people felt discriminated (Rai 2007 and Sueyoshi, Toba & Rai 2005). For many years Nepali language remained as medium of instruction for primary education. Religions and languages other than Hindu and Nepali could not get appropriate climate to flourish for many years.

While discussing this enduring debate, it may be worthwhile to mention a serious debate on use of language and the law which occurred in the late 1990s. In 1997, Kathmandu Municipality decided to use both Newari/Nepal Bhasha and Nepali as official language.

Likewise, two other municipalities (Janakpur and Rajbiraj) and Dhanusha District Development Committee in the central and eastern Tarai/Madhes made a provision that Maithili and Nepali languages will be the official language. This decision was made considering Newari and Maithili as dominant languages in terms of number of speakers in the respective areas. However, this decision was challenged legally and a case was filed against it in the Supreme Court. In 1998, the Supreme Court prohibited use of Newari and Maithili as official languages in the administration by issuing an interim order. Eventually, the Supreme Court gave a verdict that the decisions taken by the local government bodies were unconstitutional and illegal. This verdict raised serious concerns, questions and debates about political will and commitment of the government in preserving and promoting minority languages. Linguistic minority people who were quite disturbed from that decision along with their supporters came on to the streets for demonstration and mass meetings (Turin 2007).

Another tension on language issue arose in the Constituent Assembly and outside, when the first Vice-President of Nepal who represents Tarai/Madhes by origin, took oath in Hindi language in 2008. It was alleged that he dishonored official language, Nepali; his mother tongue Maithili and motherland as well by using Hindi, an official language of India. But he argued that Hindi is also one of the National languages of Nepal which is spoken as a mother tongue by 0.47 per cent of total Nepalese population (Census 2001). This is also lingua franca for the Tarai/Madhes region from the east to the west. However, a series of demonstrations and rallies were organised and effigies of Vice-President were burnt throughout the country condemning his arguments. Demonstrators were chanting slogans for his resignation from the post. Demonstrations came to a peaceful end when the Vice-President again addressed about the issue publicly through media. However, informal and in-house debates and discussions in this connection continue to take place. It reveals that language use and language policy issues need to be addressed well.

The composition of Constituent Assembly (CA) in terms of representation of indigenous nationalities and linguistic minorities with diverse cultural backgrounds spread a ray of hope among all speech communities. Some of the CA members for the first time in the history of Nepal took oath in their mother tongues wearing their own traditional dresses representing their own cultures. Linguistic minority people are very happy with this event. Shambhu Uranw (name changed) a social worker of Sunsari shares his feeling:

"As a member of Uranw language speaking community, I am proud of sharing that two Uranw leaders have been able to represent historically in the Constituent Assembly. There are some other members in CA from linguistic minorities. Therefore, we are very hopeful that new constitution will ensure linguistic rights of minority people including right to have education in mother tongue" (Interview, December 2008).

The new environment has demanded that the political parties also should address the issue of linguistic minorities through their policies and programmes. In this context, CA manifestos of four major political parties are reviewed in the subsequent section.

Discourses on language policy: a Review of Manifestos of Political Parties

Currently, the Constitution Drafting Committee under Constituent Assembly is taking the lead in developing a new draft of the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal with the help of various sub-committees represented by CA members. The sub-committees have already collected the suggestions from the people of different parts of the country. A series of discussions, meetings and seminars are organised at different levels in this connection. The existing Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) will be replaced by the new full-fledged Constitution once that is endorsed by the Constituent Assembly. In this context, it would be relevant to reflect on, review and analyze the manifestos of the political parties which were prepared, disseminated and discussed during the CA election campaigns. Those manifestos are the core documents of the political parties to take forward the Constitution drafting initiatives from their own perspectives guided by their ideologies. This analysis could contribute to enhancing conceptual clarity on language policy discourses basically from the point of view of multilingual education. Further, CA members are elected based on their manifestos. They have already committed with the people that they will be implementing their policies and strategies through the programmes of the government. Thus, it is natural that the issues raised in the manifestos will directly or indirectly influence the government policies in education. The manifestos of the political parties are also major sources of public discourses about the several issues which will help to generate new strategies and set a new road map for overall development of the country. The manifestos of four major political parties, namely, Communist Party of Nepal

Maoist (CPN M)[4], Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist-Leninist (CPN UML) and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF)[5] are included for review. The four major political parties are identified based on their seats in the Constituent Assembly and vote they received in the CA election. Altogether 25 political parties are representing in the CA of Nepal.

The Table 5.1[6] presents the review of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and Manifestos of four major political parties. It may be noted that all the Manifestos of the parties including the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) have articulated that Nepal is a country of diversity (multi-ethnic, multilingual, multicultural, multi-religious and multi-regional). It is worth noting that neither the election manifestos nor the Constitution reflected like this in the past. But, as a regional party of Tarai/Madhes, MJF does not discuss much about the regional variations and geographical difficulties of mountain and hill regions. Following the principle of non-discrimination and equality, all the documents reflect their commitment that State shall not discriminate among citizens based on language. This is well-matched with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

It is found from the documents that the need of preservation and promotion of languages and cultures of the country are well-stated in the all the documents. However, specific provisions for preserving and promoting linguistic minorities, and endangered and marginalized languages are well-captured only in the manifestos of UCPN M and CPN UML.

As far as identity of language is concerned, three manifestos, namely, UCPN M, NC and CPN UML have declared that all mother tongues of Nepal will be considered as national languages. But, the manifesto of MJF has stated that a) mother tongue b) Nepali and Hindi c) English should be considered as languages of the nation under three language policy in education and government offices. Likewise, it asserts that each autonomous region can use and approve its own regional language as official language and means of education (MJF 2007, p. 14). The parties except MJF state in their manifestos that official and link language of States will be decided by the Federal States[7] locally later on.

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[4] CPN-M has been changed to UCPN-M (United Communist of Nepal - Maoists) after unification between CPN-M and Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre).

[5] MJF is relatively a new regional party basically working for ensuring the rights of people who live in Tarai/Madhes. Before emergence of this party through Madhesi Aandolan (Movement), most of the central leaders of MJF belonged to leftist, rightist and democratic parties.

[6] The sources of the table are the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and the Manifestos of the four major political parties.

[7] The identification and declaration of the Federal States have not been done yet.

Table 5.1 Review of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and the CA Manifestos of Four Major Political Parties (2007)

The Interim Constitution (2007) and CA Manifestos of the political parties	Nepal is a country of diversity: a. multi-ethnic b. multilingual c. multicultural d. multi-religious e. multi-regional	Principle of non-discrimination and equality: State shall not discriminate among citizens based on language[8]	Need of preservation and promotion of minority languages	Language identity and status: a. national language b. official language c. link language/ lingua franca d. language of States	Does the document reflect policy and strategy in the following domains of language use[9]?			
					Education: a. Ed. in mother tongue b. MLE	Administration/Judiciary	Media	Literature
The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007)	Yes	Yes	Yes, but language in general	a. All MTs-national b. Nepali-official c. Nepali-link d. Not mentioned	a. Ed. in mother tongue b. Not mentioned	No	No	No
Manifesto of United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists)	Yes	Yes	Yes, well-articulated about linguistic minorities	a. All MTs-national b. Not mentioned c. Not mentioned d. Official/link language of States to be decided by the Federal States locally later	a. Not mentioned b. Not mentioned	No	No	No
CA Manifesto of Nepali Congress	Yes	Yes	Yes, but does not focus on linguistic minorities	a. All MTs-national b. Nepali-official c. Nepali - link d. Same as above mentioned	a. Ed. in mother tongue b. Not mentioned	Judiciary	No	No
CA Manifesto of Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist - Leninist)	Yes	Yes	Yes, well-articulated about linguistic minorities	a. All MTs-national b. Nepali-official c. Nepali - link d. Same as above mentioned	a. Not mentioned b. Not mentioned	Admin/Judiciary	No	No
CA Manifesto of Madhesi Jana-adhikar Forum	Yes, but more Tarai/Madhes centered, not enough discussion about Mountain and Hill regions.	Yes	Yes, but does not focus on linguistic minorities	a. MT, Nepali/Hindi, English - national b. Official-as above c. Link -not mentioned d. Each State can use regional languages as official	a. Three language policy in ed. (MT, Nepali/Hindi, English)	No	No	No

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[8] The Table is developed by the Researcher, mainly drawn from the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007).

[9] The domains of language use are taken from National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (NLPRC 1994).

The manifesto of UCPN M is silent about the official and link language at the national level. It appears that there is confusion among the parties to some extent regarding the provision of official language, link language, international language and medium of instruction.

The manifestos aim to establish inclusive democracy ensuring rights of people including minorities and eliminating discrimination based on religion, caste/ethnicity, culture, gender, language, etc. However, the manifestos give high emphasis on official language or link language and language to be used in the court rather than mother tongue-based multilingual education for basic and primary level. Only the manifesto of NC strongly states that it is the responsibility of the state to provide opportunity of education in the mother tongue (NC 2007, p. 25). Likewise, manifesto of CPN UML vaguely commits about the multilingual policy (CPN UML 2007, p. 13) and the manifesto of MJF declares to adopt three language policy for official use and education (MJF 2007, p. 14).

