

## Language Politics and State Policy in Nepal: A Newar Perspective

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**Language Politics and State Policy in Nepal:  
A Newar Perspective**

A Dissertation

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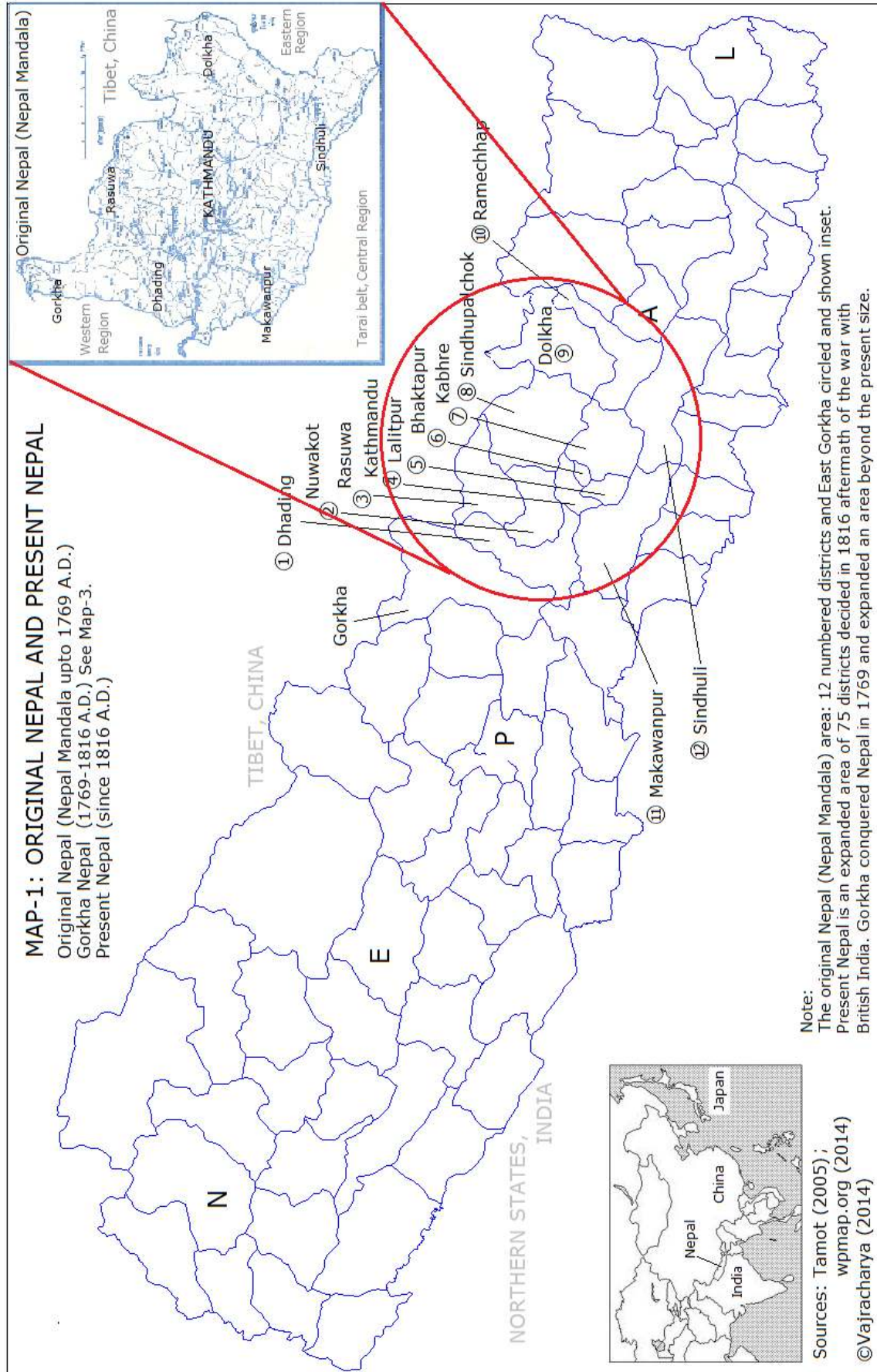
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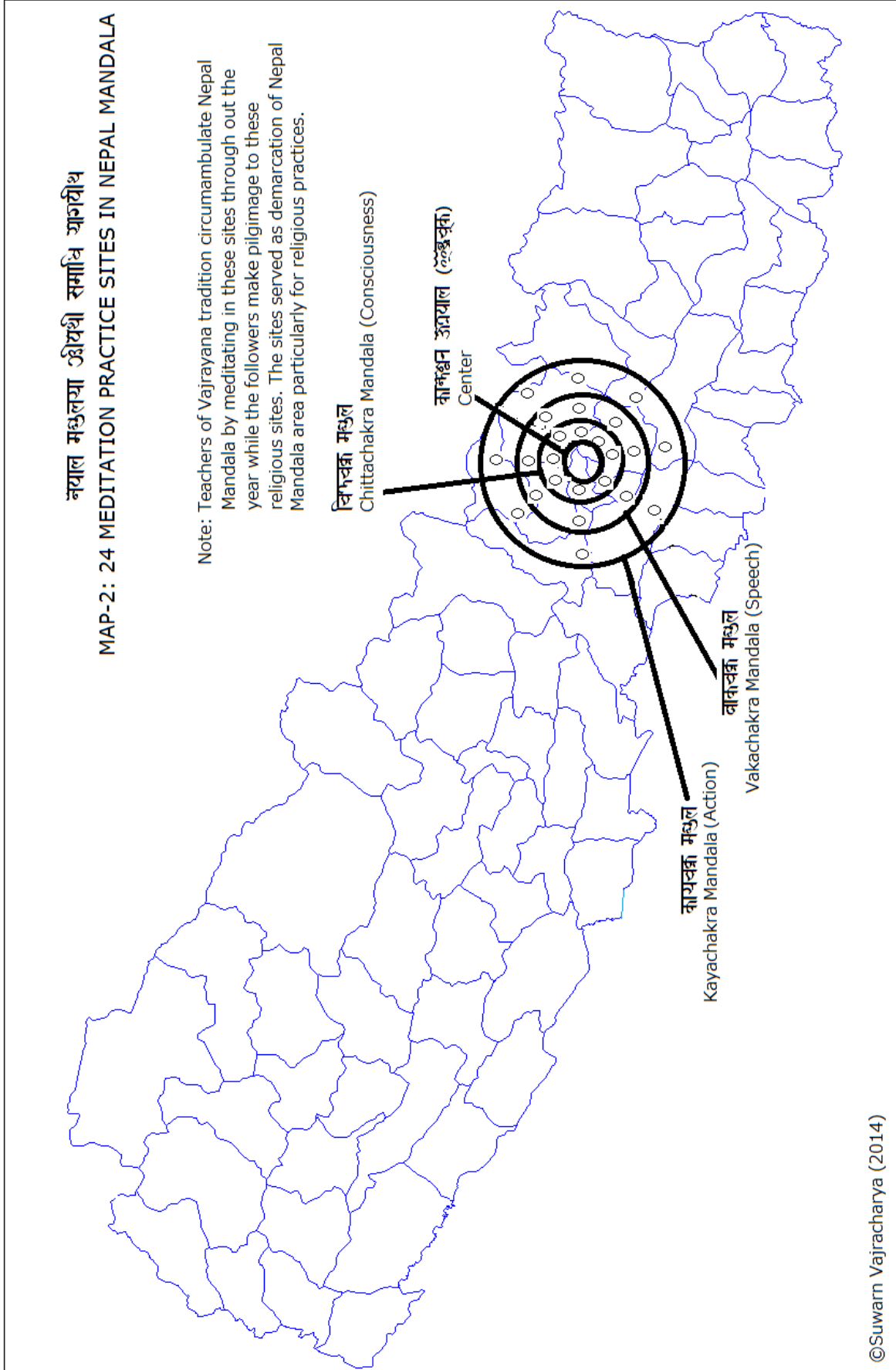
2014

*To my mother,  
who taught me the value in a mother tongue  
and  
my father, who shared the virtue of empathy.*

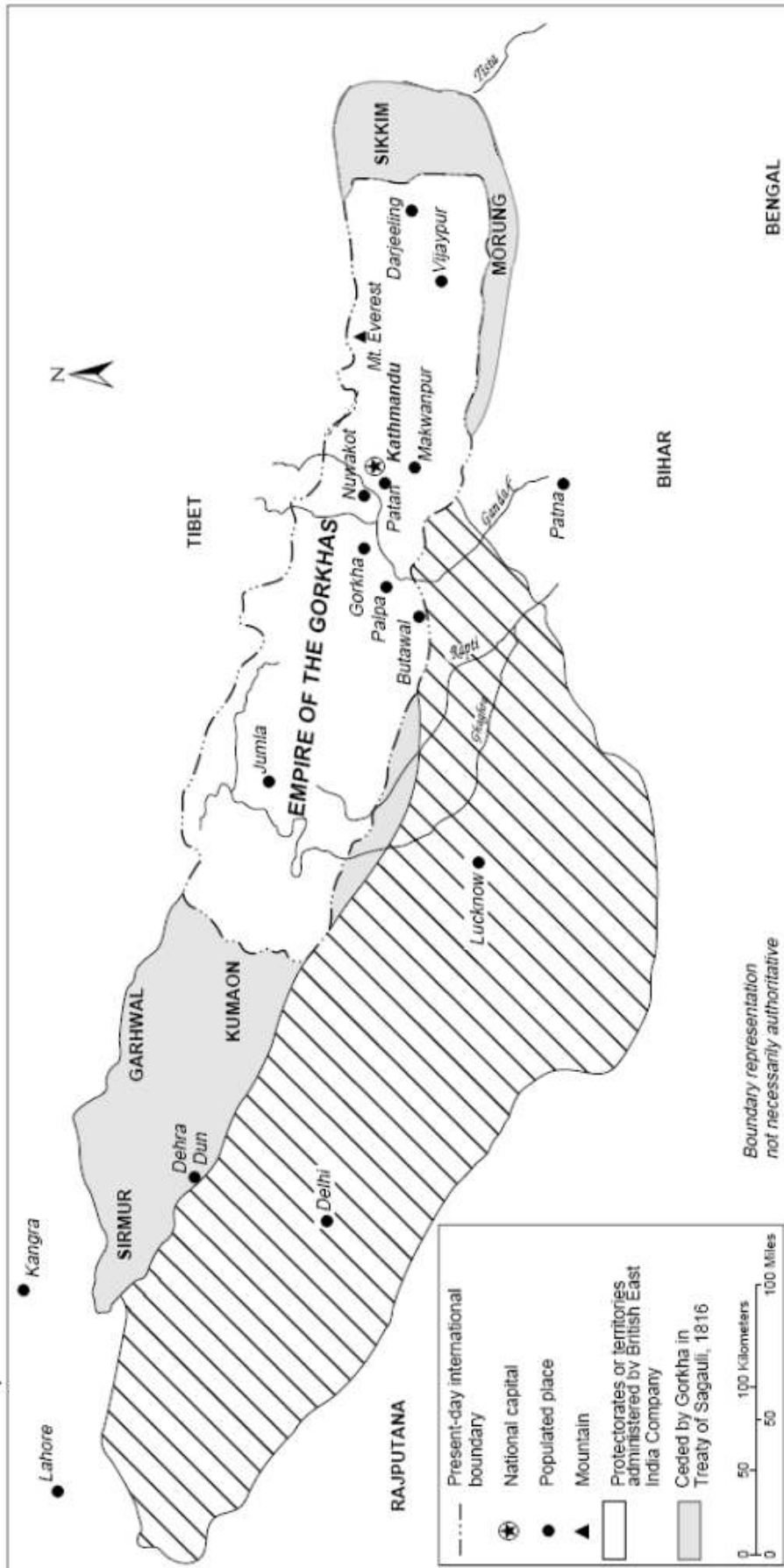
Map-1: Original Nepal (Constituted of 12 districts) and Present Nepal



Map-2: Nepal Mandala (Original Nepal demarcated by Mandalas)



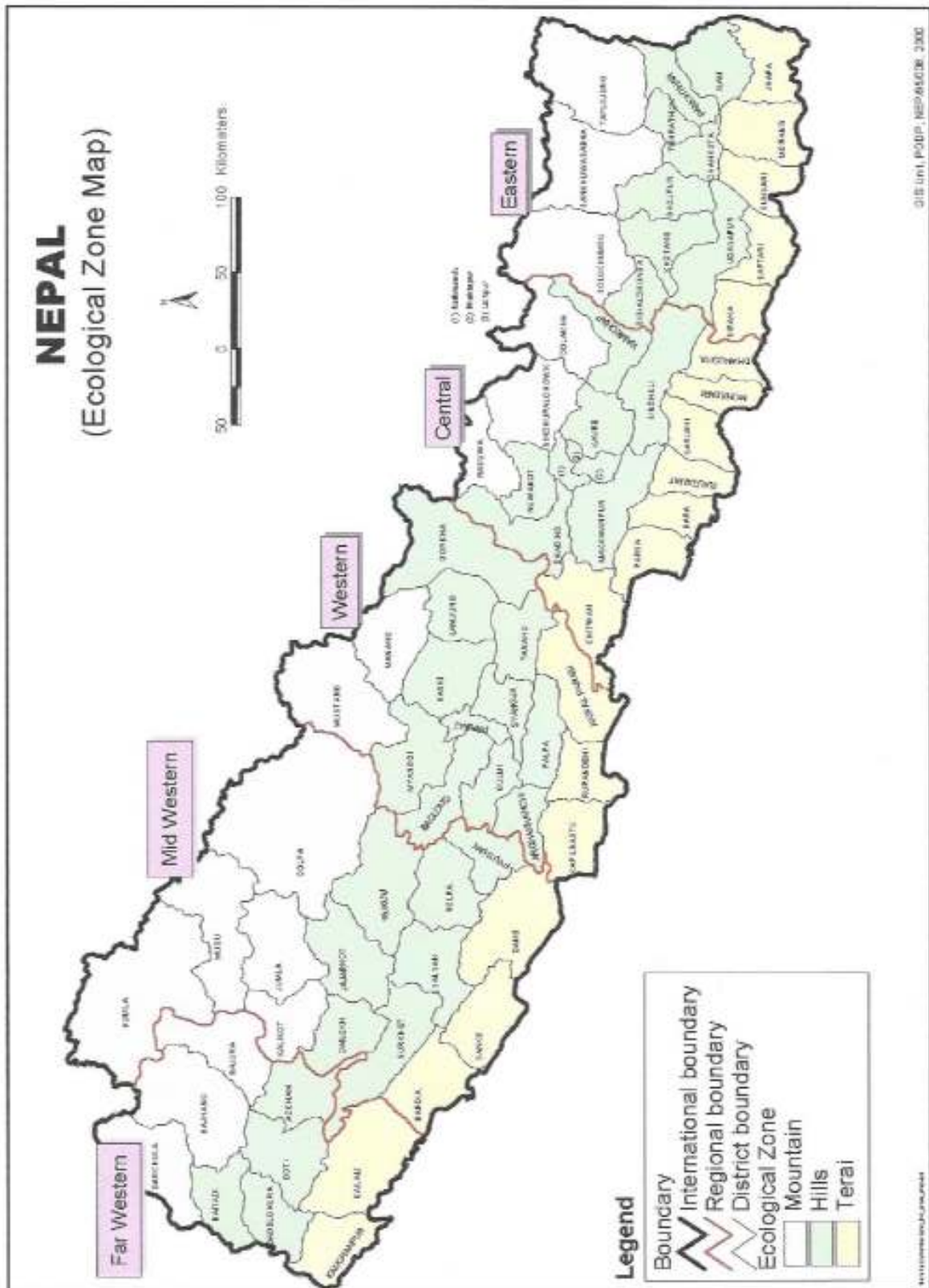
Map-3: Gorkha Nepal Expansion (1795-1816)