To sum up, political parties in general have been able to analyze the existing situation, the issues and problems related to language policy and use through their manifestos. However, policies and strategies mentioned in the manifestos to address such issues seem very scanty and weak. This might affect multilingual education policies and programs which are already initiated if it remains the same in the days to come. It is interesting to note on the basis of the manifestos that the political parties appear to be very skillful to dig out the root causes of any problem and issue, and highlight accordingly. However, they are weak in policy formulation and developing strategies. The inadequate conceptual clarity and weak commitment in the manifestos regarding multilingual education testify this argument.

Popular Discourses on MLE in Nepal

Not only political parties present diverse picture of the contestations on language in Nepal, the popular discourses are also divided on similar lines. It may be observed that people in Nepal interpret multilingual education in three different ways. Firstly, some people reiterate all the times what has been written in the Interim Constitution of Nepal which states 'each community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue'. For instance, one of the activists who represents a janajati organization

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expressed his feeling and understanding in a national level workshop on multilingual education as follows:

> "I belong to an organization of indigenous nationalities. We have been fighting for protection and promotion of our mother tongue and advocating mother tongue education at basic education level. To have education in own mother tongue is the basic right of a child. Why do you people all the time talk about the multilingual education instead of mother tongue education? Do you want to derail the agenda of mother tongue education?" (Sharing in a workshop, December 2008).

This opinion emerges as an outburst of the suppression of the views in favour of minority languages over centuries in the past. There are other people who have the similar kind of understanding. It shows that conceptual clarity is needed among the stakeholders that mother tongue education is embedded in the overall framework of multilingual education.

Secondly, another way of thinking goes on in the opposite extreme. Some people believe that raising the voice of mother tongue education has been a 'slogan for politics' but this is 'not beneficial for the children' in this age of high competition in the background of growing trend of globalization. One of the high ranking government officials from the Ministry of Education argues:

> "The issue of mother tongue is nothing but a vested interest or agenda of political parties and some of the so-called human rights activists. They want to draw attention of their voters especially from the janajatis chanting slogans of caste/ethnicity and mother tongue. We need to go forward but not backward. In this age of globalization, students will have to compete in Nepali and English languages rather than mother tongues" (Interview, December 2008).

This view indicates that there are still many individuals at the policy level who have not internalized the main essence of mother tongue-based multilingual education even after progressive changes in the Interim Constitution of Nepal and other policy documents. Providing supplementary logic to the aforesaid view, another well-educated development professional from Tarai/Madhes region narrates his experience:

> "My mother tongue is Bhojpuri. During my school and college life, I was compelled to have very bitter and embarrassing experience from my classmates and teachers due to

influence of my mother tongue while pronouncing and reading Nepali and English. It is because of my continuous struggle against ridicule and embarrassment, I am here now. This is why, I did not encourage my children to learn mother tongue. They are doing well in their study. Now politicians even who do not have their different mother tongue other than Nepali are now encouraging us to educate our children in the mother tongue whereas they are sending their children to the elite schools with English medium" (Interview, November 2008).

This view gives a real picture of the dominant monolingual classroom environment where there is a prevalence of ridicule and embarrassment due to language based discrimination. However, this opinion is highly influenced by competitive environment in the context of globalization which requires more understanding on the importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education in ensuring educational rights of linguistic minority children.

In Sunsari district, UN agency, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local NGOs are working for years in the field of education. Interviews are taken to explore the level of commitment in their policies towards ensuring the education of linguistic minority children in their mother tongue. One of officials from an INGO who claims that his organization has been contributing to ensure the rights of the children says:

> Our organization has been providing financial and technical support for educational interventions which are being implemented through NGOs, CBOs and schools. The priority programs are community based ECCD centres, School Improvement Programmes and Non-formal Education Classes. We do not have any strategy and programme for multilingual education. We do not have any plan to revisit our strategy of education programme in the near future. Without having the strategy, programme and budget, we cannot support for such initiatives. As far the provision of mother tongue education in the Interim Constitution is concerned, I have not gone through that (Interview, November 2008).

This experience informs that some INGO officials are not still adequately aware of the Constitutional provisions about education in the mother tongue. So, they do not foresee

any possibility of revisiting their education programme strategy as per the changed context.

Lastly, what is interesting is that the school children have also clearly pointed out their views on the mother tongue-based multilingual education. Man Kumari Uranw, a 12 years old girl from grade five in Sharada Primary School argues:

> When I was studying in class one, teachers used to teach all subjects in Nepali language. I used to get scared with teachers because I could not speak Nepali in the class. I had to face really difficult times during the early days in my school. Now, I am so much happy to know that my younger sister Srijana is studying in Uranw language. She showed me a small book in Uranw language. I love to read that book. It is very important to get education in mother tongue. I could speak only Uranw language when I was in class one. Gradually, I learnt to speak Tharu and Maithili from my friends and neighbours. At home, we speak our mother tongue. Sometimes, I speak in Tharu and Maithili with my friends and neighbours. Whenever I go to Inaruwa (district headquarters) or Biratnagar (a regional city in Morang district), I need Nepali language for communication with others. In addition, we should learn Nepali and English to pass our exam and to get good job in future (Interview, December 2008).

It is worthwhile to mention that Man Kumari elaborated the importance and need of mother tongue-based multilingual education without reading and knowing its definitions offered by the experts. Some authors, linguists and multilingual education experts claim that mother tongue-based multilingual education is the appropriate way to address the issue of linguistic rights of minority children.

Let's see how the policy is implemented on the ground and how the stakeholders at the local level perceive debates on language. One of the teachers in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School states:

> In the beginning, we brought text books of Chamling Rai, Bantawa Rai, Tamang and Limbu languages from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and used. But Chamling Rai, Bantawa Rai and Tamang languages were dropped due to unwillingness of students and parents and also due to lack of financial support for teachers. Now, we are continuing Limbu language because we have received teacher's quota for this language only from District Education Office. Though there are only two students with Limbu MT in school, we have made it compulsory for all children from class one to

...re to learn Limbu language as a subject. CDC has not been able to provide the text ...ooks in Limbu language. We found some mistakes in the text books developed at the ...ational level. We sent 22 point suggestions for improvement to CDC but we have not received any responses yet (Interview, November 2008).

However, one of the officers, who is responsible for MLE curriculum in CDC clarifies:
In accordance with the Flash Report, bilingual education was adopted in about 6000 schools in Nepal. They are using the curriculum and text books developed by CDC in 16 different mother tongues. CDC has published reference materials for children in nine different languages as well. But problem lies here at the local level. Local schools are not sending their demand for the text books through District Education Offices in time. For example, we do have a lot of textbooks of Newari language in Devnagari script. Our office is in Kathmandu valley where density of Newari speech communities is very high. But the demand for Newari textbooks is negligible. So, we are not publishing the text books without demand. Some schools request for the text books without having any linguistic information of the school's catchment areas. These schools do not have records that how many primary school-aged children by mother tongue are there in the catchment areas and how many of them are attending schools or not. Each school and district should have information like this. In the present context, absence of this kind of linguistic information has been one of the major constraints for multilingual education (Interview, December 2008).

It reveals that both the arguments might be logical from their perspectives. But where does the gap lie? The major problems are found to be due to lack of ethnic and linguistic information and two ways communication among the educational institutions and mechanisms such as Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centre, Department of Education, District Education Offices, and Schools. As far as the unwillingness of students and parents on mother tongue education is concerned, most of the teachers and government officials shared that there is a need of awareness raising among the parents about importance and need of mother tongue-based multilingual education. It is because of the globalization, many parents are highly influenced by effects of English language. In spite of this, the major contributing factor for

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unwillingness is the centrally developed text books which do not represent the local dialects, culture and the context.

Mother Tongue versus English Debate

In Nepal the craze for English has been increasing day by day even in the remote rural communities. This has raised community level discourses on mother tongue versus English language. Whenever some curiosity and questions about their preference of the mother tongue are asked, the parents, PTA and SMC members brought English as a central agenda of discussion. Some of opinions of parents and other stakeholders are interesting.

Case Study1:

Mr. Shyam Ghising (name changed) is a resident of Hanshposha, who spent eight years in Saudi Arabia as a wage labourer. He can speak Tamang (mother tongue), Nepali, Hindi, Arabic and English to some extent. But his three children who are studying in the school cannot speak Tamang language. He feels sorry for this. However, he gives high priority for learning English. He argues: "Teaching in mother tongue is okay. Because I and my wife speak Tamang language at home but my children cannot do so. Sometimes, I feel guilty. Our language will die after 50 years if new generation did not learn and use it. But why should our children learn Limbu language[10] instead of Tamang in the name of multilingual education? There will be no use of Limbu language for our children. We must give high importance to English. I spent eight years in Arab countries and I knew that this is the world of English. So, our children should learn English effectively so that they will be able to get job in future. Each child should get education in mother tongue, then Nepali and English language. If we did not follow the context of the changing world and stuck only in the mother tongue, that will be disaster for future generation" (Interview, December 2008).

Three points can be drawn from this view. Firstly, parents like Mr. Ghising are willing to preserve and promote their own mother tongue. The mother tongue education at primary level could be one of the ways to address this. At the same time, he is very concerned

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[10] He refers to teaching of Linmbu language as a subject to all children having different MTs from grade two to five in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School.

with the imposition of one mother tongue on children who speak another mother tongue. Secondly, parents want to make their children competitive so that they will be able to get job in future. They think that Nepali as an official language and English as an international language can contribute towards that. Lastly, though they are not well aware of the definition of multilingual education, they demand the mother tongue-based multilingual education.

The case of Mrs. Shashi Uranw (name changed) presents an interesting example of a parent who is concerned about the English education for her child. This is an example for a parent who even tries to change the school for the sake of English education.

Case Study 2:

Mrs. Shashi Uranw has been sending her nine years old son to a private boarding school in Bhamari whereas her daughter is studying in class five in Sharada Primary School. She says: "Our son Dipendra is studying in LKG in Bhamari boarding school. We sent him to Sharada Primary School for one year but he did not learn much there. So, we changed his school keeping in mind his future. Because we heard that English is good in boarding school. His progress is good now"(Interview, November 2008).

However, according to another parent, Mr. Ram Bista (name changed), both Nepali and English are of equal importance.

Case Study 3:

Mr. Ram Bista is a hill migrant who came to Simariya two years back. His children study in class one and two in Sharada School narrates his experience: "I live in the village where a majority of people speak Uranw, Tharu and Maithili as mother tongues. I cannot speak any language except Nepali. I am also learning other languages informally from neighbours. I am not worried but happy that my sons are learning Uranw, Tharu and Maithili as well in school.

But they should be competent in Nepali and English languages as well (Interview, November 2008).

Not only the parents, children are also vocal about the dilemmas of language.

Case Study 4:

Sanjay Kumar Uranw (eight years old) who is also studying in LKG in Bhamari boarding school was also interviewed. He is happy to attend private boarding school. During interview with him, some parents shared that they are happy with the MLE programme started in Sharada School but they are also concerned about the future career of their children. They are not really confident whether MLE will help in this connection or not (Interview, December 2008).

It is because of the growing influence of English and boarding schools, parents have started demanding English as a subject as well medium of instruction. English is already there as a compulsory subject from grade one. Moreover, they want to add English as optional subject as well instead of mother tongue (See Table 3.4). Some Resource Centres[11] in Sunsari have already given approval to include English as an optional subject. According to a Resource Person from one of the Resource Centres in Sunsari:

> National Curriculum Framework has clearly stated about the provision of mother tongue as an optional subject. But parents and students do not prefer to go for this. They demand highly for additional English. So, we have developed understanding between Resource Centre and schools. Schools have included additional English (100 full marks) as an optional subject in addition to its compulsory status. If we did not follow this understanding, many children will join private school next year. Then, poor parents will not be able afford the cost of their children in private boarding school (Interview, November 2008).

It shows that there is a gap between the government policy and implementation practice on the ground. On the other hand, this practice has forced non-Nepali speaking children

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[11] Resource Centre (RC) is an educational unit under District Education Office (DEO), which has major responsibility of school monitoring and supervision. RC office is based in a secondary or higher secondary school. The responsible person of Resource Centre is Resource Person.

in a complex world of language learning. A five year old Uranw or Tharu child is compelled to learn non-home languages with 300 full marks (200 full marks English and 100 full marks Nepali) in an unfamiliar and unfriendly environment. The gap that prevails here is that many parents, teachers and government officials do not know how mother tongue education in the earlier grades can contribute to learn other languages such as Nepali and English later.

It may be worthwhile to draw some cues from the Indian experience of MLE. According to Mohanty (2006), "Some studies interrogating the myth of English medium superiority and showing the benefits of mother tongue-based multilingual education are discussed. It is argued that education must cater to the social needs of every child to develop from mother tongue to multilingualism and provide equality of opportunity through a language-shelter type of multilingual education that begins in mother tongue medium and introduces other languages after at least three to five years of primary schooling (p. 283)."

This view indicates that one should not put mother tongue and English in either or situation. In other words, it won't be logical to think that one can replace another. It is clear that learning mother tongue will provide some basic skills to children for learning other tongues.

Sum Up

As in other countries like India and Canada, debates and contestations on mother tongue or other tongues are going on for years. The transformation of Nepal as Federal Democratic Republic has been further stimulating such debates, discourses and contestations. As a result, language issue has been one of the major agendas of public discourses (Bhattachan 2003a). Currently, issue of official language is inviting hot debates and tensions during the Constitution Drafting process as well. Some regional parties are demanding to include Hindi as an official language in the Tarai/Madhes whereas some other parties are against of it. It is worthwhile to mention that people should have rights to decide their lingua franca themselves instead of imposition (Bhattachan 2003b). It may be observed that dilemmas and tensions remain at various

levels due to lack of conceptual clarity on importance of linguistic human rights and MLE framework which may contribute for preservation and promotion of languages, and enhance quality of education for all.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and CA Manifestos of the four major political parties reiterate the principle of non-discrimination and equality in terms of language use and reinforce for preservation and promotion of language. However, the Manifestos of the political parties do not present clear strategies for preservation and promotion of all national languages of Nepal. Language cannot be preserved and promoted if it is not transmitted to the new generation. Generally, this transmission process begins from home which is reinforced in school later. Only a mother tongue-based multilingual education framework can make this transmission smooth and successful, which is missing in the Manifestos.

English as medium of instruction has gained the currency all over the country due to mushrooming of privately run 'boarding schools' and decision of the Government to include English as a subject from the grade one. English is increasingly becoming as a language of power, prestige and effective means for better employment (Jhingran 2009). In some cases, local mother tongues are unofficially replaced by English as an optional subject in addition to its presence as compulsory status. This situation calls for serious attention of the policy makers and the researchers.

CHAPTER - VI

CHAPTER - VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the context of on-going restructuring process of Nepal, issues of exclusion and inclusion are emerging prominently in the policies and public discourses. A major issue in the education sector has been to recognise and facilitate the education of marginalised and excluded ethnic and linguistic groups in the country. The practice of 'one nation, one religion and one language' during the period of Monarchy has largely ignored or subordinated many ethno-linguistic minorities and their languages, which are facing a threat of either endangering or extinction. Since the home language or the mother tongue has not been the language of instruction, children from the ethno-linguistic minorities do not get opportunities to learn and protect their own languages. It is found to be one of the reasons for the lack of enrollment, retention in the school as well as for the poor academic performance of children from ethno-linguistic minorities. It is the issue that the present study aimed to examine with the help of an exploratory empirical field visit to two schools which are multilingual. The study explored the linguistic and cultural constraints and complexities of learning for linguistic minority children. The study had also focused on outlining the contemporary debate between various stakeholders on mother tongue and other tongues or English.

As discussed in Chapter two, linguistic diversity is the most basic characteristic of Nepalese society which is apparent not only at the national or district level but also at the village and school levels. It is evident that there is an inter-relationship between ethnicity and language as a majority of the languages of the country (64 out of 92) are spoken by the janajatis (indigenous nationalities). Despite their largeness in terms of the number of languages, janajati languages are a minority in terms of the number of speakers in comparison to Indo-European languages such as Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri and Awadhi. Moreover, the nomenclature of Nepali languages reveals that a good number of languages such as Uranw (Jhagar/Dhangar), Tharu, Tamang, etc. derive names from their community or tribe name. On the other hand, a tribe such as Rai (Kiranti) also speaks various janajati languages. Thus, linguistic identity is also linked with ethnic identity.

Language is increasingly becoming an important issue and 'symbol of identity politics' (Nambissan 2000) in Nepalese context.

Both Simariya and Hanshposha villages include various castes and ethnic groups which have a number of their own distinct mother tongues and cultural traditions. Deeply rooted hierarchical Hindu caste system prevails in these villages. As a result, Brahman, Chhetri and some Tarai/Madhes caste groups such as Yadav and Mehata hold power in various spheres of social life. They speak Nepali and Maithili as their mother tongues. The State has endowed till recent times Nepali language as the official and national language as well as the medium of instruction. Thus, as Mohanty (2006) argues, the 'linguistic hierarchy and inequality are institutionalized through various political and statuary processes'.

Further, some janajatis experience multiple subordinations if we look through the 'dominant and minority groups criteria' of Bhattachan (2008). For example, Uranws of Simariya belong to minority group in terms of ethnicity, and their language receives subordinate or minority status in comparison to Nepali language. On the other hand, Uranws who live in the eastern Tarai of Nepal, are also in a subordinate status in terms of geographical and development region. Thus, Nepali society's hierarchical social structure contributes to produce and reproduce discrimination and exclusion.

To address the issue of inclusion of ethno-linguistic minorities, Government of Nepal had formulated various policies in the post 1990s. But those policies are highly influenced by the undemocratic political system. After the reinstatement of multi-party democracy in 1989, the Constitution of Nepal (1990) took positive steps of recognising all mother tongues spoken in Nepal as national languages. Consequently, other policies such as Tenth Plan, Education for All (EFA) National Plan of Action (NPA) and the Three Year Interim Plan, etc. tried to capture the spirit of the Constitution and mother tongue education initiatives were subsequently started. Further, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) set milestones reinforcing mother tongue education as the right of the child. It may be observed that most of the education policy related documents state the inclusive strategy and education in mother tongue.