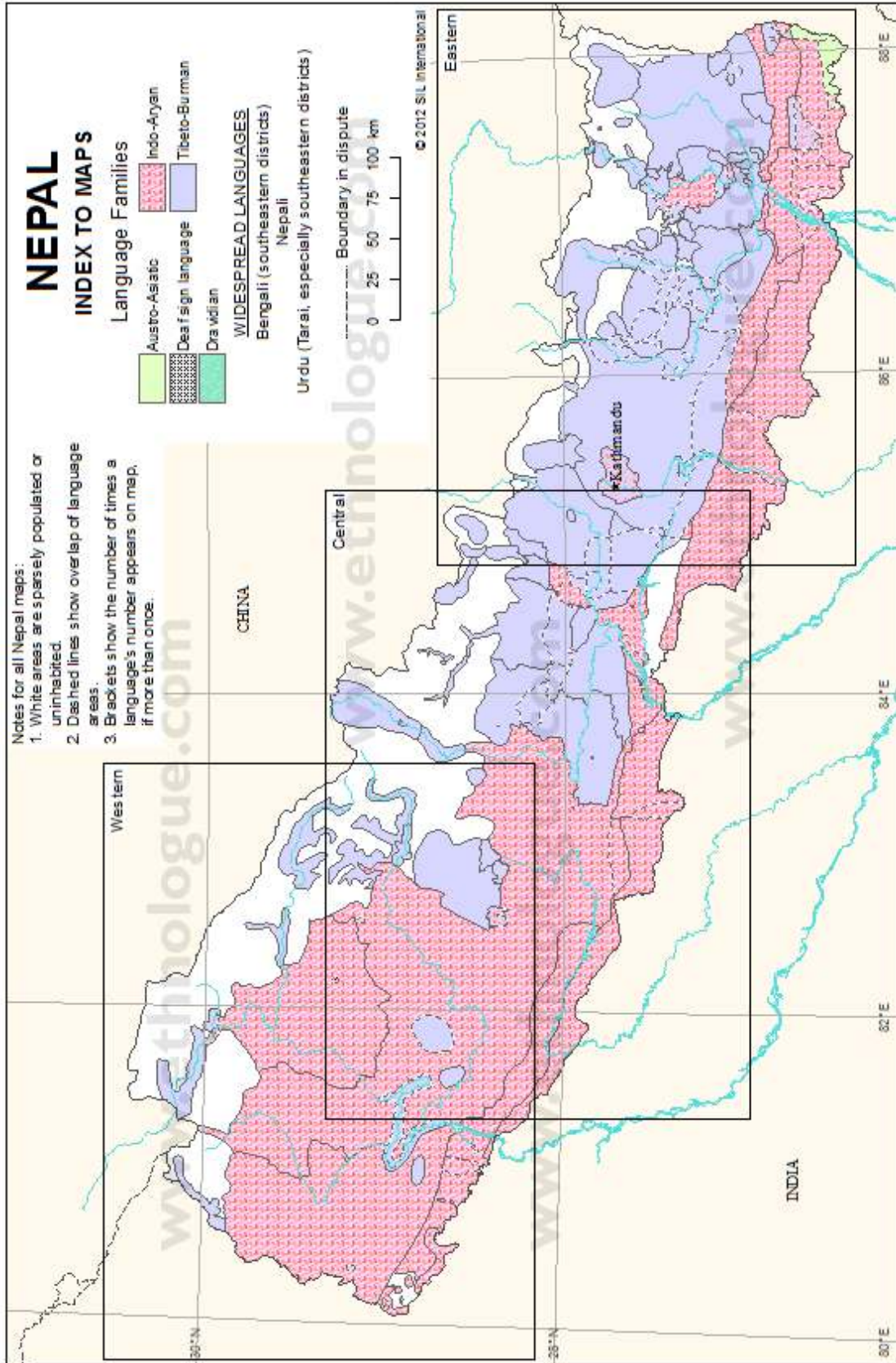
Note: Gorkha conquered Nepal in 1769 A.D. and engaged in expanding the territories until 1816 as shown in gray. The white area indicates the present area of Nepal after returning the conquered areas in that year.

Source: Library of Congress, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/nepal/np01\\_03b.pdf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/nepal/np01_03b.pdf). Retrieved on January 3, 2014

Map-4: Present Nepal by Ecological Zones (Mountain, Hill and Tarai zones)



Map-5: Nepal by Language Families



Source: Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.).  
 2014. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition*.  
 Dallas, Texas: SIL International.



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दुगुली लदुन, ब्रगीका दडुत्ताय Contended and grateful you are  
वुल्लय् वल्लय् सदुयदस उअन And hearing the truth in time  
धुक्खण गग्गाजिगु सुत्ताः सीक Highest Blessings they are<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> My renderings in Nepal Bhasa and English to a Pali verse in the Maha Mangala Sutta, one of the discourses of the Buddha. The Pali verse:

*Gārāvō ca nivātō ca - santutthi ca katannutā  
kālena dhammasavanam - ētam mangalamuttamam*



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFANS	Alliance for Autonomous Newar State (नवाः स्वायत्त राजा मंका संघर्ष समिति - <i>Newah Swayatta Rajya Manka Sangharsha Samiti</i> ).
ANS	Autonomous Newar State
B.S.	Bikram Samvat (see also V.S.)
CA	Constituent Assembly (National Parliament)
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CDL	Central Department of Linguistics
CDN	Central Department of Nepali
CDNB	Central Department of Nepal Bhasa
CHHE	Caste Hill Hindu Elite
DDDC	Dhanusha District Development Committee
DHC	Department of History and Culture
DOE	Department of Education
EU	European Union
FDRN	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
FRN	Federal Republic of Nepal
JSB	Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi ( <i>Jagat Sundar School</i> )
KMCC	Kathmandu Metropolitan City Council
K/NS	Khas/Nepali Speaking
MOE	Ministry of Education
MT	Mother Tongue
MTE	Mother Tongue Education
MTIC	Mother tongue illiterate class
NBMK	Nepal Bhasa Manka Khala (Nepal Bhasa Alliance)
NDC	National Development Council
NDD	Newa Dey Daboo (Newar National Forum)
NEB	Nepal Education Board

NEC	Nepal Education Commission
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (Janajati Mahasangh)
NEPS	National Education Planning System
NFDIN	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NK/NS	Non-Khas/Nepali Speaking
NLPRC	National Language Policy Recommendation Commission
NNEPC	Nepal National Educational Planning Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPI	Nepal Press Institute
NRP	Nepa Rastriya Party (Nepal National Party)
N.S.	Nepal Samvat (Nepal Era)
NSU	Nepal Sanskrit University
NTG	Nepal Tamang Ghedung
OLP	Oriental Language Programme
ONEC	Overall National Education Commission
PMED	Politically marginalized economically disadvantaged
PSC	Public Service Commission
RTC	Rajbiraj Town Council
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
S.S.	Saka Samvat (Saka Era)
TU	Tribhuvan University
VPT	Vajracharya Preservation Trust
V.S.	Vikram Samvat (Vikram Era) = B.S. (Bikram Samvat)

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Objectives

This study seeks to understand state-society relations, influenced by language politics, pursued by the Nepali State and its society of diverse nationalities during the period before the people's movement restored multiparty democracy in 1990, and the reshaping of relations due to the State language policies by the governments that came to power thereafter. The study primarily based on the fieldwork conducted in Swanigah (Kathmandu valley) on spatial status of Nepal Bhasa examines the single language policy in Newar<sup>2</sup> perspective for two major rationals: One Nepal Bhasa is the mother tongue of the Newar people, who are indigenous to Nepal Mandala, the ancient Nepal. The study of their spatial state today reflects the status of other indigenous languages in Nepal. Two, Nepal Bhasa has been the former State language of Nepal. It is now reduced to a definitely endangered language (See p.311). This study aims to explore what rendered Nepal Bhasa into such an endangered state in its own native land. For the purpose, the study conducted a language survey looking at the attitudes of both the speech community Newar and their government.

In approaching this problem, a model of linguistic hegemony has been designed from the synthesized ideas in the concepts of Antonio Gramsci's hegemony, and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice as well as the literature on nationalism, linguistic ideology and subaltern studies. Thus, placing emphasis on how a single language policy can impact on other languages affecting the state-society relations in Nepal's multilingual setting, this study explores the circumstances with a special reference to Nepal Bhasa and its speech community, the Newar. The study intends to contribute its findings to the promotion of state-society relations in Nepal in particular, and in multi-ethnic societies in general.

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<sup>2</sup> In Japan, the Newar people are introduced as *Newāru jin* or *Newāru minzoku* (「ネワール人」または、「ネワール民族」) meaning Newar nationality or Newar ethnic People (Ishii 2014). Their language is introduced as *Newāru go* (ネワール語) meaning Newar language while the scholars of Nepal Bhasa studies refer it as '*Nepārubāsa*' ネパールバーサ (Weblio 2014). However, many concerned with the Newar of Nepal have yet to notice the status of Nepal Bhasa in theory and practice. This is an attempt to disseminate the spatial status of Nepal Bhasa. For Japanese readers, a first glance at the news in Japanese will provide some idea about it. See Appendix-4.

## Research Background

Language is an important identity marker. It is at once both a unifying and dividing force in a society (Malla 1989:448). It is particularly so in nations of ‘diverse nationalities.’<sup>3</sup> Language and its identity with ethnicity and religion play a crucial role in state-society relations. In Nepal, language is a dominant factor among other identity markers in understanding the identity politics of this nation of diverse nationalities.

Nepal’s state-society relations, socio-economic progress and its important task of nation building have been protracted by imbalanced State policies. Among these, a single language policy has played a dominant role impeding progress and prosperity of a major section of the people and stagnating state-society relations in Nepal. In other words, the Government promotes Khas/Nepali<sup>4</sup> at the expense of other national languages of Nepal. There is a long history of religious and language identity clashes, controversies and movements in many parts of the world. In South Asia alone, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have had language and religious identity crises. Independent India first separated between Hindu and Hindi India, and Muslim and Urdu Pakistan, in 1947. Pakistan’s own Urdu dominant policy forced its east wing to become a separate Bangladesh in 1971. Sri Lanka fought a civil war for 25 long years over the Sinhala Tamil conflict fueled by imbalanced language and developmental policies. In Nepal, multi-lingual society is in tension with the monolingual State dominated by caste hill Hindu elite (CHHE).<sup>5</sup>

According to the Census 2011 of Nepal<sup>6</sup>, 123 languages are spoken as mother tongues by 125 diverse nationalities in this country.<sup>7</sup> The Interim Constitution 2007 of Nepal<sup>8</sup> recognizes all the languages (spoken in Nepal as mother tongues) as ‘national languages’ while keeping Khas/Nepali intact as the sole official language.<sup>9</sup> The centuries old tension between multi-lingual society and the State dominated by CHHE seems far

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<sup>3</sup> A collective term I propose for ‘peoples of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity’, otherwise known as ‘multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual people.’

<sup>4</sup> Khas/Nepali refers to Khas Bhasa, the language of Khas nationality of Nepal. It was renamed as ‘Gorkha Bhasa’ / ‘Gorkhali’, in the past and as ‘Nepali’ in 1962. The Newar do not accept the term Nepali for Khas Bhasa as it was usurped from Nepal Bhasa. In order to avoid the controversy, this study uses Khas/Nepali to refer all those terms.

<sup>5</sup> Lawoti and Gunaratne (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Henceforth ‘Census 2011’.

<sup>7</sup> See Tables 17-18 for some selected groups of population by ethnicity and language.

<sup>8</sup> Henceforth ‘Interim Constitution 2007’.

<sup>9</sup> See 1.4. for detail under ‘Linguistic reality, ‘Official’ and ‘National’ languages.

from over despite Nepal seeing century old autocratic monarchy replaced by several democratic governments in the past two decades from 1990. During the Gorkhali rule of Early Shah (1769-1845), the rulers discouraged the use of Nepal Bhasa, and other regional languages. During the Rana oligarchy (1846-1950), land and property deeds and documents written in Nepal Bhasa were nullified; public usage of Nepal Bhasa was banned. During the partyless Panchayat regime (1960-1990), Gorkhali (Khas Bhasa) was named as “Nepali” and made the sole official language, while all other languages, including Nepal Bhasa, were banned. Perpetrators were penalized, jailed, and their properties were confiscated; they were even not only banished but also hung to death by these regimes.

It was only during the first democratic rule (1951-1960), established by a revolution, that the Rana oligarchy was overthrown and Nepal Bhasa and Hindi were given State recognition that allowed usage of both languages in schools and the State media. However, the language freedom was short lived, suppressed again by Panchayat regime that came to power by a Royal coup-d'état in 1960. It was during Panchayat rule that the first ever resistant movement against the single language State policy was launched by the Newar community, the natives of Kathmandu City, its valley and the peripheries together known historically as Nepal Mandala (original Nepal). Panchayat rule promoted the policy of “*Ekadesh, eknaresh, ekbhesh, and ekbhasa* [One country, one ruler, one religion, and one language]” depriving citizens from basic human rights of free speech, free gathering and free movements. Public speech, publications in anything other than the Khas/Nepali language; public worship and preaching other than for the Hindu religion and no public gathering other than literary were tolerated. People and their activities in opposition to the Panchayat were punished. However, the situation was changed by the impact of world events outside Nepal.

World political changes such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship stimulated the people in Nepal, also uprising against the autocratic Panchayat rule. A mass uprising, the People’s Movement, in April 1990 overthrew Panchayat autocracy and restored multiparty democracy providing the greatest ever victory of political freedom in the history of Nepal since the Gorkha<sup>10</sup> conquest of Nepal Mandala in 1769. The restored multi-party democracy returned the human rights of the people and paved a smooth passage to the institutionalization of democracy.

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<sup>10</sup> The term Gorkha is also referred as Gorkhali while foreigners use Gurkha instead.



Suppressed languages such as Nepal Bhasa and Hindi were recognized as national languages, primary schools were allowed to teach classes in mother tongues spoken in Nepal, and State media Radio Nepal resumed Nepal Bhasa and Hindi programs, added with programs in several other ethnic languages. In addition, three municipalities soon added their regional languages (Nepal Bhasa and Maithil Bhasa) to their public services, previously limited to Nepali (Khas Bhasa) only. The new facility in local municipalities in their own languages was short lived again as the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a writ petition filed by a vested interest group against the use of regional languages in the municipalities.

Further, even the democratically elected government after 1990, despite no public call, promoted Sanskrit, an old language used only in Hindu religious purposes, and introduced it both in media and as a compulsory subject in all level schools. Both the Supreme Court ruling against the use of Nepal Bhasa and government's move promoting Sanskrit in media and imposed compulsory Sanskrit education triggered mass protest. Citizens affected by the Supreme Court's biased ruling and government's unexpected move were considered as if a warning from CHHE, the ruling elites, to show who are in charge despite the government system changing from autocratic Panchayat regime to multi-party democracy. The post-Panchayat democratic governments collapsed one after other for apparent intra and inter party wrangling and Maoist communist insurgency protracted until April 2006 when the constitutional monarch takes the country under his full control. However, an attempt to repeat a half century old royal coup-d'état was foiled by a second uprising of the People's Movement in 2006. Events followed thereafter rolled up towards new hopes for peace and stability.

Three significant events followed the victory of the people's movement. They were a) a peace agreement signed between the Maoist insurgents and the interim government of a seven party alliance; b) a general election held to elect a Constituent Assembly (CA) to draft a new Constitution within the mandated two year term; and c) the first meeting of the CA in May 2008 after the abolition of autocratic monarchy and declaration of a democratic federal republic that guarantees secularism and inclusive democracy. Meanwhile, the CA elected 601 members under first-past-the-post and proportional election systems and mandated to frame a new Constitution within two year's

term. However, despite the extension of three more years to CA than the mandated period, the CA failed to frame the New Constitution before its extended term ended in May 2012. The caretaker government under Maoist and Madhesi coalition has called for fresh elections to elect another CA. It is reported in the media that about 90 percent of the drafting has been completed and only the structuring or delineating of the federal states were left when the CA term ended on May 28, 2012. The incomplete draft has retained the language clauses of the past interim and the 1990 Constitution. The ethnic and language movements in the country have demanded the guarantee of linguistic diversity among other rights in the new Constitution. The Newar-lead resistance movement known as the Nepal Bhasa movement has moved up to further step ahead demanding identity based autonomy in the new political structure.

### **Research Questions:**

For an in-depth investigation of state-society relations affected by persistent state policy and the social resistance movement represented by the Newar community, the following two overarching research questions are proposed:

- 1) Why is language, among other identity markers, a dominant factor in understanding identity politics in Nepal, and how significant is Nepal Bhasa (the language of the Newar) in the context of state-society relations in Nepal?
  
- 2) What approaches has the Newar community made to influence the State's persistent policies, predominantly the single language hegemony, and how do these approaches show impediments to fellow ethnic communities (to socio-economic progress) in this nation of diverse nationalities?

### **Research Methodology**

This study:

- i) used the method of qualitative research and content analysis toward what sort of language politics were pursued by both the Nepali State and society of diverse nationalities from 1951 to 2013. It was this six decade long period that saw the struggle between the supporters of both democracy and autocracy in the state governance.

- ii) located language policy and related laws in official publications (government/law commission etc.); activism of the Newar, and other communities in Nepal, found in printed and online publications such as newspapers, magazines, communiqués, memorandums and unpublished manuscripts.
- iii) interviewed selected persons about language politics, policy and activism; conducted a survey to identify and analyze related problems.
- iv) categorized, evaluated, and interpreted the gathered materials to explain why language, among other identity markers, is a dominant factor, how significant Nepal Bhasa is, and what approaches the Newar took to influence the state-society relations in Nepal.

### **Significance of the Study**

Why is this research topic so important? The research to be undertaken on the said topic is considered significant for the following three reasons:

- i) There has been no significant study by local or insider researchers on the effect of language politics on state-society relations from the Newar perspective though there were a significant number of foreign scholars aided by several local or insider scholars undertaking research on Nepal's anthropology and on the Newar in particular.
- ii) The only available study recently published derived from an MA thesis on Nepal Bhasa movements.<sup>11</sup> The analysis of the study by an insider however was directed more towards self-evaluation, not an in-depth exploration of the problem relating to the single language favoritism against state-society relations.
- iii) I would like to make an in-depth study of state-society relations influenced by language politics pursued by both the Nepali State and its society of diverse nationalities. I would like to understand why the State is persistent in pursuing Khas/Nepali single language policy, why a major section of Nepali population such as the Newar is resistant against the State's language policy, and what is in a language to value.

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<sup>11</sup> Shakya (2011).

## **Organization of Study**

This study is organized into eight chapters divided into two parts. Chapters One to Four constitutes Part I of Nationalism and language politics: Victims of History while Chapters Five to Eight make up Part II of Hegemony and Resistance. It begins with Chapter One that provides an introduction to Nepal and its reality of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity.

Chapter Two defines Nepal, the Newar and Nepal Mandala while outlining the Newar and examining in detail their rise and fall as the native/indigenous people. An account of the history of the Newar starting from a military invasion of Nepal Mandala by the Gorkhali army to open oppression by Rana autocracy and hegemonic manipulation of the Newar people by a titular turned powerful king is narrated to provide an understanding of the Newar and their achievements and failures, up to how the single language policy affects them under the power of the CHHE, the ruling class. The account also provides information on how the Newar continue resisting oppression from military conquest to the persistent single language policy that favors Khas/Nepali at the expense of other national languages including Nepal Bhasa, the former language of the State. The chapter ends providing a picture of law enforcement in Nepal.

Chapter Three examines the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa in present-day Nepal. It presents a report of the language survey conducted in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) area that included both interview and questionnaire. The report sheds light on the empirical data gathered during the fieldwork. The scope of the interviews and survey is limited to the Newar, the speech community of Nepal Bhasa. The report looks at how the single language policy can affect the rest of the non-Khas/Nepali population in multilingual Nepal. The chapter also incorporates the views of those interviewed which included several scholars, advocates, activists, common citizenry and students.

Chapter Four provides reviews of literature so far contributed by various scholars about the language politics, state language policies in areas from European context to the realities of South Asian language policies. Also, previous studies about the language politics and policies accumulated in the literature of Nepal are studied and reviewed while the contribution and significance of this study is given at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Five reviews Gramsci's hegemony with particular reference to his concepts of cultural hegemony, language, common sense and subalternity, which provide important insights for this study of language politics affected by single language hegemony in Nepal. It will also explore key concepts of Bourdieu who has analyzed language and its relations

with power and politics which helps to understand the language situation in Nepal. In addition, theories of law and policy, and legal consciousness, are explored in some detail. Moreover, the framework structure constructed by Doshier is also examined to provide guidance for this study.

Chapter Six examines the single language policy of Nepal known as the “Khas/Nepali only” policy, a legacy of “*Ekdesh eknaresh, ekbhesh ekbhasa*”<sup>12</sup> or the Nepali version of “one nation and one language” policy, which has remained intact for the past six decades despite socio-political changes occurring periodically. The chapter will explore the fundamentals of the law and the objectives of the State of Nepal related to language rights and policies, recommendations for the promotion of languages of the land. The investigation in this chapter also includes government agencies related to education, and public services and media and their responsibilities with regard to fostering other languages including the Khas/Nepali.

Chapter Seven examines state-society relations with a focus on the new rulers of Gorkha who invaded Nepal Mandala and engaged in ruling the Newar citizens. This chapter explores from the Shah rule that began in September 1769, and ended in May 2008. The chapter divided the Shah rule into Early Shah (1769-1845), Rana oligarchy (1846-1950), multiparty democracy (1951-1960; 1991-2008), Panchayat (1961-1990), until it ended with the advent of Inclusive Democracy in May 2008. The chapter also examines state-society relation in reference to Nepal Bhasa, how it has been treated under the Shah and other governance and how their language, Nepal Bhasa, is affected and the conflict between the new rulers and the native Newar sets the background for the Newar resistance movement during the past two centuries.

Chapter Eight looks at the resistance movement in detail and focuses on how the Newar had to launch their resistance against the State and its policies. Despite the harsh oppression and persistent policies of the Government of Nepal under different regimes, the Newar approach follows a similar type of discourse to the counter hegemonic style advocated by Gramsci. While examining the meanings of resistance and movement in the context of the Nepal in some detail, this chapter provides details of some important events and the resistance’s style and approach.

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<sup>12</sup> Literal translation: One State, one king, one religion one language.

Concluding Chapter summarizes the detail investigation made on the study of language politics and state policy with a focus on state-society relations in Nepal and policy choices under the Khas/Nepali hegemony. While outlining important points of how the single language policy has affected other languages including the one time language of the State, Nepal Bhasa, and its speech community. The summary also looks at which policy choice may be useful for a viable state-society relationship in Nepal's multilingual reality. The last chapter also summarizes how languages are endangered and how external forces affect the language to endanger. The chapter draws the attention of concerned parties to the need of shifting the present single language policy to a policy that will do more, not just give the name 'national' to other languages of Nepal.

**PART I**

**NATIONALISM AND LANGUAGE POLITICS: VICTIMS OF HISTORY**

## CHAPTER ONE

### NEPAL: A REFLECTION OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Nepal, a mid sized South Asian country, is home to a number of peoples. The religions each of these peoples adheres to, cultures they follow and languages each of these groups speak in this land reflect the unity in diversity. This unity in diversity has played an important role in identifying Nepal as one country and accommodating Nepali peoples into one nation of diverse nationalities. Since 1951, the advent of democracy and nation building efforts as one nation, the rulers have successfully convinced the world that Nepal was a ‘peace loving, sovereign and independent State’ (Shrestha 1974: 20).<sup>13</sup> Despite periodic turmoil seen in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recent political changes have confirmed Nepal as a federal republic of secular and inclusive democracy recognizing its reality of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity. In setting stage for exploring more leading to my investigation of the language politics and state policy in Nepal, I will outline below a basic background of this country: the topography, peoples and their cultures and languages.

#### **1.1. Topography: A Unique Variety**

Nepal ranks the 95<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world with a total land area of 147,181 square kilometers. Its 885 kilometer long demarcation from west to east and 193 kilometer wide land from north to south have constituted Nepal in a rectangular shape. This landscape of Nepal is sandwiched between Tibet of China and several northern states of India. Nepal shares its borders with India in the west, south and in the east while it shares Himalayan range as borders with Tibet in the north. In other words, Nepal is landlocked by Tibet and India. A simple explanation would be an imagination of Aladdin rolling out his flying mat over the slope of the Himalayas. In other comparisons, Nepal is the fifth largest country in South Asia while it is a little larger than New York State (141,299 square kilometers) but a little smaller than half the size of total landscape of Japan (377,930 square kilometers).

Although landlocked between China and India, Nepal’s strategic location has

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<sup>13</sup> This quality won Nepal support of the majority member countries for her admission to UN membership on December 14, 1955.



served as a buffer state in the geopolitical relations between the two world economies. Nepal's location has not only immensely benefitted its entrepot economy but also cultural exchanges with her two giant neighbors till today since the long past. India's influence on Nepal's religions and languages on the one hand and Nepal's impact on Tibet on the other hand also attributed to this strategic location. India's Hindu religion, languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithil and Bengali have spread in Nepal widely while Nepal is also recorded to have contributed in spreading Buddhism in Tibet. In addition, Nepal is a competitive market for both Indian and Chinese goods and productions since long.

Moreover, the ecology of Nepal is a unique variety that its rectangular shaped land area is composed of three distinctly stratified ecological belts that spread out from the west to the east sides of this country (See Map-4.). The elevation of this land from 30 meters in the low land area above sea level in the south rises up to over 8000 meter highlands in the north. The first ecological belt is the mountain in the north covered with snow-clad Himalaya through out the year. The Mountain ecological belt covers 16 districts from Darchula in the west of Nepal to its east district of Taplejung. The Mount Everest (Sagarmatha),<sup>14</sup> the world's highest summit (8848 meters) is located in this ecological belt of Himalayan mountain range. The second ecological belt is the hilly lands with lower mountains spread out in the middle row of the country. The Hill ecological belt covers 39 districts from Baitadi district in the west to Ilam district in the east. Kathmandu (Yen), the present capital city is located in this area. The third ecological belt is the low land area in the south which is also known as Terai belt. This belt covers 20 districts from Kanchanpur in the west to Jhapa district in the east. Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace is located in this area (See also the Ecological map.). In order to grasp the exact location of these places, an outline of district map should be useful.

Nepal is divided into 75 administrative districts inside above ecological belts. The three belts are segmented into 14 zones<sup>15</sup> inside 5 major development regions. Towns and villages are located inside these districts. For example: the aforementioned Mount Everest is located in Solukhumbu district in Sagarmatha Zone inside the East Region of Mountain belt. Similarly, Lumbini is in Rupandehi district, Lumbini Zone inside the West Region of

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<sup>14</sup> In the brackets are original toponyms.

<sup>15</sup> A Zone constitutes several administrative districts.

Terai belt. In other explanation, Central Region of Hill ecological belt is made up of three zones: Bagmati (Vākamati), Narayani and Janakpur, while Bagmati Zone is constituted with 8 districts. They are Kathmandu (Yen), Lalitpur (Yala), Bhaktapur (Khopa), Kabhre (Bhota), Nuakot (Nakva), Dharding, Rasuwa and Sindhupalchok districts. This should guide to locate any district or place therein I would be referring through out this study (See also Map-4: Nepal by Ecological Zones.).

## **1.2. Cultural Pluralism**

Nepal is home to a population of 26,494,504 Nepali people.<sup>16</sup> They are made up of diverse nationalities. The Census of Nepal, 2011 (henceforth Census 2011) records 125 caste/ethnic groups. As identified by social/cultural anthropologists by examining physical features of the people in Nepal, these groups belong to four main racial groups: 1) Mongoloid, 2) Caucasoid, 3) Dravidian, and 4) Proto-Australoid. (Bhattachan 2008:16). Nepal's majority of peoples belong to Mongoloid and Caucasoid. The Mongoloid, Dravidian, and Proto-Australoid are indigenous peoples while Caucasoid group migrated to Nepal after the 11<sup>th</sup> century to escape Muslim invasion in India. The Dravidian and Proto-Australoid groups are nominal and confined in some pockets in eastern region of Terai belt (ibid:17). The indigenous people of Mongoloid, Dravidian and Proto-Austroid races do not follow the Hindu Char Varna system. I shall outline it below.