However, gap lies in between different policies which claim that they are aligned with each other. For instance, The Tenth Plan states that social inclusion is one of the

four pillars for development. EFA NPA and NPA for children spell out that they are aligned with the Tenth Plan. In the end, the NPAs do not pay adequate attention to inclusion in education. However, they do highlight non-discrimination and equality in relation to language, and status of languages as national, official and link, and mother tongues. Except EFA NPA, the policy frameworks do not give clear strategy and models for MLE. In addition, National Curriculum Framework considers Nepal's 'mixed society with socio-cultural and linguistic diversity' as a challenge which contradicts the essence of the Interim Constitution. It fails to recognise that linguistic diversity may be taken as an opportunity or a resource. What is interesting is that the stakeholders such as education bureaucrats, teachers, etc. believe that 'mother tongue education is just a political issue'. A good number of parents in Simariya are not aware of multilingual education (MLE) and its benefits to their children even after its implementation.

To address the educational issues of linguistic minorities, Department of Education, Ministry of Education has launched MLE programme in 2007-08. It may be too early to evaluate the outcomes and impact of this incipient initiative on all children in general and linguistic minority children in particular. This initiative aims to popularise among the children and communities the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction and cultural inclusion in curriculum and text books involving children, parents and teachers at the local level. Firstly, children are found to be very much happy to participate in the learning activities in their own languages as media of instruction. This has tremendously reduced the tension among the children created by Nepali as the medium of instruction especially in the first grade. Secondly, children, parents and teachers are fully excited to have localised curriculum and textbooks in Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages which are prepared by them in a participatory manner. Lastly, they do have a profound sense of belongingness and feeling of pride and empowerment (Hough et al. 2009) due to their involvement in educational process, and incorporation of local culture and indigenous knowledge in the textbooks which never happened before. Interestingly, though the community members are hopeful about the positive outcomes and impact of MLE programme, they are concerned about the progress of their children in Nepali and English languages as well. It is because of the growing trend of mushrooming of private boarding schools in the neighbouring villages or towns which

provide for English as not just a medium of instruction but also as a means of communication in the school premises.

The study looked into both the MLE and non-MLE school settings as to how they are trying to address the education of linguistic minority children. One of the major criteria for differentiating an MLE School from a non-MLE School is the media of instruction in more than two languages. In the MLE School, namely, Sharada Primary School, Simariya, the selection of languages for using as mother tongue for instructional purpose was done on the basis of information available in the school. Thus, the school included Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages on the basis of their numerical majority. All these languages are used as media of instruction while teaching subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, and Social Studies, and also taught as separate subjects. This provision is said to have created scope for better academic performance of children, and preservation and promotion of Uranw, Tharu and Maithili languages.

In the non-MLE School, namely, Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, Hanshposha, this situation does not prevail. In that school, however, Limbu language is taught as a subject compulsorily for all children in the school. It is not used as a medium of instruction to teach subjects like Maths, Science, Social Studies, etc. as in MLE School. Selection of Limbu language, despite its negligible number of speakers in school, was based on the political decision without considering the baseline information of the school. Consequently, even the children of grade five who have already attended the Limbu language classes for about four years are not able to communicate in Limbu language. Frustrations emerge due to this imposition among the non-Limbu speakers. It is argued by the teachers that non-MLE School has got teacher's quota in the name of Limbu language, so it is retained as a subject. This practice has serious implications for education policy regarding recruitment and deployment/transfer of teacher based on baseline information of the school.

The study found that the linguistic minority children encountered problems and constraints in the first grade of their schooling due to the presence of children from other speech communities. It may be noted that the home-school transition begins in the grade one of the primary school as there is no early childhood care and development (ECCD) or

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pre-primary education opportunity. Though, diverse linguistic reality is an opportunity and a resource for interactive learning process, and may be developed as 'laboratory' within the classrooms (Delpit 2003), handling such a situation by untrained teachers may create complex world of learning for children. The 'welcome to school campaign' organised by the school every year, during the first month of the academic year, is instrumental in bringing linguistic minority children to the school. However, immediately after ending of the 'welcome to school campaign', linguistic minority children begin to experience unwelcoming environment and behaviour in the school due to imposition of non-home language as a medium of instruction. Ridicule and embarrassment prevail in the classroom, which exacerbate hostile classroom environments for linguistic minority children. It is observed that direct kinds of ridicule and humiliation from dominant groups are sometimes expressed latently as well. In other words, school system does not pay much attention to the smooth home-school transition for linguistic minority children. The similar situation prevails even in the multilingual Indian context. Pattanayak (1981) argues that a 'conscious academic strategy is needed to transfer a minority child from the home language to the school language'. It means that just transferring the child from home to school during school hours may not solve the problems of linguistic minorities. Hence, mother tongue based multilingual education may be the means for this transition process.

However, complexities of learning for linguistic minority children are even found in the mother tongue-based MLE classrooms. Teachers are found to be using Uranw, Tharu, Maithili and Nepali languages while teaching subjects like Mathematics, Social Studies and Science in the same period in grade one. Thus, practice of code switching and code mixing are evident in the classroom which is a common phenomenon in the multilingual situation. However, language choice for code switching by the teachers is influenced by his or her mother tongue. It means that teachers also feel comfortable to teach in their own mother tongue for early grades. It may create more complex environments and confusion among the children. On the other hand, teachers follow practices without any pedagogical training and without understanding the meaning of code switching and code mixing. This aspect may need more attention from the policy practitioners and researchers.

Nepali and Maithili speaking children in Sharada Primary School are found very active in responding to teachers, asking questions and having interaction with peer groups. Actually most of these children with Nepali and Maithili mother tongues, who represent the so-called upper castes in the Hindu hierarchical social system benefit from their privileged 'cultural capital'. In other words, they acquire some forms of knowledge, attitude, skills and style at home. It is because, this advantage makes the school system a familiar and comfortable place for them, which is highly influenced by the dominant culture. This reality corroborates the arguments of Aronowitz and Giroux. They argue that 'schools legitimize the dominant cultural capital through the hierarchically arranged bodies of school knowledge in the hegemonic curriculum, and by rewarding students who use the linguistic style of ruling class' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1986). On the other hand, linguistic minority children such as Uranw, Tharu and Tamang do not have experience of 'transmission of cultural capital at family level' before entering into school (Bourdieu1986). Furthermore, the school situation reinforces the argument of Bernstein regarding his notions of 'elaborated codes' and 'restricted codes'. For instance, Nepali speaking children possess the elaborated code before and after entering the school which assist them to cope with the use of formal classroom language. But the non-Nepali speaking children, endowed with restricted codes, are deprived of such kind of privilege. They are compelled to struggle with unfavorable environment in school from the linguistic perspectives.

Before the launching of MLE programme in April 2008, teachers used to discourage using mother tongues such as Uranw, Tharu and Maithili in the classrooms. This reality indicates that school was a fertile place for 'reproduction of inequality' in education from the linguistic and cultural view points. If school culture is highly influenced by the dominant culture, children of marginalised sections of the society are deprived of this advantage of cultural and linguistic capital. According to Bernstein, school demands the use of 'elaborated code' but working class children have access to only 'restricted code' (Rai 2005, McLaren 2003). This might be considered as one of the contributing factors of exclusion in education.

In addition to the cultural constraints, linguistic barrier is also observed in the classroom. It occurs due to mandatory provision of Nepali as a medium of instruction

despite insignificant number or even absence of children with Nepali mother tongue in the class. For instance, there is no Nepali mother tongue student in class three and five in Sharada Primary School. Most of the non-Nepali speakers from the linguistic minorities had terrible experience regarding language difficulty during the early months in the first grade of the primary school. It may be noted that Uranw children had to face more humiliating treatment by others during their early school days. Sometimes, even students with Maithili and Tharu mother tongue dishonour the linguistic and ethnic identity of Uranw. It indicates that linguistic minority children particularly Uranws face multiple disadvantages or subordinations. In some cases, this kind of situation pushes them out of the school. Even if they continue, it hinders their academic performance and achievement.

At the macro level, what is interesting in the study is that there has been a growing trend of contestations on mother tongue or other tongues in Nepal. The changed political context of the country and the on-going process of new Constitution drafting have further motivated these contestations. Some tensions regarding language use are spilled over onto the streets in the form of demonstrations. As a result, language policy and mother tongue issues have been the concern and agenda of public discourses. The Constituent Assembly Manifestos of four major political parties of Nepal are found to be committed to establish inclusive democracy ensuring rights of the people from linguistic minorities. However, the policies and strategies they proposed do not include mother tongue-based multilingual education.