### ***Char Varna and Brahman/Chhetri caste***

Char Varna (Sanskrit: four colors/ranks)<sup>17</sup> refers to a Hindu social hierarchical system which divides people into four social ranks: Brahmin, Chhetri, Vaisya and Sudra, and numerous castes and sub-castes. The Brahmans carried this system into Nepal from India. Of these four ranks, Vaisya group is found only in the Terai belt, not in the Hill and the Mountain belt. The Brahman and Chhetri caste groups in Nepal belong to Caucasoid race. They are known to have entered Nepal from India and China. The Brahmans have placed themselves into the highest caste, Chhetri into the 2<sup>nd</sup>, rank and

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<sup>16</sup> CBS (2012: 1).

<sup>17</sup> Citing several Indian writers, Wikipedia refers the Char Varnas: Brahmins as priests and scholars; Kshatriyas as kings, governors, warriors and soldiers; Vaishyas as cattle herders, agriculturists, artisans and merchants while the Shudras as labourers and service providers (Wikipedia 2014). However, these meanings have lost in today's practices of caste discrimination despite its official ban in Nepal.

others such as Kami (blacksmith) or Dalit into the lowest or the untouchable caste. There are numerous sub-caste Brahmans but two major groups live in Nepal: Hill Brahman and Tarai Brahman. The Hill Brahmans are concentrated in the Hill ecological belt while the Tarai Brahmans live in the Terai belt. The Census 2011 records them as two separate caste groups as Brahman - Hill and Brahman - Tarai.<sup>18</sup> The latter is also known as Madheshi Brahman as Tarai belt is composed of inner Tarai and Tarai. The area is also known as Madhesh and outer Madhesh. Madhesh is often translated as middle region from the word Madhesh combined from Madhya (middle), and Desh (country). But a Nepal Bhasa<sup>19</sup> term 'Madesa' refers to a foreign country: Ma (foreign), desa (country). This term supports a view that Madesa<sup>20</sup> was a neighboring country than a part of ancient Nepal (Nepal Mandala). This will be discussed in the next chapter in some detail.

As indicated above, Chhetri is a second ranking caste group after Brahman in the Hindu caste system. But the Chhetri is the largest among the caste/ethnicity groups in Nepal. They outnumber the Brahman caste and others for two apparent factors. One, that Khas people were Buddhist and an independent people. They had lived in the Far-western and Mid-western regions of present Nepal before the Brahmans migrated from India. Two, the migrated Brahmans overpowered some Khas people, and placed them in the Chhetri caste, which is second Brahman caste while others joined this caste system voluntarily (Shakya 2009). According to Census 2011, a vast majority of Khas turned Chhetri group are still concentrated in Far-West (24% of the total Chhetri caste) and Mid-West (24%) regions, although about a half them have migrated to central and eastwards during the past several decades. The Kami caste group is also concentrated in these two regions (31% of the total Kami caste group in Mid-Western region and 26% in Western region) of Hill ecological belt.

### ***Mongoloid and Indigenous Nationalities***

Mongoloid is another race that Nepal's majority peoples belong to. Although the term is debatable, it is used to refer peoples who have physical characteristics of Central Asian peoples such as Mongol, Tibetan etc. In Nepal, the term refers to indigenous peoples who

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.:144.

<sup>19</sup> Bhasa refers to language. Nepal Bhasa: Language of Nepal (See also next chapter.).

<sup>20</sup> An adult Newar will say Marse (Madese) wonegu (Nepal Bhasa: [I] will go abroad).

have such physical features. The term Mongoloid is also used in order to differentiate people from the Hindu caste groups such as Brahman and Chhetri, who belong to Caucasoid race. Other attribution to differentiate racial grouping is the dominant power the Caste-Hindu-Hill-Elite (CHHE) hold over the indigenous and other ethnic peoples. These indigenous people are referred as Adivasi Janajati, and translated the phrase into 'indigenous nationalities' indicating that they are a collective group of nationalities with distinctive identity in terms of ethnicity, religion and language. Adivasi is synonym to another local term Mulavasi as if English has different terms such as indigenous, native, autochthonous etc. meaning the original peoples. Responding to the demand and active pressure of various indigenous organizations, the Government of Nepal officially recognized the indigenous peoples in 2002 by establishing a National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN). Affiliated to the Ministry of Local Government, the NFDIN operates as an autonomous body for the concerns of the indigenous peoples. In the Act of the NFDIN, the Government defined indigenous nationalities as 'those ethnic group or community as listed in the annex,<sup>21</sup> who has their own MT and traditional customs, different cultural identity, different social structure and written or oral history' (HMG-N 2002:170 in Bhattachan 2008:32). Since the NFDIN was formally established, the government has recognized 59 indigenous nationalities.

The term Mongoloid integrates these diverse indigenous nationalities into a 'distinct collective identity' (NFDIN 2002) on the one hand while the term indigenous nationalities covers Dravidian, Proto-Australoid races together with Mongoloid race. Practically, the term 'indigenous nationalities' has gained currency over other terms in defining ethnically different peoples in Nepal. However, the difference is that not all ethnic groups or minorities are indigenous to Nepal though the term ethnic groups cover indigenous peoples, minorities and immigrants living in Nepal. In terms of religiousity, these peoples converge into several religious traditions. Next, I shall examine religious environment of this country in brief.

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<sup>21</sup> Annex here refers to a list of indigenous nationalities that were recognized by the Government of Nepal in 2002. See Appendix-1, Table-1 for the detail.

### 1.3. Religiousness of People and the State

Peoples of Nepal as a whole are religious. They practice one or other religion as the country is known for two prominent religious traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Buddha (as noted above) and Pashupati, the Hindu temple are located in this country. Beside Buddhism and Hinduism, other religious traditions are also practiced side by side in the country. About ten different religions are followed in Nepal: Hinduism (81.3%; 21,551,492) while Buddhism (9.0%; 2,396,099), Islam (4.4%; 1,162,370), Kirat (3.1%; 807,169), Christianity (1.4%; 375,699), Prakriti (0.5%; 121,982), Bon (13,214), Jainism (3,214), and Sikhism (609)<sup>22</sup>.

Except the Muslims (Musalmans) who follow Islam; and Brahman, Chhetri, Kami caste groups who follow Hinduism, the majority of indigenous nationalities including some other ethnic minorities follow Buddhism as a common ground for convergence of diversity. Both Buddhism and Hinduism have played important role in the advent of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity in Nepal. While Buddhism promoted Pali literature to greater extent, Sanskrit became a common language of scholarship of both Buddhism and Hinduism at a latter period. These two languages have greatly influenced developing Nepal Bhasa and later Khas Bhasa, which is now called 'Nepali' though incorrectly. Moreover, many people do not differentiate between Buddhist and Hindu traditions as gods and goddesses and religious observances are overlapping each other indistinctly. Historically, a religion distinct to Nepal had emerged over the past thousands of years merging Buddhist Hindu practices into one unitary form of worship and practice known as Vajrayana (Sanskrit: holy vehicle). It was only after the State assertion of Hinduism to superiority over Buddhism has attributed the separation between the two major religions.

Further, the patronizing of Hinduism and condemnation of Buddhism by the State can be cited as two notable factors that have affected the respondents in reporting their religion in the Census questionnaire. Hinduism holds state power Buddhism not. It will take time to reflect the correct data of religious population as it was only in 2007 that the Government of Nepal endorsed religious freedom through the Interim Constitution in response to the peoples' pressure and demand for secularism. The term secularism in Nepal

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<sup>22</sup> CBS (2012).

refers to religious equality and freedom of worship than a reference opposition to religion. The data related to religious beliefs above witnesses a gradual change in reporting of religion in the Census. While the Christian population is seen proactive in utilizing the finally opened opportunity for religious freedom, other religious groups such as Prakriti (nature worship) and Bon (Tibetan religion) have also returned in the Census for the first time in 2011. Besides the change in religiosity of the people of Nepal, their linguistic profile is also changing. Next, I shall explore it.

#### **1.4. Linguistic Reality, ‘Official’ and ‘National’ Languages**

Nepal’s ethnically and religiously diverse society is further diversified with distinct languages each of these groups identifies with. According to Census 2011, there are 125 caste/ethnic groups of people and 123 languages are spoken as mother tongue (MT) in this country. Among these languages, ‘Nepali’ is known as ‘official’ language while the rest of other MTs are known as ‘national languages.’ I shall explore in some detail of the meanings in the two definitions.

First, Nepali was made ‘national’ language in 1962. Since then, Nepali became the language of public service, education, and the administration including all local offices. It was used in the court of law and the mass media. At the outset, people accepted the rule of a new language calmly. But when the Government started promoting Nepali at the expense of other MTs, by banning them and hindering progress of other languages, people responded the State policy with resistance. After a long resistance, the Government made all languages spoken in Nepal as ‘national language’ while elevating ‘Nepali’ into ‘official’ in 1990. The status of ‘national’ given to other languages provided right to promote MT and open school on the concerned community’s own will and expenses. The Government when pressed for equality and justice provided provisions and laws but such laws were hardly implemented: ‘why so and how?’ Finding answers to these questions is the main rationale of this study as indicated in my research questions in the preceding pages.

Second, it is important to understand the linguistic reality of Nepal before examining the loopholes in the laws and its implementation and the responsibilities. How diverse Nepal is, and why it is so? These are two important questions to respond. Each question depends on every preceding answer, as ‘one thing depends on the other’, a

socio-philosophical thought popular as ‘dependent origination’ (*Patīccasamuppāda*) in South Asia. Nepal is linguistically diverse because they originated from diverse socio-religious and culturally different background. Thus, linguistic difference originated depending on their socio-religious environment. Languages spoken in Nepal testify this dependent origination. Like ethnic, race and religious diversity, linguists in Nepal also categorize languages spoken in this country into four main language families: 1) Dravidian, 2) Austro-Asiatic, 3) Tibeto-Burman and 4) Indo-Aryan (Malla 1989).<sup>23</sup>

1) Dravidian language family: This is one of the largest language families of South Asia. Its 70 languages are grouped into south, south-central, central and north. They are spoken by 215 million people living primarily in South India to some extent in central and northern India extending up to Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.<sup>24</sup> Nepal has only one language belonging to this language family. It is Jhangad/Dhangad (hereafter Jhangad) spoken by its ethnic population living in Sunsari district in the Tarai belt of the Eastern region (See also Table-4.). Jhangad is one of 59 officially recognized indigenous nationalities of Nepal while its language Jhangad is also known as ‘Kurux, Nepal’<sup>25</sup> deriving from Kurukh language spoken in its kin-state India.<sup>26</sup> However, examining the origin of Jhangad, it is quite possible that it is a corrupted form of the term Jharkhand. Jharkhand is a northern Indian State, where a larger portion of the population speaks Kurukh (Lewis et al. 2014). This confirms Nepal as a home to Kurukh language, too.

2) Austro-Asiatic Language family: This is a family of 150 languages spoken by 65 million people living through out eastern India and Southeast Asia. The languages of this family are spoken mainly in linguistic areas of Khmer, Mon and Vietnamese. Mon-Khmer and Munda language in India are two branches of Austro-Asiatic language family.<sup>27</sup> In Nepal, two languages spoken in its Eastern region belong to this family. They are: Satar/Santali spoken in Sunsari, Morang, and Jhapa districts in the Eastern region. Another is Khariya language spoken by Bankariya people living in Morang and Jhapa

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<sup>23</sup> See Map-5 on page vii.

<sup>24</sup> See Dravidian languages (Britannica 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Jhangad is referred as ‘Kurux, Nepali’ in Ethnologue 2014, and ‘Kurux (Nepal)’ in UNESCO Atlas of the World Languages in Danger.

<sup>26</sup> Kurux is a language of India spoken by 1,750,000 people in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Tripura northern states of India. It is also spoken by 50,000 in Bangladesh, and 4,200 in Bhutan in total by 1,804,200 people (Lewis et al. 2014).

<sup>27</sup> See Austro-Asiatic languages (Britannica 2014).

districts of the same region (See also Table-4.).

3) Tibeto-Burman language family: Tibeto-Burman languages belong to wider language group of Sino-Tibetan family which has about 400 languages. These languages are spoken in and around Tibet and Burma (present Myanmar) by about a 57 million people. Several countries where over one million Tibeto-Burman speakers live include Burma, China, India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Other countries with substantial numbers of speakers are Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Laos, and Vietnam.<sup>28</sup> My examination of different sources including the Census 2011 calculated a rough total of 4,125,715 Tibeto-Burman speakers out of 6,815,138 Mongoloid people lived in Nepal as of 2011. The calculation stems from the 'indigenous nationalities' of Nepal (See also Table-1.). Of the total 59 indigenous nationalities, 34 ethnic groups speak Tibeto-Burman languages. I shall now examine some examples of these languages spoken in Nepal, segmenting their native places into three areas: Mountain, Hill, and Tarai, the three ecological belts.

3.a) Languages of Mountain Peoples: There are 18 indigenous nationalities living in the Mountain belt (See also the Ecological zone map.). As most of the languages in this area have yet to be studied, I shall explore some of them briefly and supplement useful figures in Table-2.

The Mountain belt area is home to Byansi (also known as Byasi/Sauka), the least spoken language, and Sherpa spoken by the largest group and several others. Byasi people live in 9 villages of Byasi valley in Darchula district in the Far-Western region while Sherpas are concentrated in Eastern and Central regions. Although organized into separate ethnic identity, some of them share one language or other dialect. Thakali is one such shared language by Barah Gaunle, Chairotan, Marphali Thakali, and Tingaunle Thakali, and Thakali communities. Perhaps because it is shared by several groups, Thakali became the second largest language in the mountains. The Thakali people are concentrated in the villages of Mustang district, Dhawalagiri Zone in the Western region. Thakali language is diminishing for one obvious reason, which is shifting their MT to other. The rest of the

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<sup>28</sup> Britannica (2014) list Tibeto-Burman speakers in South and Southeast Asia as: Burma (about 29 million), China (some 17.2 million), India (about 5.5 million), Nepal (some 2.5 million), and Bhutan (about 1.2 million), Thailand (535,000), Bangladesh (530,000), Pakistan (360,000), Laos (42,000), and Vietnam (40,000).



languages are spoken by smaller communities. They are outlined in brief showing the status and language lost in number and percentage (See Table -2.).

3.b) Languages of Hill Peoples: There are 23 ethnic groups living in the Hill ecological area, which has the largest Tibeto-Burman speaking population in Nepal. The Hill area is also home to two Indic language groups such as Kumhale and Pahari. I shall return to this in the next section. Although it is yet to determine which language family it belongs to, Kusunda language in the Hill is least spoken. The Hill belt is also the native place for three largest languages such as Nepal Bhasa, Magar, and Tamang, and two other smallest languages: Baram and Surel. Other larger groups are Limbu, Gurung, and Rai languages. Most of these languages are spoken in the largest land area spreading out from Baitadi in the Western region to Ilam in the Eastern region. The Table-3 will provide a short detail of these languages with its location, present status and language lost.

4) Indic languages (Indo-Aryan language family): It is a new term given by artificial science and widely used in the new media to refer to Indo-Aryan languages which are subgroups of Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family. Indic languages are spoken by vast majority in and around India expanding to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In Nepal, Indic languages are spoken by several smaller and larger groups. They can be categorized into two groups: 1) Indic languages spoken by the Indo-Aryan stock of the indigenous nationalities, and 2) Indic languages spoken by Indo-Aryan community.

The first group is constituted of three sub-groups: a) Kumhale and Pahari spoken in the Hills, b) Bote, Danuwar, Darai, Maji spoken in the Inner Tarai; and Rajbansi of Dhanuk, Gangai, Tajpuriya and Tharu spoken in the Tarai belt. The second group is constituted of Khas/Nepali, Maithil (and Bajjika), Bhojpuri, Doteli and Urdu. Table-4 will outline these groups and their status together with areas of concentration.

As noted above, the second group of Indic languages also has distinct identities associated with ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. They are among ten largest languages spoken in Nepal (See the Table-7 below.).

Khas/Nepali is concentrated in the Central region (29%) while the percentage of its speakers is decreasing from Eastern region (16%) to Far-Western region where about 7% percentage of the Khas/Nepali speakers live. The trend is an indication of internal

migration of Khas/Nepali speakers from the earlier settlements of the Far-west to central and eastward settlements. The Khas/Nepali speaking population is diminishing for two factors. 1) Awareness of linguistic identity among indigenous people attributed to the Khas/Nepali domination over other languages. Since the Peoples movement dismantled the

Table-7: Ten Largest Population by Language – 2011

Khas/Nepali	11,826,953	44.6%
Maithil	3,092,530	11.7%
Bhojpuri	1,584,958	6.0%
Tharu	1,529,875	5.8%
Tamang	1,353,311	5.1%
Nepal Bhasa	846,557	3.2%
Bajjika	793,418	3.0%
Magar	788,530	3.0%
Doteli	787,827	3.0%
Urdu	691,546	2.6%
Other	3,198,999	12%
Total	26,494,504	100

Adapted from Census 2011.

past autocratic governments in 1990, people returned to census with their own ethnic and linguistic identities instead of borrowed or imposed identities of ‘Nepali’. As a result, Khas/Nepali speakers decreased from 50.3% in 1991 to 44.6% in 2011 (See Appendix-1, Table-18.). 2) Internal division among Khas/Nepali speaking stock. A gradual division among the Khas/Nepali groups that have claimed ‘Nepali’ as their MT has realized that their MT is not Nepali but a language distinct to their own identity. Doteli language proves this factor returning in the Census 2011. Doteli was never reported in any of the past census but it scored the 9<sup>th</sup> position among the ten largest languages reported in the last census. I would call the return of Doteli in the Census 2011 reflects the awareness of distinct identity among the concerned people than a division among the claimers of ‘Nepali’ as their MT. Another important factor this trend suggests is that the change is possible. While exploring the status of languages in Nepal, this study also attempts to locate what hinder the CHHE to change their apathy to empathy. I shall now look briefly at some other Indic languages spoken in Nepal.

Maithil (or Maithili as outsiders call) is another Indian language spoken in Nepal. Concentrated in the Tarai belt it is the second largest language spoken in Nepal. Maithil is

lexically very closer to Hindustani a mixture of Hindi, Urdu and Bengali languages that existed in India before the Independence. Maithil is the native language of Mithila, an ancient kingdom existed until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Maithil language became a part of Nepal only after the part of Mithila land was annexed to Nepal in the war during that period (1795-1816). As its kin-state India promotes linguistic diversity together with cultural pluralism, Maithil today stands as a provincial language in the Bihar State of India. The status of Maithil in India not only provides laudable stimulation to Maithil in the Tarai belt of Nepal but also to Bajjika another dialect of Maithil. Bajjika stood 7<sup>th</sup> position among the ten largest languages of Nepal in the Census 2011.

Similar to Maithil, Bhojpuri, Awadhi and Urdu also belong to Indic language family. All these languages are also spoken primarily in the Tarai belt. As noted above, they became part of Nepal in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, progress and maintenance of these languages have attributed to policies in their kin-state than in the state they have made home. Their speech populations are increasing while languages of Nepal's indigenous nationalities are diminishing (See Table-18.). Among the ten largest languages discussed above, only Tharu and Tamang languages are maintaining their MT population while Nepal Bhasa, Magar and several indigenous languages are diminishing to endangerment of their existence (See Tables 2, 3, 4, and 18.). The situation explains another rational for undertaking this study as to how and why indigenous languages are losing their grounds in their own homeland. Many of these indigenous languages of Nepal have no kin-state other than Nepal. The Nepal Bhasa is one among them. Despite will, attempting to study the situation in all of these languages is an impossible feat. Hence, this study was taken to investigate the impediments to socio-economic progress of the indigenous peoples in the Newar perspective. The study will report in the proceeding chapters its findings from a field study of spatial status of Nepal Bhasa and their speech community and the state policy affecting the socio-economic progress of a major section of Nepali population in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and IT world.

In reporting the results of my investigation that has led to explore the language politics and state policy in Nepal, I have looked at the circumstances through a framework of linguistic hegemony of the Khas/Nepali with the guidance of previous studies related to language politics, state policies, Nepal and Newar. I have particularly followed Gramsci's

cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's linguistic habitus and symbolic power politics. I have used this framework to interpret the meanings of dominant group and dominated groups and referring the CHHE as the dominant class and the Newar reflecting other indigenous nationalities as subalterns. The term CHHE is a popular term for the dominant group among the scholars of interdisciplinary fields in Nepal. However, I have used the term not limiting the reference only to the Hill elites of Hindu caste, but also to those regardless religious or ethnic differences, who carry over and are fond of dominance over the subalterns. The term subaltern has many meanings given by scholars of study that extensively expanded its meaning. But, I have used the term as a social circumstance any subjugated or subjected had to and can face in a competitive world of economic profit and progress. I have referred subalternity to a changeable phenomenon, not a subaltern woman who doubly suffers for the caste label she did not impose on herself.

In the next chapter, I shall begin examining who the Newar are and how they fall from authors of history of Nepal to subaltern today if not the victims in their own native land: Nepal.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NEWAR: AN ACCOUNT OF AUTHORS & VICTIMS OF THEIR HISTORY

*What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures are dreamed.*

- Benedict Anderson<sup>29</sup>

*If the language survives, the nation will survive.*

- Siddhidasa Mahaju<sup>30</sup>

*A nation's self-respect hinges upon its ability and willingness to defend itself, but its very existence is inconceivable without its own language.*

– Herder<sup>31</sup>

We saw the reality of Nepal as a nation made up of culturally plural and linguistically diverse societies in the last chapter. It is useful to understand the Newar nationality and their identity involving Nepal Bhasa to get a glimpse of the background for language politics and the Newar perspective on the State language policy in Nepal.

#### 2.1. The Newar as Authors of their History

The Newar today are one among many diverse nationalities of Nepal. They are the sixth largest group with a population of over 1 million. The Census of Nepal (2011) reported that there are 125 caste/ethnic groups in Nepal. While many groups have distinct languages, literature, cultures and particular places of origin, some do not. However, each group is distinct in one feature or other from other groups. What is distinct with the Newar is that the Newar are neither a single caste group such as Bahun or Chhetri nor an ethnic group such as Magar, Tharu or Tamang. Again the Newar are neither a religious group such as

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<sup>29</sup> Professor of International Studies at Cornell University, and author of the well-known work on nationalism, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Famous as a great poet in Nepal for his contribution to Nepal Bhasa poetry.

<sup>31</sup> Advocated importance of nation as inseparable to its language in Germany in 1772.

Muslims nor do they belong to any particular religious denomination such as Buddhism, Hinduism or Christianity. The Newar are a conglomeration of diverse peoples, castes and religious beliefs. They are both native or indigenous people and emigrants amalgamated through a common language of Nepal Bhasa in a distinct territory known as Nepal Mandala, and adhered to Vajrayana (religion)<sup>32</sup> over the past two millennia in present-day Nepal. In short, the Newar are the original inhabitants of Nepal Mandala with a distinct identity of territory, language, culture, religion, and history separate from the rest of the population of Nepal. These characteristics refer to a nation hence the Newar is a nation. Over that past two millennia, they have authored their own history. However, socio-political changes that took place in this country, especially for the past 240 years, have turned the table upside down. The Newar today have to struggle for their survival as a nationality, sustain their identity of distinct language, culture and religion and resist the State policies that deprive them of their basic human rights. I shall explore here how the Newar authors have fallen as victims of their own history while authoring their history with their distinct identity of territory, language, culture, religion, and history.

### **2.1.1. Definition of Nepal and Newar**

In the present socio-political context, ‘Nepal’ refers to the country standing tall in between the two giant nations of China in the north and India in the south, while ‘Newar’ refers to the native people of today’s Kathmandu Valley and its periphery, historically known as Nepal Mandala. Scholars agree that both words are interdependent. According to historian D. R. Regmi, ‘Newar is another form of expression to denote the inhabitants of Nepal...[and]...the Newar are the only people to have been closely associated with the origin of the word Nepal’ (Regmi 2007:17-18). But scholars differ with the construction of the word ‘Nepal’ and its meaning. Regmi suggests that the earliest reference to Nepal is found in Kautilya’s ancient Indian political treatise *Arthashastra (Economics)*, as a country that made a certain kind of blanket indicating that the usage of the word goes back to Maurya period when Kautilya (c.370–283 BC)<sup>33</sup> was the economic and political advisor to Emperor Chandragupta and his son Bindusara.

Another historian, Kamal P. Malla points out that the date of Kautilya’s existence has not yet been traced. Instead, he locates two earliest references of the word Nepal.

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<sup>32</sup> See 2.1.4.

<sup>33</sup> Mabbett (1964).

One was found in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta (335-375 A.D.) that the kings of Nepala<sup>34</sup> paid tribute to, and obeyed the orders of. Second, he locates the domestic sources in the inscriptions dated 512 A.D. issued by King Vasantadeva 'in Tistung, a small valley at the foot of Candragiri, on the ancient entry route to Nepal Valley' (Malla 1983: 33). The reference to Nepal was written as 'swasti naipalaibhya'<sup>35</sup> which is interpreted as 'Greetings to Nepalese' – 'Greeting to the residents of Nepal – Greetings to the Nepalas' (ibid). In his extensive research on the word Nepala, Malla finds that all the interpretations suggested by several scholars like Levi, Turner, Chaterjee, Burton-Page and Acharya, were unanimous on the point that Nepala is a Sanskritisation of Newara. Hence, Malla suggests that 'Nepala is the learned Sanskrit form whereas Newara is the colloquial Prakrit form' (Malla 1983:38). Meanwhile writer Satyanarayan Sayami asserts Newar as the nation and Nepal as the country the Newar people live. In his introduction to *Newar the Nation and Nepal the State*, he states that 'we Newar are a nation while Nepal is our country. Our distinct food, drink, feast, jewelry, culture, script and language constitute our identity. Newar refers to a nation while Nepal refers to the State' (Sayami 2007:1). Sayami also refers to Bodhisatva Manjusri to be the founder of Nepal, who made his disciple Dharmakara to be the first king (ibid.: 6). A popular myth ascribes the origin of 'Nepala' to King Dharmakara that he followed (*pala*) the law (*Niyama*) duly to rule the country: Niyama (law) + pala (rule) → Nempala → Nepala → Nepal. Similarly, another popular myth ascribes the term Nepala to a hermit named Nemuni, who is said to have lived in the ancient Nepal. However, these myths are yet to be traced properly.

Writing about the Nepal and Newar recently, linguist Indra Mali locates the earliest textual reference of the word Nepal in *Atharvaparisishta* (a Vedic text) dated c.600 B.C. and an ancient inscription reference dated 464/505 A.D. issued by King Manadeva. Mali also suggests that 'Nepal' and 'Newar' both originated after the 'country' and the 'nation' or 'nationality' (Mali 2014)<sup>36</sup>.

The accounts I have so far examined suggest that the words Nepal and

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<sup>34</sup> Original form of the word. Dropping 'a' at the end of Nepala probably occurred after Hamilton, who authored *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* after his fourteen month-long stay in Nepal from 1802-3. The first foreign work on Nepal was by William Kirkpatrick published after his mission to Nepal in 1793, in which he uses Nepaul or Nypaul instead of Nepal.

<sup>35</sup> स्तुति नैपाल्य

<sup>36</sup> 1134 N.S.

Newar are synonyms meaning both the country and the people. However, what is missing from the interpretations above is the reference of the native terms of नवा (Newā), a popular spoken form of Newāla. It was to Newāla, the outsiders (such as Gorkhas) referred as Newāra (written form) and Newar (as spoken form). Similar to the term Nepal, the term Newar has also gained currency as a written form in the modern writing to the extent that even the native mistake the term ‘Newar’ as one of native term of Nepal Bhasa. But several examples attest that Newar is not a native term but a term referred by outsiders.

The word ākha (letter/script) derives from ākhala but is referred by outsiders as ākhara/akshara. Likewise, sākha (raw sugar) ← sākhala and becomes sākhara/sakkhar in Khas/Nepali. Kasā (a copper smith; caste name Kansakar) ← Kasāla → Kansākāra – kansākār; kī (an insect, worm) ← kila → kirā; bichā (opinion, thought) ← bichāla → bichāra – bichār; lajagā (an occupation, profession) ← Lajagāla → rojagāra – rojgār. In short, the present term ‘Nepal’ has derived from the original term of ‘Nepāla’ (written form), and ‘Newar’ from the ‘Newāra’, the term used by outsiders for the insider term of ‘Newā’, the spoken term for ‘Newāla’. Thus, Nepal has been used as the name of the country, Nepal Bhasa (language of Nepal), Nepal Lipi (script of Nepal), Nepal Samvat (Nepal Era), Nepami ← Nepāla+mi (people of Nepal) etc since the ancient past. It was with the conquest of Nepal by Prithvinarayan Shah in 1769, the new rulers referred to the native people as Newar and retained Nepal as the name for the country while calling themselves ‘Gorkhali’. This can be considered as the first time assertion of separate identity for Gorkhali and labeling ‘Newar’ on the Nepami. As this study on the State language policy of Nepal was carried out from the Newar perspective, I shall use Newar to mean the native/indigenous people of Nepal throughout this study. I shall hereafter explore who the Newar are in some detail while examining the difference between the word Nepal and Nepal Mandala at the outset.