Notwithstanding some policy pronouncements, implementation of EFA NPA and School Sector Reform (SSR), and high coverage of policy discourses in media, there still remains a dilemma among the stakeholders regarding the conceptual clarity and significance of MLE in Nepal (Mohanty 2006; Sinha 2008). Indian experience also substantiates this argument. Mohanty says, 'the question of use of multiple languages as medium of instruction (which is a defining feature of multilingual education) is not clear in Indian education' (Mohanty 2009, p. 301). The Constitution of India in its VIIIth Schedule recognizes only 22 mother tongues including Nepali as official languages, and English is recognized as an associate official language, and 33 languages are used as

media of instruction. However, contestations on language policy continue to take place in India where three language formula was initiated as far back in 1957.

It is observed that confusion remains at various levels regarding mother tongue as a medium of instruction and as a subject. On the other hand, growing trend of attraction of parents towards English as a medium of instruction and as a subject right from the pre-primary education level, may challenge the rapid expansion of MLE if parental awareness is not raised about the need and importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education in the days to come. Further, stakeholders are yet to enhance their knowledge and attitude on how acquisition and competence of mother tongue can contribute to learn other tongues (other national languages, official language and international language), and promotion and safeguarding of all languages of the country.

In this context, one of the issues that may require immediate policy attention is the creation of the disaggregated data in terms of caste/ethnicity, mother tongues, etc. in the case of Nepal. It appears from the study that the Education Management Information System (EMIS) itself is the major stumbling block in the collection of disaggregated data by caste/ethnicity and speech communities. In other words, the forms and format of EMIS are not inclusive enough to collect the data regarding mother tongue. Only the data of children enrolled in the school cannot serve the purpose of making strategy of inclusion of excluded children from the linguistic minorities. Thus, it may give an impression that EMIS itself is exclusionary. This situation calls for an urgent need to redesign the EMIS and having linguistic survey at the community level. The MLE programme document itself has mentioned that the absence of the disaggregated baseline data is one of the risks (DOE 2007). However, the MLE programme could not carry out the baseline at the local level before launching it. In the meantime, MOE aimed to expand the MLE as a priority programme in future adapting the lessons learnt from the on-going programme which requires a lot of financial and human resources. Thus, harmonization between demand and supply in this connection could be a big challenge for MLE programme in Nepal. Even after collecting updated and disaggregated information about the mother tongues of children and teachers, issues such as proper deployment of the teachers in the appropriate schools where they can teach different mother tongues as media of instruction, might arise. On the other hand, a large number of teachers are yet to

be trained on conceptual understanding and teaching methodologies to be adopted for mother tongue-based MLE.

If the issue of mother tongue based multilingual education is not addressed, the threat of survival of many languages looms large within the Nepali society. For instance, Kusunda language has been claimed to be extinct or dead (Gurung 2005, Yadava 2007, Turin 2007). A few other languages such as Kisan, Koche, Munda, Kumal, Bhujel and Baramu which have less then 18 per cent of language retention by their speakers in Census 2001 in comparison with Census 1991 (Gurung 2005) are also at the verge of extinction.

The language loss and language shift are observed in the case of the non-MLE School where children from eleven speech communities co-exist. Some children from Tamang, Rai, Newari, Magar, Majhi and Gurung speech communities stated that their parents can speak their mother tongues but they cannot. They are willing to learn their own mother tongues but both the home and school do not offer nurturing and conducive environment for that. Some parents and teachers expressed that they are reluctant to transmit their home language to the children despite their respect to mother tongue and culture. The contributing factors for such reluctance include high dominance of majority languages in school education and demands for competence in Nepali and English language for employment opportunities. These reasons are similar to the factors encouraging language loss as argued by Conklin and Lourie 1983, as cited in Baker 2006. On the other hand, it appears that the loyalty of minority parents to their mother tongues found to be reduced due to the subordination of dominant language and culture in the societies. They want their children to be more competent in Nepali and English languages. As, Fishman (1991, as cited in Baker 2006) argues, 'where families do not transmit the minority language, the school is there to do it. Where parents do not bring up their children in the minority language, the school is expected to be the substitute minority language parent'.

However, non-MLE school does not play this kind of role in the Nepalese context. In Nepal 58 languages have less than 10,000 speakers (0.04 per cent of total population) and 28 languages have less than 1,000 speakers as mother tongue. In case of Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School, eight languages (Gurung, Magar, Newari, Majhi,

Maithili, Limbu, Urdu and Tharu) have less than 13 speakers out of total 194 students in the school. If the school continues to produce and reproduce language subordination without adopting mother tongue-based multilingual education, many minority languages may face extinction despite the commitment for preservation and promotion of all languages expressed in the Interim Constitution, educational policies and manifestos of the political parties.

It is interesting to note that language loss and language shift are not apparent in MLE school, where there is a less number of mother tongues and less prevalence of internal migration. However, it may be observed that linguistic, cultural and pedagogical constraints are much more severe in the school even after implementation of MLE programme. These constraints have been stumbling blocks for education of linguistic minorities. Before implementation of MLE programme, children had to face learning difficulties due to hostile environment created by one language policy adopted by the school. Now, MLE programme has contributed to change such environment into friendly ones where children of linguistic minorities enjoy their rights to education in mother tongue. However, they are encountered with a complex world of learning due to use of multiple languages in the same class taught by the untrained teachers. Though both the schools follow the same rules, regulations and style of school governance, their linguistic and pedagogical processes suffer from what Freire called 'narration sickness'. The major reason behind this could be lack of technical and financial resources.

It appears that Nepali language is pushing out minority languages exercising its hegemonic power of official language and medium of instruction. On the other hand, English is found to be increasingly becoming stronger pushing not only the minority languages but also dominant language like Nepali towards linguistic marginalisation. It is due to the growing trend of popularity of English from the perspectives of employment opportunities. However, Skutnab-Kangas et al. (2009) argue that 'prominence given to English is problematical wherever local languages are not used, especially in education' (Skutnab-Kangas et al. 2009). Therefore, there may be a need for creating win-win situation between mother tongue and other tongues through complementary roles instead of having rivalry between and amongst them. In such situation, even English can play the role of healer language instead of 'killer language' (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). However, it

is not possible to create win-win situation without 'replacing the authoritarian, rigid, pre-ordained knowledge approach of dominant culture-centric education in the early years of schooling by a system of critical educational experiences empowering indigenous/tribal and linguistic minority communities to become valued, equal, and responsible members of their own and the larger society outside their community' (Panda and Mohanty 2009, p. 295).

Therefore, the study brought to the fore a complex scenario in the education of linguistic minorities in Nepal. It had highlighted the need for mother tongue based MLE as a policy mechanism to address the issue of educability of children from linguistic minority groups based on the macro policy review and a micro empirical school based study. The study used multiple perspectives from sociology of education, socio-linguistics and public policy discourses to understand this issue.

Notwithstanding the strengths of the study in terms of covering a terrain that has not been touched by not many scholars in Nepal, there could be a possible expansion of the study. For instance, the study could include the community's responses towards the challenges of multilingual education of their children, the classroom based observations of the teaching-learning situation; the socio-political considerations of multilingual education at various levels of the community, regional and national. All these aspects may be considered for further research. On the whole, the study is a small exploration to highlight a few issues relating to the exclusion of children from ethno-linguistic minorities from educational contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX – A

INTERVIEW/INTERACTION SCHEDULE FOR

CHILDREN (Grade One)

Name of the child:

Age:

Gender:

Name and address of the school:

Home address:

Caste/ethnicity:

Mother tongue:

1. What is your name?

2. How old are you?

3. Does your brother or sister study in this school?

4. Can you tell the name of your five best friends in the class?

5. Do you talk with them in Uranw/Tharu /Maithili/Tamang/Rai/Nepali language?

6. Do your teachers speak in Uranw/Tharu/Maithili/Tamang/Rai/Nepali language while teaching?

7. Is that easy to understand?

8. Do you speak other languages besides your home language?

9. Who is your favourite teacher?

10. Do your teachers punish/slap/scold you? If yes, why?

11. What do you like in your school?

12. Do you come to school regularly?

13. Can you show your books?

14. Which book do you like more?

15. What are easy and difficult subjects, and why?

16. Are you happy to talk in your home language in school?

17. Who are your friends on the way to school and back home?

18. Have you ever quarreled with your friends? If yes, why?

APPENDIX – B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

(Grade Five)

Name of the child:

Age:

Gender:

Name and address of the school:

Home address:

Caste/ethnicity:

Mother tongue:

1. What is your home language?

2. What is your parents' mother tongue?

3. Do you talk with your siblings, parents and other family members in your home language?

4. What other languages do you speak besides home language? (in order of proficiency)

     a.   b.   c.   d.

5. Which language is used as a medium of instruction in your class now?

6. Which language was used as a medium of instruction when you were in the first grade?

7. Which language is used for informal communication in the classroom and outside?

8. Did you face any problems and learning difficulties due to Nepali medium of instruction while you were in the first grade? If yes, what are those problems and difficulties?