### **2.1.2. Nepal Mandala and Nepal**

Nepal Mandala is the original name of Nepal, for which it has been known for much of its long history. It was a single independent State until 1482 and afterwards became a co-federation of three city-states with Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Lalitapur) and Khopa (Bhaktapur) inside Nepal Mandala. According to Mary Shepherd Slusser, a ‘mandala is a circle, a mystic diagram of varied form, and in ancient Indian usage signified an administrative unit or a country. From at least the sixth century AD., in conjunction with



the word ‘Nepal,’ it signified to the Nepalese the Kathmandu Valley and surrounding territory’ (Slusser 1998: viii). Mandala has further meanings such as spherical area, a region, a union, a co-federation, federation, orb and orbit like the earth or the world (*Bhu Mandala*)<sup>37</sup>. As the land area of original Nepal was spherical (Tamot 2005: 18) and the State system was co-federation style during the latter half of the Medieval period, Nepal Mandala was a popular term. It is found in Licchavi inscriptions dated between seventh and eighth century (Slusser 1998:9). Further, religious geography developed inside Nepal Mandala, a large circle of holy sites of worship related to Vajrayana religious tradition (an integration of both Buddhist and Hindu denominations). Vajracharya gurus are supposed to circumambulate these holy sites spending a span of one year (Vajracharya 1999:70). The non-native and foreign writers use ‘Nepal Valley’ to mean Nepal Mandala but some mistake it for Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) area, the three city-states. Nepal Valley should be understood as Nepal Mandala, a larger area over which the Malla kings of three cities had jurisdiction beyond Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley). The size of Nepal Mandala equals to a three fourth of the present ‘central development region’ in Nepal, while the size of present Nepal (147,181 sq. km) was decided at Sugauli treaty in December 1815 and ratified in March 1816 after war with East India Company during 1814-16.

### ***Territory of Nepal Mandala***

According to the oldest inscription (after the Asoka pillar inscription in Lumbini dated 250 B.C.) so far found dated 464 A.D. and erected by Licchavi King Manadeva at Changuarayan<sup>38</sup>, Nepal Mandala is defined as a territory bordered by the Gandaki River and Trisuli River in the west, and the Tamakhusi (Tamakoshi) River and Lunkhusi (Sunkoshi) River in the east. Other inscriptions erected by several Licchavi kings have located Tistung and Chitlang as the southern border and perhaps suggest the Himalaya in the north, though no inscription so far has been found in the north (Tamot 2005: 13). Nepal Mandala territory so defined underwent changes later – expansions to a wider area that reached Vangadesa (Bengal/Bangladesh)<sup>39</sup> in the southeast, the State of Bihar in the south, Gorkha to Palpa in the west and Shelkar Dzong (Tibet) (ibid) in the north during the reign of Jayayaksha Malla, popularly known as Yaksha Malla (1428-1482 A.D.).<sup>40</sup> It was after

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<sup>37</sup> Pradhan (2004:590).

<sup>38</sup> Now a village of 900 houses located in Khopa (Bhaktapur) district.

<sup>39</sup> Bouchon (2004:56).

<sup>40</sup> 548-602 N.S.

the death of Yaksha Malla that Nepal Mandala was ruled from Bhaktapur as capital, with the land divided into three city-states among his sons. However, there were attempts in the reigns of several later kings to unify the divided city-states of Nepal Mandala. The reign of Sivasimha Malla (1578-1620)<sup>41</sup> attests to it. During his reign, Nepal Mandala had been defined as a territory that included Sindhuli in the east, Dhading in the west, Dvalukha (Dolakha), Kerung in the north and Makavanapur in the south (Vajracharya 1999: 70). With Dvalukha (Dolakha) included in Nepal Mandala, Malla kings are said to have ruled four states amongst each other while merging with adjoining states from time to time under a co-federation until 1769.<sup>42</sup>

After the Malla period ended at the hands of the Shah rulers, the latter, followed by Rana and Panchayat regimes, dismantled the State administration of Nepal Mandala into different parts. As a result, it is now divided into 12 districts in 3 zones (See Map of Nepal-1.). However, the economic delineation of 'Central Development Region'<sup>43</sup> provides a glimpse of historical Nepal Mandala, which was the original Nepal. I will now explore the Newar people of Nepal Mandala.

### **2.1.3. The Newar as a Nation: A Conglomeration of Diverse Peoples**

The Newar today are one of several major nationalities, each of which has over a million people. According to historian Manik Lall Shrestha, the people of Newar are not an ethnic community. They are a conglomeration of diverse peoples. Since ancient times, people of Aryan, Mongoloid and Austro-Dravidian races who arrived in Nepal Mandala from different directions integrated with the indigenous people of the land. Although they came from different originations, races or blood, they intimately linked up with the religion and culture of the land. They learnt Nepal Bhasa and integrated with the people of Nepal Mandala. They are a speech community. Their language is a very important part of community identity (Shrestha 2002:19-20). Further, Satya Mohan Joshi, a well-respected culture expert, points out that there were professional migrants<sup>44</sup> such as Vaidya (doctor), Joshi (astrologer), Tamrakar (bronze smith), Dhobi (washer man) besides Brahmins such as Jha, Misra, Acharya, Rajopadhyaya from the South (India), and Mithila in the Southeast of

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<sup>41</sup> 698-740 N.S.

<sup>42</sup> 889 N.S.

<sup>43</sup> One of 5 development regions delineated.

<sup>44</sup> From Interview with Chancellor Dr. Satya Mohan Joshi (February 25, 2011)

Nepal Mandala. All these people live today among other indigenous Newar such as Jyapu (farmers).<sup>45</sup>

The majority of the Newar live in Nepal Mandala which is now spread out over 12 districts and 3 zones (provinces), more than half of them concentrated in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley). The rest are spread out in towns in the periphery of Swanigah such as Bhota (Banepa), Panauti, and Dvalukha (Dolakha) inside Nepal Mandala. Making an observation around 1971 of the spread of the Newar beyond Swanigah, Slusser notes that ‘[p]articularly, since the eighteenth century, in the exercise of their traditional métiers — trade and the arts — the Newars have spread far afield into the bazaar towns throughout Nepal, where their combined numbers now almost equal the Newar population of the Kathmandu Valley’ (Slusser 1998:11). She has noted that Kathmandu had a population roughly corresponding to the population of Bagmati Zone (1,496,971 persons) citing the 1971 census (ibid). Population of the area has increased threefold and the Newar population today accounts for 905,056 persons.<sup>46</sup> Also, the Newar also live in most of the towns over Nepal while there is a considerable number living in India with a concentration in Sikkim.

#### **2.1.4. Newar Culture: A Blend of Diversity**

Newar culture refers to physical, created artifacts and intangibles such as language, customs, religion etc. followed or developed by the Newar, the people of Nepal Mandala. As the Newar themselves are a conglomeration of diverse peoples that integrated as the people of Nepal Mandala over the course of a long period of time, their culture, no doubt, has accommodated features from different cultures. What distinguishes Newar culture from others is that it has evolved into a culture neither entirely the same nor different from others. Mahatma Gandhi’s famous equation of ‘milk-tea’ with integration of different cultures into one may not be an exaggeration if we are to refer to Newar culture in a single term. This designation is applicable to both tangible cultural products and intangible features of the Newar culture. Several examples can illustrate this point.

The most remarkable physical artifacts that stand as distinct cultural heritage in Nepal Mandala are the traditional multi-roofed temples with small sized family *chaityas*

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Census 2011: The number is a total of Hill and Mountain areas of the Central Development Region, as enumeration system has changed.

(Buddhist cenotaph) (Pradhan 2004: 177) and monuments of large *stupas* (pagodas). Educationist Yubaraj Pradhan attests these monuments as ‘testimony to the artistic skill and craftsmanship of the Newars who thrived on the patronage of Newar kings ruling the three city-states of the Valley until 1768’ (Pradhan 1980). He recalls an account of Sylvain Levi which has attributed ‘the resemblance of Chinese pagodas and Japanese temples to Newar influence’ (ibid). The monuments are products of a combination of Buddhist and Hindu religious arts and architecture, which are distinct from artifacts of the South and Southeast Asian regions. The skills and craftsmanship have derived from the Vajrayana religious tradition, another distinct aspect of Newar culture. Religious tradition of Nepal is another intangible culture specific to the Newar.

As authors of the history of Nepal Mandala, the Newar have also impressed the world as unique people in many ways. Pradhan asserts that Newar people, being Buddhists and Hindus, have ‘exhibited a unique example of co-existence and tolerance, which is one of the prominent marks of a civilized society’ (ibid). One most noticeable example is the *Bungadyo saleegu* (pulling chariot of the god of *Bungamati*). Bungadyo’s original Nepal Bhasa name is *Karunamaya*<sup>47</sup> while its Sanskrit name is *Avalokitesvara or Padmapani* (other two names for historical Buddha the Gotama). The *Karunamaya* is known as *Matsendranatha or Macchendranath* in Khas/Nepali and is the tutor of Gorakhanatha (Landan 1924:2007). The *Bungadyo* is one of the two important divinities in Nepal Mandala, housed in a three-tiered-roofed temple in a Buddhist Vihara known as Tahbahala in Yala (Lalitapur). Another god is housed in Janabahala, Yen (Kathmandu). The *Bungadyo* is taken out of his temple every April, mounted on a tall chariot and is pulled in a huge procession around the city of Yala. At every locality it stops at, local people come out to make offerings. Michael Allen, an anthropologist, who studied Newar Buddhism, and has done extensive research, records the religious event as in the following:

Altogether thousands participate in the pulling, hundreds of thousands make offerings and perhaps half a million see the god. Hindu devotees equate Matsendranath [Bungadyo] with Siva and Buddhists equate him with Avalokitesvara, Lord of the Universe. He is worshipped by all Newars regardless of caste or religion (Allen 2005:40).

Further, *Karunamaya*, the original name of the *Bungadyo*, is better known among informed Buddhists, who consider it the personification of Buddha’s compassion (Karuna)

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<sup>47</sup> Most of the gods, temples and places have colloquial and written names, while Khas/Nepali names are later additions

and practice to become compassionate to living beings, human or non-human. Of the three traditions of Buddhism (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana), Vajrayana took root in Nepal, particularly among the Newar, to the extent that Vajrayana is better known among foreign scholars as Newar Buddhism. The Newar contributed to the spread of Buddhism in Nepal and Tibet as well. Monasteries in Nepal served a bridge between Tibet and India while accommodating Buddhist scholars arriving in the country to escape Muslim invasion in India. The Newar supported the spread of Buddhism in Tibet by training Tibetan monks in Nepal and translating Buddhist texts into Tibetan. The teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism took root in Tibet to the extent that the religion became known as Tibetan Buddhism, or Lamaism later. What is distinct about Vajrayana (Newar) Buddhism from Theravada and Mahayana is that the former provides teachings tailored for individual choice. Theravada advocates personal attainment of *Nibbana* rather than enlightenment while Mahayana teachings give preference to helping save all beings over personal enlightenment. According to Sridhar Rana, a well-known Buddhist teacher, Vajrayana tradition is a skillful blending of ‘means and wisdom’ (*Upaya and Prajna*) to actualize wisdom. Vajrayana teaches ‘infinite methods to attain enlightenment to suit individual temperaments, situations, communications, predilections etc.’ (Rana 2005:90-93).

With regard to canonical texts of Vajrayana Buddhism, Nepal is also known to have developed a distinct set of Nine Holy Scriptures (*Navagunadharm*) different from the canons of Theravada Tipitaka and Mahayana Triagama. Shankar Thapa points out that the tradition of studying Buddhist texts already existed before the 7<sup>th</sup> century in Nepal.<sup>48</sup> He attests the popularity of Buddhahadra, a Nepalese scholar monk in China at that time, and the fact that “development of Newar Buddhist scholarship marked steady growth from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards” (Thapa 2005b:40-41).

### **2.1.5. Nepal Samvat: The National Calendar**

There are several calendars used in today’s Nepal. The Government of Nepal officially uses Vikram Samvat (V.S.) the Vikram Era. For example, the first day of this year commenced on April 14, 2013 as Vaisakh 1, 2070 V.S. Other calendars in use are the Nepal Samvat used by Newar and others for religious events. Tibetan calendar is used by most of the people in the Himalayan region such as Sherpa, Tamang, Gurung etc. in the northern area,

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<sup>48</sup> This implies that Nepal Lipi (the original script of Nepal) had already been developed before 7<sup>th</sup> century.

while Laxman Samvat calendar is used by Maithil area in the southeast provinces of Nepal. And the Buddha Samvat is followed by the Buddhists of Nepal. As the name suggests, Nepal Samvat originated in Nepal and was officially in use as the national calendar until it was replaced with Vikram Samvat by Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumser in 1904. But the people and informed astrologists, Newar and non-Newar, continue to use it until today. With pressures of advocates of Nepal Samvat, the Government of Nepal reinstated it as national calendar on the 1129<sup>th</sup> New Year's Day (October 26, 2008). Nepal Samvat is vital to studying the history of Nepal as it has been used in inscriptions, coins, and documents for the past 1134 years.

The origination of Nepal Samvat is attributed to a Newar trader who is known to have paid the debts of people of Nepal Mandala out of his wealth and fortune. In celebration of freedom from the debt, a new calendar era was established and named as Nepal Samvat rather than Shankhadhar Sakhva era, the benefactor who paid the debt of people and freed them from their lifelong indebtedness, reminding Maurya Emperor Asoka of his freeing people of Lumbini from paying taxes (See 2.2.2.). According to Kashinath Tamot, a historian and expert in Nepal Bhasa, the calendar era is known by several names such as "*Sankhadharakrita Nepalasamvatsara* (Sankhadhar-constituted-Nepal calendar), and Nepaleeya Samvat (calendar of Nepal). But since its inception, it is popularly known as Nepal Samvat. He also points out that there is a "unanimous agreement among the scholars that the inception of Nepal Samvat contributed to shift the Ancient period to the Medieval period of Nepal history" (Tamot 2008:39). Several examples can illustrate these points.

First, the calendar was created not after any individual or royal dynasty but after the name of a country - Nepal. Second, the knowledge of Nepal Samvat became compulsory in studying history of culture, arts, and literature that have been recorded during thousands of years between the Medieval period and the Modern period in the history of Nepal. Third, it became a symbol of national pride together with Nepal's arts and culture for its usage outside Nepal, too. A well known royal decree sent to the ruler Shaktishingharam of Bhota (Banepa)<sup>49</sup> by China's King Tai Ming of the Ming Dynasty reveals that the decree was signed on Nepal Samvat date of Ashadha sukla 10, 535 N.S. (June 16, 1415 A.D.). Due to the international fame the Nepal Samvat had gained, the Chinese king had used it also for the Great China era. Tamot points out two more similar usages of Nepal Samvat outside Nepal. One, during the Medieval period, King

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<sup>49</sup> Another principality located beyond Khopa (Bhaktapur).

Prananarayan (1627-1666)<sup>50</sup> of Kochvihara (in West Bangal, India now) used Nepal Samvat in the gold coinage he issued. He was the elder brother-in-law of Nepal's King Pratap Malla (1641-1674)<sup>51</sup> who had been married to two sisters of Prananarayan: Rupamati and Anantapriyadevi. The two princesses are known in inscriptions in Nepal as "Bihari princesses" (Tamot 2008: 40). Nepal Samvat was also often used in communications and agreements exchanged between Tibet and Nepal.

Thus, Nepal Samvat has been used not only in Nepal but also in India, Tibet and China since its inception on Kachhala 1, 1 N.S. (October 20, 879 A.D.). Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher replaced Nepal Samvat with Indian Vikram Samvat since 1904<sup>52</sup> for official use in Nepal. However, the Newar of Nepal Mandala and other informed people have continued the use of this calendar till today. It continues to be valuable for the people who have authored it and for those studying the history of arts, culture and socio-politics of Nepal particularly in reference to the past 1105 years.<sup>53</sup> The oldest recorded use of Nepal Samvat has been found in the Lankavatara (a Buddhist medicinal text) dated Kartika-krisna 8, 28 N.S. (November 908 A.D.), and Astasahasrika Pragyaparamita (Buddhist wisdom text) dated Magh-sukla 10, 148 N.S. (January 9, 1028 A.D.).<sup>54</sup>

I have so far discussed the definition of Nepal, Newar, Nepal Mandala and Newar as a nation, and its culture; I shall next explore another important feature of Newar identity – the Nepal Bhasa.

## 2.2. Nepal Bhasa: The Identity of the Newar

Nepal Bhasa (the language of Nepal) is the oldest language of Nepal. It has been the mother tongue of the Newar for over 3 millennia. It was the *Desa Bhasa* (State language) of Nepal Mandala during the Malla period (1200-1769)<sup>55</sup> and continued its official position until it was officially oppressed by the Rana regime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>50</sup> 747-786 N.S.

<sup>51</sup> 761-794 N.S.

<sup>52</sup> 1023 N.S. / 1960 V.S. (Vikram Samvat calendar was originated by King Vikramaditya of Ujjain, India 56 years before the Christian Era (A.D.). There is a long controversy about the usage of this calendar in Nepal between advocates and opponents.

<sup>53</sup> Number of years Nepal Samvat has been used in official and historical inscriptions and documents.

<sup>54</sup> Tamot (2008:38).

<sup>55</sup> 320-889 N.S.

However, in response to the resistance movement of the Newar, Nepal Bhasa is now a national language of Nepal.<sup>56</sup> Historians believe that it must have been in use since ancient times or for more than at 3000 years. They also inform of traditions of using Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali in religious and educational institutes in Nepal in the past.<sup>57</sup> Nepal Bhasa was spoken by both the general populace and the members of the royal court while Pali and Sanskrit were used by the literati, the educators, and the officials. They view that Nepal Bhasa must have been spoken first among the common people, then in the royal court as the public language, long before it was written in the inscriptions later. By the time of Licchavi rule (400-750 A.D.), the inscriptions primarily written in Sanskrit also included many non-Sanskrit words, which scholars have recognized as Nepal Bhasa names of things, places, and rivers of the country. By the Malla period, Nepal Bhasa replaced Sanskrit and became the State language of Nepal. It was the language of education, administration and the media in today's terms. By the year 1380<sup>58</sup>, Nepal enacted *Nyayavikasini*,<sup>59</sup> a complete law to rule the country under an executive and judiciary system. This law enacted by King Jayasthiti Malla is supposed to be the first written law in the world. Hence, I would call it 'Jayasthiti Code.' It is believed to be 500 years older than the Napoleon code which is recognized to be the first written law. The law known as *Nyayavikasini* written in Sanskrit with full commentary in Nepal Bhasa attests to Nepal as an independent sovereign nation with distinct law and language to conduct the administrative affairs of this country.

Further, thousands of manuscripts on diverse subjects from Holy Scripture, law, medical sciences to arts, were written in Nepal Bhasa during Malla rule. Official messages, correspondence and MOUs exchanged between the States of Nepal and Tibet in Nepal Bhasa support the view that Nepal Bhasa was also in use as the language of diplomacy in the past<sup>60</sup>. Since the first appearance of Nepal Bhasa names of things, places and rivers in the inscriptions circa 400, the use of Nepal Bhasa in public including the court has been recorded. Besides inscriptions, hundreds of examples of coinage of the Malla period and thousands of handwritten manuscripts have been stored in the Government Archives and

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<sup>56</sup> See the Constitution (1990), Article 6; the Interim Constitution (2007), Article 5.

<sup>57</sup> MOE Report (2004:3).

<sup>58</sup> 500 N.S.

<sup>59</sup> A law enacted by King Jayasthiti Malla in 500 N.S. (1380 A.D.).

<sup>60</sup> See MOU between King of Nepal and Dalai Lama of Tibet written in Nepal Bhasa dated 895 N.S. Bhadra pada sukla (August 1775 A.D.).



private *Asha Safukuthi* (Asha Archive) in Kathmandu with copies available in libraries of major countries such as Japan, the US, the UK and Germany confirm the classical values of Nepal Bhasa and manuscripts written in it. Despite the discouragement of the use of Nepal Bhasa in the aftermath of the Gorkha invasion of Nepal Mandala, Nepal Bhasa was used freely during the end of the early Shah period (1845).<sup>61</sup> A stage drama<sup>62</sup> written by King Rajendravikram Shah (1813-1881)<sup>63</sup> supports the use of Nepal Bhasa in the royal court of Nepal at the time. Although it is known that Rana prime ministers promoted Khas/Nepali (known as Gorkha Bhasa then), there is recorded evidence that they at least spoke<sup>64</sup> Nepal Bhasa. The Newar, as the indigenous people, built their nation and authored their history and culture, which is known as Newar culture because of its distinct identity from other cultures.

### 2.2.1. Significance of Nepal Bhasa

The significance of Nepal Bhasa is shown by the attitude of the speech community, the Newar. Slusser describes them as ‘a well-defined group of people who preserve their mother tongue and their own distinctive customs and institutions’ (Slusser 1998:11). As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Anderson equals mother tongue of a patriot to the eye of the lover. Language encountered at the mother’s knee parts with only at the grave (Anderson 1991:154). For the Newar, Nepal Bhasa is the dominant factor among other identity markers as the Newar is an amalgamation of diverse social groups. A gold chain should illustrate the mechanism of the link of Nepal Bhasa how it has interconnected the Newar people. Nepal Bhasa serves the most important tying link among these people as the nation of Newar. In other words, the Newar evolved into a speech community, Nepal Bhasa became their common wealth.<sup>65</sup> Referring to a well-known dictum of Nepal’s Great poet Siddhidasa Mahaju – ‘if the language survives, the nation will survive,’<sup>66</sup> Joshi asserts that ‘there is a well-founded truth in Mahaju’s dictum that correctly reflects the

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<sup>61</sup> 965 N.S.

<sup>62</sup> A popular Buddhist legendary story of prince Mahasatva feeding a feeble tigress in a jungle of his country, Panchala desa. This country is identified as historical city of Panauti located 36 km South-East from Yen (Kathmandu).

<sup>63</sup> 933-1001 N.S.

<sup>64</sup> Based on personal conversation with a member of Rana family.

<sup>65</sup> From the interview with Dr. Satya Mohan Joshi (February 25, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Professor David Gellner translates Mahaju’s dictum as “if the language survives, the nation/group will survive” in Gellner (1986:102) while Dr. Pancha Maharjan translates it as “a clan can exist only if its language survives” (Maharjan 2012:29).

construct of Newar nation through Nepal Bhasa, and the significance of the latter for sustenance of the former. In other words, Nepal Bhasa is an important part of Newar identity. If Nepal Bhasa survives, the Newar will survive.<sup>67</sup>

Writing about the importance of language and its relation to its nation, Herder in 1772 cautioned that a nation will survive as a separate group until they preserve their language as a collective inheritance and articulated that ‘a nation’s self-respect hinges upon its ability and willingness to defend itself, but its very existence is inconceivable without its own language’ (See 4.1.1.). Exactly a century and a quarter later, Siddhidasa Mahaju in the 1920s made a similar statement of dictum referring to the nation of Newar whose survival depended on the sustenance of Nepal Bhasa. His alert reflected the alarming situation of the Nepal Bhasa during his time. Mahaju, a contemporary to Chandra Shumsher Rana, the 5<sup>th</sup> hereditary prime minister, whose official repression of Nepal Bhasa triggered a resistance movement in Nepal. Rana repression showed how the law of their own land affected the Newar, the natives of the land (See Chapter Seven.).

### **2.2.2. Nepal Lipi: Original Scripts**

Nepal has its own original scripts known as “Nepal Lipi” (Lipi meaning scripts). It has been used to write Sanskrit, Nepal Bhasa, Pali, Maithil, Bhojpuri and even Khas/Nepali from the latter part of the Licchavi period to the Modern period of the history of Nepal. During the Malla period, Nepal Lipi was used primarily to write Nepal Bhasa as the use of Sanskrit declined gradually. In the early Modern period, Nepal Lipi was used to write not only Nepal Bhasa texts but also some texts in Khas/Nepali. Nepal Lipi was used to write hundreds of inscriptions, thousands of documents, manuscripts on varieties of subjects for the past 1500 years. It was also the source for developing several varieties of scripts. Two of them – Ranjana and Golamola – were used in writing specific subjects. While Golamola was used to write legal documents, Ranjana was used to write primarily Holy Scriptures. Ranjana not only became popular inside Nepal but also spread out to major parts of Asia that included Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Sri Lanka. Nepal Lipi remained an important script in the history of Nepal with an inseparable attachment to Nepal Bhasa and the history of Nepal from the early Malla period to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>67</sup> From the interview with Chancellor Dr. Satya Mohan Joshi.

until Nepal Lipi was replaced by Indian Devanagari script in Nepal. I shall explore the significance of Nepal Lipi in some detail below.

The history of use of script in Nepal goes back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The first 2 inscriptions discovered in southern province of Nepal were written in Brahmi script which is known as South Asia's oldest. A pillar inscription discovered in Lumbini dated 249 B.C. reveals that Gotama, the Buddha, was born in Lumbini village. The inscription read '*Hida Buddha jāteti Lumbinigāme* - the Buddha was born here in Lumbini village.' The content therein relayed that Indian emperor Asoka had visited to pay his veneration to the Buddha, and freed the villagers from paying taxes. He is also known to have erected another pillar inscription in Niglihawa, also located in the southern province of Nepal indicating that he visited to pay homage to Kanakamuni Buddha. With a long gap of about 700 years, the next inscription discovered was a victory pillar erected by Licchavi King Manadeva<sup>68</sup> in 464 A.D. at Changunarayan temple in Nepal Mandala. Consequent inscriptions found dated between 464-879 A.D. were in Sanskrit but 80 percent of the place names found in them were non-Sanskrit (Malla 1989: 445). As noted above, those non-Sanskrit terms belonged to Nepal Bhasa.

First Brahmi script and then Gupta script were used at the end of the Licchavi period, until a new script was developed in Nepal by the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The script became known as "Nepal Lipi" because of its origination in this country. The oldest manuscript written in Nepal Bhasa with Nepal Lipi so far discovered is a manuscript known as "Lankavatara" dated 28 N.S. (908 A.D.),<sup>69</sup> while the oldest inscription in Nepal Bhasa in Nepal Lipi discovered was dated Jestha sukla 2, 119 N.S. (June 999 A.D.).<sup>70</sup> The inscription was found in the process of archeological excavation held in Jagannath temple area in Khopa (Bhaktapur), the oldest capital city of Nepal Mandala, now one of the three historically important cities of Swainigah. The discovery of this inscription, reported in October 2011, is still a new story as there may be hundreds of other inscriptions still buried underground or destroyed intentionally or by natural decay. But in our study of texts of Vajrayana Buddhism, we also found out that there is a holy scripture written in Sanskrit

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<sup>68</sup> King Manadeva reigned from 464 to 506 A.D.

<sup>69</sup> Tuladhar (2000).

<sup>70</sup> Maskey (2011).

dated prior to both of above dates. The scripture is known as *Pancaraksa Sutra* dated 19 N.S. (899 A.D.) and is found in the Cambridge Collection (Thapa 2005b:70).

The study of inscriptions in Nepal is not very old. It was in 1000 N.S. (1880 A.D.), that Bhagawanlal Indraji and George Buller first started the practice of exploring, studying and publishing inscriptions in Nepal (Regmi 2003:31) According to Dineshchandra Regmi, history and archeology expert, the two leading scholars published 23 inscriptions that included 15 inscriptions erected between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and 8 belonged to the latter part of the Licchavi period. This was followed by many scholars studying and publishing inscriptions they discover. They included studies and publications of large numbers of bronze plaques, gold plaques, manuscripts, and chronicles such as *Himavatakhandā, Nepal Mahatmya, Swaymbhupurana*.<sup>71</sup> These were the products of the Medieval period or the Malla reign. A Nepal-German project of preservation of manuscript microfilmed these manuscripts and prepared a catalogue in 2000 A.D.<sup>72</sup> This was followed by digitalization of the manuscripts under an Asa Saphukuthi<sup>73</sup> project supported by Toyota Foundation. The collections have been categorized into themes such as philosophy, religious stanzas such as *Sutra, Tantra, Mantra, Dharani, Hridaya, Stuti, Strotra, Pujavidhi, Homavidhi* etc. The variety of subjects and number of manuscripts speak their own values. They attest Nepal Lipi as the historical pride of Nepal. With these documents preserved in new technology together with their original manuscripts written on original palm leaves, birch and paper folios in thousand numbers lie in various archives and libraries in Nepal and abroad. People do know how much of these facilities have been utilized because Nepal Lipi in Nepal remains neglected now. The Government of Nepal has yet to notice the values of the Nepal Lipi. My approach to meet a sitting prime minister in March 2010 to convey the importance of Nepal Lipi did not materialize. Perhaps the Prime Minister's personal assistant did not bother to convey my message to the prime minister for an appointment.

This concludes a short outline of the Newar people; their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa, the former State language of the country; and the culture that had become the pride

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<sup>71</sup> Historical texts about Nepal.

<sup>72</sup> 1120 N.S.

<sup>73</sup> Asa Archives: Nepal's first and only community archives located in Yen (Kathmandu).

of the people of Nepal Mandala who authored their history. Next, I will examine how today's Newar have fallen victims to their own past history.

### **2.3. The Newar as the Victims of their History**

The Newar, as we saw in the last section, were an independent people. They were built of a conglomeration of diverse peoples who had merged with the indigenous people of Nepal Mandala, the original Nepal since ancient times. As the royal court adopted the language of the common people, Nepal Bhasa was elevated to *Desa Bhasa* (State language), which continued integrating people arriving in Nepal Mandala as they settled in this land and spoke Nepal Bhasa. The Jayasthiti code known as *Nyayavikasini* written in Sanskrit with full commentaries in Nepal Bhasa attests to Nepal as a sovereign nation with its distinct law and language to conduct the business of administrative affairs of the country by 500 N.S. (1436 A.D.). It is noteworthy that the Jayasthiti Code supersedes the Napoleon code as the first written law in the world (Pant 2008). Nepal Bhasa further consolidated its link with cultures brought into the country by diverse peoples, who converged into the Newar culture. Thousands of manuscripts written in Nepal Bhasa bear witness to these contributions to the language. As Great Poet Siddhidasa reminded in his statement, 'if the language survives, the nation will survive,' which meant the Newar nation depends on Nepal Bhasa. Failure of sustenance of the language of a nation can be detrimental to the existence of a nation (Herder 1772). I will explore next whether such an important language was sustained by the Newar community or whether they have fallen victim to their own history, in Silbey's term.