9. Are you facing any problems and difficulties regarding medium of instruction now?

10. Have you ever shared those problems and difficulties to your teachers and parents?

11. Do your parents visit school to discuss with teachers about your academic progress?

12. Do you receive your text books in time?

13. What are easy and difficult subjects, and why?

14. Who are your five best friends in the class? Why?

15. What do you like in your school? (likes in terms of use of language, teachers' behavior, relationship with teachers and peer groups, involvement in learning activities)

16. What are your dislikes? (dislikes in terms of use of language, teachers' behavior, relationship with teachers and peer groups, involvement in learning activities)

17. What are encouraging factors that attract you to attend the class regularly?

18. What are factors that discourage you to attend the class regularly?

19. What is your future ambition and dream in terms of profession?

20. Can you share any happy and unhappy moments/events that you experienced in your class and school?

21. Have you experienced any kind of corporal punishment, bullying, harassment, ridicule and teasing in school while using home language in school?

22. If yes, did you or teachers or parents make any effort to solve those problems?

23. Does your younger sibling study in grade one?

24. If yes, is she or he enjoying home language in the classroom?

25. Have you seen any textbook developed in your own mother tongue?

26. What are the advantages of mother tongue as medium of instruction?

27. What are the disadvantages of mother tongue as medium of instruction?

28. Child's suggestions regarding effective use of mother tongue and other tongues in classroom

APPENDIX – C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

Name of the parent:

Age:

Gender:

Home address:

Name of her/his child's school:

Caste/ethnicity:

Mother tongue:

Educational qualification:

Educational qualification of spouse:

Occupation:

Occupation of spouse:

Mother tongue of spouse:

1. What is the medium of communication at home?

2. Do you interact with your children at home in your mother tongue? If not, why?

3. What is the medium of communication at your work place and nearby market place?

4. Do you speak other languages besides your mother tongue? (In order of proficiency)

   a.   b.   c.   d.   e.

5. How many ethnic groups are there in your village?

6. If there are more than two ethnic groups in the village, how is the relationship among those ethnic groups?

7. What is the link language to have interaction among those groups?

8. How many languages are spoken in your village?

9. Do you want to preserve and promote your mother tongue? If yes, why?

10. Do all school aged children from your family attend school?

11. If there is any out-of-school child in the family, what are reasons?

12. If there is any school dropout child in the family, what are reasons?

13. Does your child want to go to school happily?

14. What is the medium of instruction in your child's school?

15. Do you prefer mother tongue education for your child at pre-primary and primary level? If yes, why? If not, why?

16. Do you prefer teaching of Nepali and English as subjects from grade one? If yes, why? If not, why?

17. Does your child speak other languages in addition to her/his mother tongue? If yes, what are they?

18. Have you experienced/observed any language and culture related difficulties for your child/children in school? If yes, what are those difficulties?

19. Has your child ever shared those difficulties with you?

20. Have you ever discussed with teachers about those difficulties?

21. How often do you visit school to discuss about the progress of your child? If no, why?

22. Does your child receive textbooks in time?

23. Have you seen any textbooks developed in your mother tongue?

24. Are you familiar with MLE program implemented in the school? (In case of MLE School only)

25. Have you ever participated in the meeting of MLE program?

26. Have you observed any additional motivation and positive or negative changes on your child after attending classes under MLE program?

27. What are advantages of MLE?

28. What are disadvantages of MLE?

29. Are you familiar with the government policies on MLE?

30. Are you happy with the role played by school teachers, SMC and PTA members, DEO and DOE, MOE officials during MLE program implementation?

31. What are the challenges of MLE?

32. Would you like to provide any suggestions for improvement of MLE program?

APPENDIX – D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Name of the teacher:

Name of the school:

Home address:

Gender:

Caste/ethnicity:

Mother tongue:

Educational Qualification:

Training received:

Permanent/temporary:

Local/outsider:

Total teaching experience:

Academic qualification:

1. Do you speak other languages besides your mother tongue? (In order of proficiency)

   a)   b)   c)   d)   e)

2. What is the medium of communication at your home (with adults and children)?

3. What are castes/ethnic groups reside in the catchment areas of your school?

4. What are languages spoken in the catchment areas?

5. What is the lingua-franca/link language in the catchment areas?

6. What are the languages spoken by the children as mother tongue in the school?

7. What is the link language in the school for children with different mother tongues?

8. Which grades do you teach?

9. Which subjects do you teach?

10. What is the medium of instruction in grade one?

11. What is the medium of instruction in other grades?

12. Are the children discouraged to use home language in the school?

13. Which language do you use to have interaction with children outside the class?

14. Do you observe any language and culture related difficulties or constraints for linguistic minority children in the class?

15. What are the problems of linguistic minorities or non-Nepali speaking children in school?

16. What is the relationship between dominant language and minority language in the school and communities?

17. Are the school environments friendly for linguistic minority children?

18. Are the children given corporal punishments in the school? If yes, why?

19. Are you familiar with mother tongue-based multilingual education?

20. Does your school implement the mother tongue based MLE programme?

21. If yes, how long is your work experience in MLE programme?

22. Have you received any training particularly related to MLE and multi-grade teaching?

23. How effective is mother tongue as medium of instruction adopted by school?

24. Are you facing any language and culture related problems and difficulties while teaching in the class?

25. Are you facing any problems and difficulties while implementing MLE program in the classrooms?

26. Did you make any efforts to solve those problems and difficulties?

27. Do you need any support from SMC, RC, DEO and DOE to solve those problems and difficulties?

28. What are differences between MLE and non-MLE environment in terms of children's participation in learning?

29. Are the curriculum and textbooks locally prepared?

30. Do children receive textbooks in time?

31. What are the strengths and advantages of MLE program?

32. What are disadvantages and areas to be improved (weaknesses) for MLE program?

33. How frequently do the parents visit school and have interaction with teachers?

34. Is there Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) formed in school? Is PTA functional?

35. What are the monitoring mechanisms for MLE programme from RC, DEO and DOE?

36. How is the role of DEO, RC, VDC, SMC, PTA for implementation of MLE (financial and technical support/supervision)?

37. Are you familiar with government policies and strategies for MLE?

38. How is your impression about the policies, strategies and programmes of the government regarding mother tongue-based MLE in Nepal?

39. Do those policies, strategies and programmes address the issues related to education of linguistic minority children?

40. Are the curriculum, textbooks, training packages and learning materials aligned with the policies and strategies?

41. What are gaps between existing policy provisions and practices at school level?

42. What are the challenges of MLE in terms of policies, strategies, structures and mechanisms, programme designing and planning, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation?

Additional Questions for Interview with Head Teacher

1. Have SMC and PTA ever discussed about creating friendly environment for linguistic minority children in the school?

2. Has SMC made any efforts for collection and updating the ethnic and linguistic database from the catchment areas of the school?

3. Do EMIS and the Flash Report include the segregated data regarding caste/ethnicity and mother tongue of the children?

4. Do the ethnic, cultural and linguistic constraints contribute for failure, drop out and repetition?

5. Do you experience any difficulty regarding the recruitment of teacher in the mother tongue?

6. Does SIP include plan and programme for MLE?

7. How is the coordination and cooperation among educational institutions and committees such as DEO, RC, School, DEC, VEC, SMC, PTA and Child Club (if any), NGOs and CBOs to address the educational issue of linguistic minority children?

APPENDIX – E

OBSERVATION: PLACES, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Places		Description of observation (events and activities)
Simariya	Sharada Primary School	• Whole day school observation: from assembly (10 am) to closing (4 pm) • Class observation (grade 1) • Class observation (grade 5) • Class observation (grade 2 and 3) • Indoor and outdoor games • Drawing competition in grade 1 • Singing and dancing events in grade 1 • On the spot MLE training/coaching to the teachers by technical team and officials from Inclusive Education Section, DOE, MOE • Joint exposure visit in MLE school by 7 organizations (MOE, DOE, DEO, RC, UNICEF, INGOs and NGOs) and their interaction with teachers and SMC members • Stakeholders' meeting on MLE • Informal interaction among children • Informal interaction between children and teachers • Informal interaction between teachers and SMC/PTA members • Informal interaction between teachers and NGO/CBO staff/board members • Informal interaction between teachers and officials from DEO, DOE, MOE • Informal interaction between teachers and human rights, ethnic and linguistic rights activists • Informal meeting among the teachers
	Charaiya and Simariya	• Observation of local festivals and cultural events • Observation and visit of children's home (interviewees) • Informal interaction between parents and children at

		home
		• Day to day activities and informal interaction among the community people particularly in the local shop and tea shop
		• Observation of local *haatbazar* (market)
		• Observation of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centre
		• Observation of Janta Secondary School, Simariya-7
		• Observation of B. P. Primary School, Simariya-2
		• NGO and CBO office and meeting
		• Religious rally
		• Interaction between VDC officials and community people
		• Interaction between NGO staff and community people
Hanshposha	Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School	• Whole day school observation
		• Class observation (grade 1)
		• Class observation (grade 5)
		• Observation of quiz contest (grade 1-5)
	Tarahara	• Observation of cultural event (*sakewa sili chandi naach*)
		• Home visit and observation
		• Visit and observation of neighbouring school of Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School

APPENDIX – F

INTERVIEWS: PLACES AND INDIVIDUALS

Places		Participation of individuals in the semi-structured interviews
Simariya and Hanshposha	Sharada Primary School and Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School	1. Children of Grade one (total: 40, girls 19 and 21 boys) • Uranw mother tongue: 11[1] • Tharu mother tongue: 11 • Tamang mother tongue: 7 • Nepali mother tongue: 11 2. Children of Grade five (total: 34, girls 20 and boys 14) • Uranw mother tongue: 9 • Tharu mother tongue: 9 • Tamang mother tongue: 7 • Nepali mother tongue: 9 3. Children of Grade three (total: 4, girls 1, boys 3): all Uranw MT 4. Teachers: 11 (5 female)- (Uranw MT 2, Tharu MT 2, Tamang MT 1, Nepali MT 2, Maithili MT 1, Limbu MT 1 and Rai MT 2) 5. SMC chairperson and members: 6 (Uranw MT 2, Tharu MT 2 and Nepali MT 2) 6. PTA chairperson and members: 3 (1 female and 2 male)
	Communities (Simariya 4 and 8)	• Parents: 35 (Uranw MT 9, Tharu MT 9, Nepali MT 9, Maithili MT 4 and Tamang MT 4) • School drop out adolescents and youths: 3 • Local educated youths: 4 • Social workers and politicians: 6 (Uranw MT,

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[1] It refers to the number of individuals participated in the interviews.

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		Tharu MT, Maithili MT and Nepali MT)
	VDC Office	• VDC Secretary and some social workers: 3
District level	DEO Office, Sunsari	• DEO officials: 3 (including a Resource Person) • Teachers out of Simariya and Hanshposha: 4
	DDC Office, Sunsari	• Local Development Officer/District Education Committee chairperson and other officials: 2
	Sunsari	• UN agency and INGOs: 4 • NGOs: 3 • Teachers' organization: 1 • Indigenous People's organizations: 2 (Uranw and Tharu) • Political parties: 4
National level	MOE, Kesharmahal	• MOE officials: 3
	DOE, Sanothimi	• DOE officials: 5 (including MLE technical team)
	CDC, Sanothimi	• CDC officials: 2
	NCED, Sanothimi	• NCED officials: 2
	Linguistic Department, TU, Kirtipur	• Lecturer at Central Department of Linguistics, TU: 1 • Linguistics Society of Nepal: 1
	Kathmandu	• Organization of Indigenous Nationalities: 2 (NFDIN and NEFIN) • Embassy[2], UN agencies and INGOs: 7 • NGOs: 3 • Teachers' organization: 1 • Research Scholars: 3 (working on MT education) • Individuals experts/educationists: 3 • Political parties: 4
Total number of individuals: 209		

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[2] It refers to the Embassy which has been providing financial and technical support for MLE.

APPENDIX – G

POPULATION BY CASTE/ETHNIC GROUP IN SIMARIYA

Caste/Ethnic Group		Population	Percentage
Janajatis (2524)	Tharu	1545	54
	Uranw (Jhagar/Dhangar)	654	
	Newar	142	
	Dhanuk	91	
	Gharti/Bhujel	80	
	Magar	6	
	Limbu	6	
Dalits (1037)	Mushar	801	22
	Chamar/Harijan	193	
	Dom	22	
	Kami	21	
Brahman/Thakuri/Chhetri (244)	Brahman Hill	114	5
	Chhetri	130	
Muslims	Muslim	166	4
Others (281)	Teli	87	6
	Yadav	54	
	Sudhi	52	
	Kamar	44	
	Nurang	12	
	Koiri	11	
	Hajam/Thakur	11	
	Others	10	
Unidentified castes		425	9
	Total	4677	100

Source: CBS, GoN and UNFPA, 2002

APPENDIX – H

POPULATION BY CASTE/ETHNIC GROUP IN

HANSHPOSHA

Caste/Ethnic Group		Population	Percentage
Janajatis (9993)	Tharu	4161	57
	Rai	2317	
	Newar	766	
	Tamang	743	
	Gurung	505	
	Limbu	483	
	Danuwar	362	
	Majhi	264	
	Magar	221	
	Gharti/Bhujel	130	
	Sunuwar	12	
	Dhanuk	9	
	Dhimal	8	
	Meche	7	
	Yakkha	5	
Dalits (1118)	Kami	474	6
	Mushar	310	
	Damai	237	
	Sarki	84	
	Sonar	13	
Brahman/Thakuri/Chhetri (5995)	Chhetri	2924	34
	Brahman Hill	2051	
	Sanyasi	930	
	Thakuri	66	
	Brahman Tarai	24	
Muslims (209)	Muslim	209	1
Others (179)	Teli	52	1
	Bangali	25	
	Haluwai	22	
	Hajam/Thakur	19	
	Byangsi	14	
	Kalwar	11	
	Kayastha	11	
	Yadav	10	
	Koiri	6	
	Others	9	
Unidentified castes (206)	Unidentified caste	206	1
	Total	17700	100

Source: CBS, GoN and UNFPA, 2002

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APPENDIX – I

STUDENTS BY CASTE/ETHNICITY IN SHARADA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Students by Caste/Ethnic groups	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			Class 5			Grand Total			
	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	%
Janajatis (Uranw, Tharu)	36	25	61	19	19	38	20	23	43	12	15	27	19	14	33	106	96	202	74.81%
Dalits (Rishidev)	1	1	2	1	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	1	5	8	13	4.81%
Others (Brahmin, Chhetri, Yadav, Mehata, Mandal, etc.)	12	10	22	9	4	13	4	2	6	5	4	9	3	2	5	33	22	55	20.37%
Total	49	36	85	29	27	56	25	27	52	18	20	38	23	16	39	144	126	270	100%

Note: G-girls, B-boys, T-total,   Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic Year 2008/2009)   , Collected date: 12 November, 2008

STUDENTS BY MOTHER TONGUE IN SHARADA PRIMARY SCHOOL, SIMARIYA

Students by Mother Tongue	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			Class 5			Grand Total			
	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	%
Uranw	39	22	51	14	16	30	17	18	35	11	12	23	13	11	24	84	79	163	60.37%
Maithili	12	5	17	6	4	10	5	4	9	3	4	7	4	2	6	30	19	49	18.15%
Tharu	7	3	10	5	3	8	3	5	8	1	3	4	6	3	9	22	17	39	14.44%
Nepali	1	6	7	4	4	8	0	0	0	3	1	4	0	0	0	8	11	19	7.04%
Total	49	36	85	29	27	56	25	27	52	18	20	38	23	16	39	144	126	270	100%

G-girls, B-boys, T-total,   Source: Attendance Register of School[1] (Academic year 2008/09)   Collected date: 12 November, 2008

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[1] The triangulation of the information collected from the Attendance Register was carried out discussing with all teachers and some students as well in case of confusion regarding their mother tongue.

APPENDIX – K

STUDENTS BY CASTES/ETHNIC GROUPS IN BAL BAHUBHASIYA PRIMARY SCHOOL, HANSHPOSHA

Students by Caste/Ethnic groups	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			Class 5			Grand Total			
	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	%
Janajatis	14	14	28	10	8	18	19	10	29	20	9	29	10	12	22	73	53	126	64.94%
Dalits	3	2	5	3	1	4	2	0	2	1	1	2	2	1	3	11	5	16	8.24%
Brahmin/ Chhetri	4	7	11	5	8	13	5	2	7	4	6	10	5	2	7	23	25	48	24.74%
Muslims	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	2.00%
Total	22	25	47	19	17	36	26	12	38	25	16	41	17	15	32	109	85	194	100%

G-girls, B-boys, T-total,   Source: Attendance Register of School   (Academic Year 2008/2009)   Collected date: 2 December, 2008

STUDENTS BY MOTHER TONGUE IN BAL BAHUBHASIYA PRIMARY SCHOOL, HANSHPOSHA

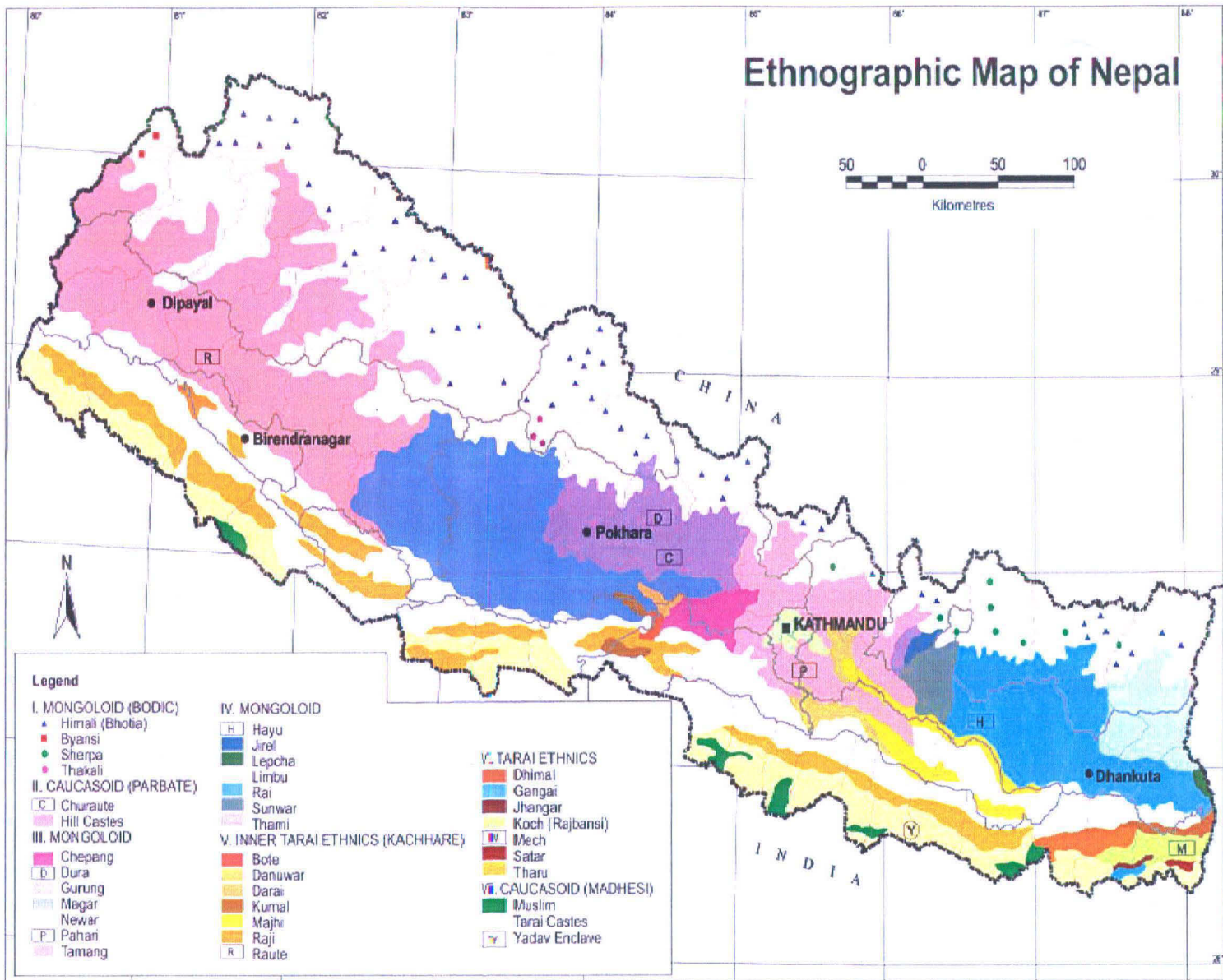| Students by Mother Tongue	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			Class 5			Grand Total			
	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	%
Maithili	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	3	2	5	2.57%
Tharu	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	4	2.06%
Nepali	8	11	19	8	10	18	6	2	8	5	7	12	10	5	15	37	35	72	37.11%
Rai	3	3	6	6	2	8	9	5	14	7	3	10	2	2	4	27	15	42	21.64%
Limbu	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	2	5	2.57%
Urdu	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	2.06%
Tamang	1	6	7	2	1	3	3	2	5	5	3	8	3	3	6	14	15	29	14.94%
Magar	2	0	2	1	1	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	7	3	10	5.15%
Newari	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	3	6	3.09%
Majhi	1	2	3	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	3.09%
Gurung	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	4	3	0	3	1	0	1	7	4	11	5.67%
Total	21	26	47	19	17	36	26	12	38	24	17	41	17	15	32	106	88	194	100%

G-girls, B-boys, T-total,   Source: Attendance Register of School (Academic year 2008/09)   Collected date: 2 December, 2008
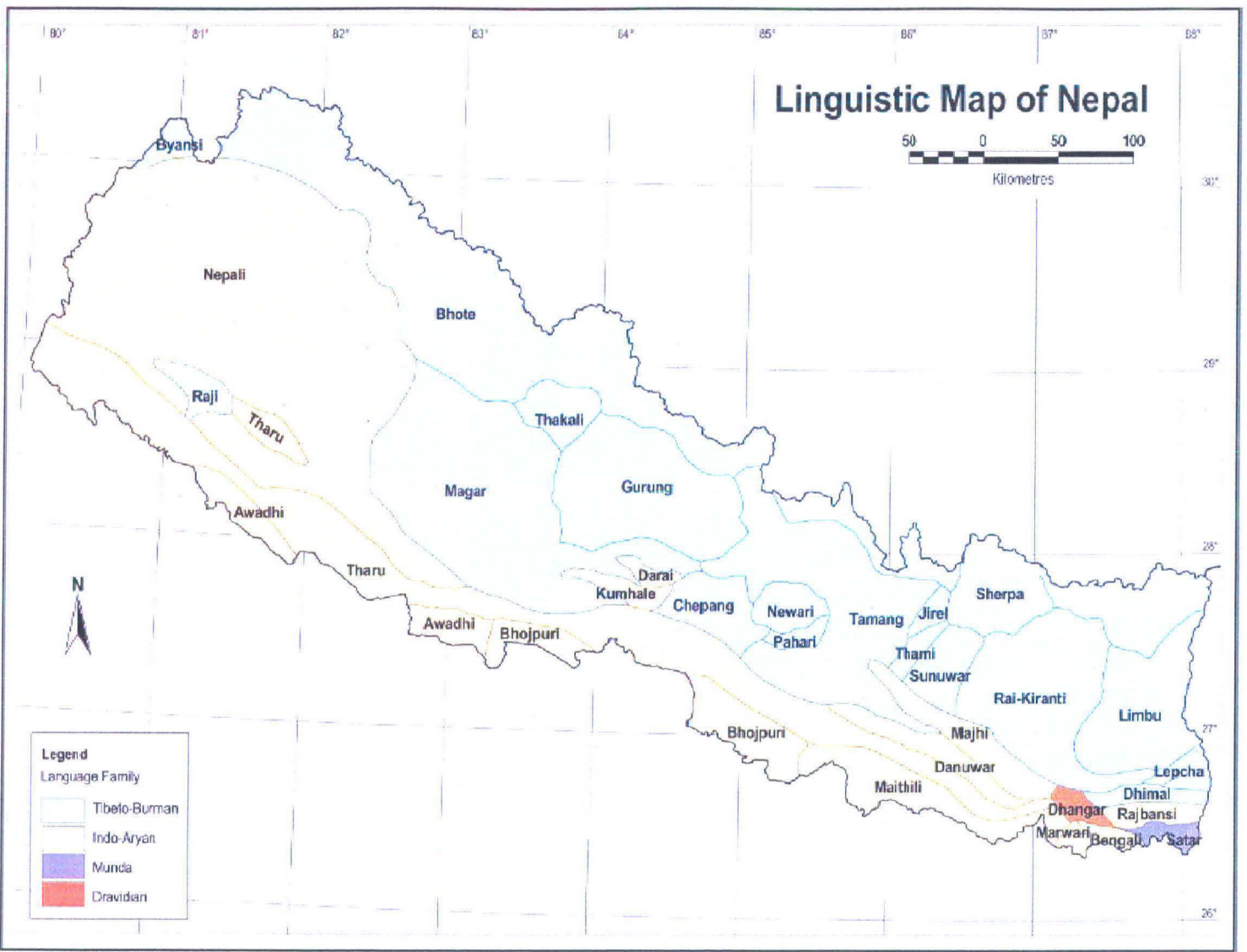
Ethnographic Map of Nepal

50   0   50   100

Kilometres

CHINA

Dipayal

Birendranagar

Pokhara

KATHMANDU

Dhankuta

INDIA

N

Legend

I. MONGOLOID (BODIC)
- ▲ Himali (Bhotia)
- ■ Byansi
- ● Sherpa
- ● Thakali

II. CAUCASOID (PARBATE)
- C Churaute
- Hill Castes

III. MONGOLOID
- Chepang
- D Dura
- Gurung
- Magar
- Newar
- P Pahari
- Tamang

IV. MONGOLOID
- H Hayu
- Jirel
- Lepcha
- Limbu
- Rai
- Sunwar
- Thami

V. INNER TARAI ETHNICS (KACHHARE)
- Bote
- Danuwar
- Darai
- Kumal
- Majhi
- Raji
- R Raute

VI. TARAI ETHNICS
- Dhimal
- Gangai
- Jhangar
- Koch (Rajbansi)
- M Mech
- Satar
- Tharu

VII. CAUCASOID (MADHESI)
- Muslim
- Tarai Castes
- Y Yadav Enclave

Linguistic Map of Nepal

APPENDIX - O

SOME PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Photo 1

School Teachers and Social Workers in Sharada Primary School

Photo 2

Children in Assembly: Sharada Primary School

Photo 3

Children learning in mother tongue

Photo 4

Children enjoying in the outdoor game

Photo 5

Children participating in the drawing competition

Photo 6

Children of grade five in the classroom

Photo 7

Children happy to get education in their mother tongue

Photo 8

A linguistic minority child (Uranw) with his parents in Simariya

Photo 9

A linguistic minority child (Tharu) with his family in Simariya

Photo 10

A girl of the grade one dancing in Bal Bahubhasiya Primary School

Photo 11

DOE officials interacting with teachers in Bal Bahubyasia Primary School

Photo 12

Cultural event (*sakewa sili chandi naach*) in Hanshposha

Photo 13

Children curiously watching cultural event in Hanshposha

Photo 14

MLE class observation by officials from DOE, UNICEF, DFID, Save the Children, Finland Embassy and VSO