#### **2.3.1. Spatial State of Newar and Nepal Bhasa**

The spatial state of the Newar and their language Nepal Bhasa today is in decline. The Newar who lived in Nepal Mandala were estimated to be 100 percent of the population of Nepal until 1769, and now have declined merely to 5 percent.<sup>74</sup> Their language Nepal Bhasa, which was the State Language then, is now the mother tongue of merely 3.2 percent. Among their speech community, only slightly over 60 percent consider Nepal Bhasa their mother tongue.<sup>75</sup> According to UNESCO evaluation, Nepal Bhasa<sup>76</sup> is now a 'definitely

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<sup>74</sup> Census 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

endangered' language. They can be attributed to several historical factors. I shall first, examine the situation of the Newar and proceed to explore the spatial state of their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa.

The decline of the Newar first started with their defeat to the intruding Gorkhali army, which has begun to attack Nepal since 1744. After 24 years of resistance against the Gorkhahli, the Newar army lost in 1769, and many Pradhans (the community leaders of Newar) were eliminated. Many left Swanigah for fear of persecution and torture by the new ruler. They included families of defeated Newar royalty. Many Mallas and Pradhans changed their family names to Pradhananga Shrestha and several others. They escaped as far as Sikkim (India) for their safety.<sup>77</sup> A third group was banished to Gorkha<sup>78</sup> as punishment, and a fourth group left Nepal Mandala to look for economic opportunities as Swanigah became insecure for trade and business after political change. Another record available is about banishment of a group of 62 Newar Christians by Prithvinarayan in February 1769 to Betia in India (Sayami 2007:9). As the first census of Nepal<sup>79</sup> was taken only in 1911, exactly a century ago as I write this, it is difficult to know the exact growth and decline of the population before 1911. However, two sources reveal that Kathmandu had a population of 22,000 people, Lalitapur 18,000 people and Bhaktapur 12,000 people by the year 1769.<sup>80</sup>

Professionally, the Newar today fall behind the Bahun-Chhetri caste group.<sup>81</sup> An outline of 'Gazetted civil servants by services and caste/ethnicity' in the Table-8 reflects their spaces in government services. The figures show the space for the Newar, who are the indigenous/native people of Nepal Mandala, after it was occupied by the Bahun-Chetri caste group. The figures depict the percentage of the total population taken in 1999.

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<sup>76</sup> World's comprehensive language catalogue, the *Ethnologue* refers Nepal Bhasa as Newar (as incorrectly as some refer) and as a language of 'wider communication,' the third level of status in its ten levels of language evaluation: level 1 (national) to level 10 (extinct). Ethnologue refers Khas/Nepali as a level 1 language while it has yet to publish enough information about Nepal Bhasa.

<sup>77</sup> From communications with two Newar friends living now in Sikkim and Japan.

<sup>78</sup> From communication with a Newar friend, who comes from Gorkha, now lives in Japan.

<sup>79</sup> Census of Nepal (2011).

<sup>80</sup> These figures were conformed in both Regmi (1961; 2007); Lienhard (1984). 2001 Newar population was: 320,244 (Yen), 136,078 (Yala), 125,830 (Khopa) Source: Singh (2010:121-122).

<sup>81</sup> The majority of CHHE come from these groups, who accompanied Prithvinarayan in his conquest of Nepal Mandala.

Table-8: Gazetted Civil Servants by Services and Caste/Ethnicity

Service Group/Sector	Caste/Ethnicity	Special Class	First Class	Second Class	Third Class	Total	Total in Percent
Administration	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	48	158	649	1978	2833	89.9
	Newar	10	20	112	163	305	9.7
	Other Nationalities	0	1	15	38	14	0.4
	Total	58	179	776	2179	3152	100.0
Agriculture	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	2	46	228	842	1118	75.7
	Newar	1	21	34	52	305	20.6
	Other Nationalities	0	1	9	25	54	3.7
	Total	3	68	271	919	1477	100.0
Health	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	3	110	331	655	1099	79
	Newar	1	35	54	154	244	17.5
	Other Nationalities	0	1	11	37	49	3.5
	Total	4	146	396	846	1392	100.0
Education	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	2	22	138	788	950	87.4
	Newar	0	10	34	61	105	9.7
	Other Nationalities	0	0	3	29	32	2.09
	Total	2	32	175	878	1087	100.0
Engineering	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	6	69	462	1312	1849	74.3
	Newar	0	48	151	368	567	22.8
	Other Nationalities	0	1	25	47	73	2.9
	Total	6	118	638	1727	2489	100.0
Forestry	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	1	19	97	324	441	81.8
	Newar	0	8	37	41	86	16
	Other Nationalities	0	0	4	8	12	2.9
	Total	1	27	138	373	539	100.0
Other	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	13	60	360	574	1007	93.9
	Newar	0	4	20	36	60	5.6
	Other Nationalities	0	0	2	3	5	0.5
	Total	13	64	382	613	1072	100.0
Total Civil Service	Bahun-Chetri/High Castes	75	484	2265	6473	9297	84.3
	Newar	12	146	442	875	1475	13.4
	Other Nationalities	0	4	69	187	260	2.3
	Total	<b>87</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>7535</b>	<b>11032</b>	100.0

Source: Manandhar (2056 V.S. / 1999 A.D.) in NTG (2006:118)

As for the space of Nepal Bhasa, officially it is one of the national languages of Nepal. The Constitution (1990) enshrined it while the Interim Constitution (2007) has consolidated its space. However, no further official actions have been taken towards implementing any further law with regard to these languages in Nepal. Nepal Bhasa is left a ‘definitively endangered language.’ Languages are endangered by several factors ascribed to internal and external forces. However, external forces such as ‘military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation’<sup>82</sup> affect the internal forces such as ‘a community’s negative attitude towards its own language.’<sup>83</sup> The matter is discussed in great detail in Chapter Three of this study in light of the empirical data gathered from the fieldwork and participatory observation. As our attempt here is to outline a chronology of the Newar nation, how it fell victim of its own history, I shall look at some notable events that have been attributed to the fall of the Newar to today’s spatial state in their own native land, Nepal.

In exploring these events, it appears that man-made impediments have more forced the victimization of the Newar than the natural calamities of earthquake, flood, tsunami, and conflagration. There seemed to be: 1) offensive war on the Newar, 2) deliberate oppression and 3) tactful hegemonic State policies imposed upon the Newar who had developed an independent country of their own with a self designed entrepot economy, trade and minting industry. The Gorkha king Prithvinarayan became interested in Nepal Mandala from the 1740s, when he saw Nepal Mandala city-states developed full of arts and architecture as the result of the fortunes and finances the Newar had made through trade with Tibet and India. Such development attracted both praise and envy. On the one hand, Nepal Mandala attracted praise for the art and architecture the Newar built. Particularly, Tibet grew attracted to Buddhism and its temple architecture. This attraction took many Newar architects to Tibet, followed by artist Arniko (1245 - 1306 A.D.), who built a white pagoda and many temples in Lhasa. Besides Tibet, scholars attest that the temple architecture of Nepal spread out to China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan. On the other hand, Nepal Mandala also attracted the envy of the neighboring principalities, particularly Gorkha, the nearest principality outside Nepal Mandala. I shall examine how Gorkha’s conquest affected the Newar and their symbols of identity, particularly the language: Nepal Bhasa.

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<sup>82</sup> UNESCO (2003: 2).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



### 2.3.2. Gorkha Invasion: Offensive War on the Newar

Nepal Mandala, or Nepal Valley as it is known to outsiders, fell to Gorkha rule partly in 1768 and fully a year later, ending the Malla Dynasty that ruled Nepal for about 600 years from 1200. Although the end of Malla rule is ascribed to internal conflict among the Mallas, who were divided into three city-states, the popular view of the native is that the three city-state rulers competed among each other in nourishing art and architecture and developed a distinct Newar civilization together. The Malla kings patronized an independent economy built on minting coins, and placer-mining that built trade relations with Tibet and the Mogul Empire of India. While minting gold, silver and copper mohar, the currency, Nepal Mandala was the sole minter of coins for Tibet until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>84</sup> The coins were known as Mahindra Malli Mohar<sup>85</sup> after King Mahendra Malla (1560-74) who introduced a basic monetary system in Nepal. Tibet adopted the currency of Nepal as their own currency for over 2 hundred years. The Newar merchants were entrusted to handle the currency and other merchandise businesses in Lhasa. With the finances earned from coin minting, trade and merchandise sent to Tibet, Malla kings built their city-states with unprecedented art and architecture that spread into foreign lands throughout Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. It was only natural Nepal grew attractive to the outside world, and neighboring friends and foes as well. A historian describes what attracted Prithvinarayan Shah of Gorkha to Nepal Mandala:

Prithvinarayana has said that...he...went as far as the Chandragiri Mountain, from where he could catch a glimpse of Nepal Valley [Nepal Mandala]. Prithvinarayana was so much attracted by the natural beauty and contour of the valley as displayed in the three cities that he cherished a desire then and there to possess it. The possession, however, would come only by conquest. Realizing this Prithvinarayana vowed in his mind to take possession of the valley and thenceforth directed his energy to this end.<sup>86</sup>

Historian D. R. Regmi one of our main sources of the history of Nepal provided this episode to refute a story about Prithvinarayan's visit to Khopa (Bhaktapur) in Nepal Mandala in 1737 and that he had to return to Gorkha apparently because the Malla rulers suspected Gorkha's intention as his father was waging war to capture places in the Dhading area that lies in between Gorkha and Nepal Mandala. Regmi was offering an alibi that that

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<sup>84</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007: 148). Prithvinarayana is the written form of Prithvinarayan as in Nepāla – Nepal; Newāra – Newar etc.

<sup>85</sup> It weighs 7 grams.

<sup>86</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007: 94).

Prithvinarayan at the time was returning from a visit to Makawanapur that he was not in Bhaktapur. But it is evident that Regmi let the cat out of the bag as to what Prithvinarayan had in his mind. It would also be misleading to state that Prithvinarayan was simply attracted to the beauty of Nepal Mandala's natural surroundings. He was aware of the resources that built those city-states full of temples adorned with copper and gold plated roofs by the Newar. 'Prithvinarayan cast his eye on the advantage of these resources. He wanted to replace Nepal Mandala's trade with Tibet by his own.'<sup>87</sup>

### ***Conquest of Nepal Mandala***

Prithvinarayan Shah prepared his plans to conquer Nepal Mandala and possess it for himself as soon as he succeeded to the kingship of Gorkha principality following his father's death in 1742. According to Regmi, conquering Nepal Mandala was the 'long cherished ambition of his life' (Regmi 2007:96). He made his first attempt to capture Nakva (Nuwakot), the north-west part of Nepal Mandala, where his army was repulsed by the army of Jayaprakas Malla, the king of Yen (Kathmandu) city state. But Prithvinarayan succeeded in his second bid to attack Nakva. This time he had full preparation, stronger men, arms and ammunition, for which he went to Varanasi (India) first out of frustration at the first defeat, and also to get friendly with allies and support for 'his crusade.' As he expected, he got support from men, plus arms and ammunition from Indian experts such as Sheikhjabar<sup>88</sup>, Muhammed Taki and Bhekh Singh (ibid: 98). Regmi appeared to be more upbeat than his subject of narration, Prithvinarayan about the crusade the latter was going to lead against Nepal Mandala, the country of the Newar. He described what the crusade consisted of:

His troops consisted of several companies, each with 100 gunmen under a Subedar and 16 Havaldars (both non-commissioned officers). Besides, there were men who used only Khuda and Khukri (daggers and swords).... The test of recruitment was patriotism and loyalty to his person. The entire population of Gorkha had been up with arms to fight for a cause. Brahmanas, Ksatriyas, Thakuris, and Khasas, Newar [emphasis added], Vaisyas and peasants, Gurungs and Magars were all enlisted.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid: 148-149.

<sup>88</sup> Prithvinarayan rewarded this Indian arm supplier also known as Shekh Zabbar with some lands of Nepal territory (ibid.: 260).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.: 99.

Regmi informs that Prithvinarayan was also able to mobilize resources that people were asked to fund the war against Nepal Mandala that even those ‘who were physically unable to participate in the battle, but came forward with hard cash, precious metals and jewels. Many who were poor enough not to possess jewels and hard cash gave edibles, grains, fruits and vegetables’ (ibid.: 100). I have no other resources to trace this story narrated so eloquently as real. My effort here was to locate how and why Prithvinarayan was attracted to Nepal Mandala. It is evident that Prithvinarayan ultimately fulfilled one of his long cherished ambitions: to conquer and possess Nepal Mandala, its fortunes and finances. The Newar defended Nepal Mandala in resistance against the Gorkhali army. But after 24 years of war, Prithvinarayan conquered Nepal Mandala, killing the last 2 Malla kings of Nepal Mandala and banishing his Newar godfather king to Varanasi, India (See also Chapter Eight.).

### **2.3.3. Gorkha Nepal Policies: Displacement of Newar Symbols**

Having fulfilled his ambition of conquering Nepal Mandala and possessing its fortunes, Prithvinarayna went on conquering other principalities as it is said that he had two other ambitions. They were: One, to make a ‘Greater Nepal,’ for which he had to conquer other principalities around Gorkha and Nepal Mandala, already under his control. Two, he desired to create a ‘true Hindustan [India] or a true Hindu country’ suggesting India is not a proper Hindustan. Although Prithvinarayan could not materialize his second and third ambitions during his lifetime, his descendants fulfilled them for him. Prithvinarayan died at the age of 52 in January 1775. But his descendants continued conquering independent principalities located in the west and the east until the East India Company stopped the expansion known as ‘Greater Nepal’ in 1814. The present territory of Nepal was decided after this war between the Gorkahli and British army. Prithvinarayan’s third ambition, to make Nepal an ‘Asali Hindustan’ (true Hindu country), his 11<sup>th</sup> descendant King Mahendra fulfilled by making Nepal the ‘only Hindu country’ in the world despite it being the birthplace of the Buddha. His Panchayat Constitution of 1962 declared this officially, which India hesitated to declare itself to be a Hindu nation despite its status as the only country with a Hindu majority in the world. For the descendents and followers, these steps may have been great achievements of Prithvinarayan, but not for others, particularly the

Newar. Until Prithvinarayan and his descendants instigated division between Hinduism and Buddhism, Nepal Mandala had followed the Vajrayana religion, a synthesis of both Buddhism and Hinduism. Likewise, Nepal Mandala had its own symbols of national integrity: a language known as Nepal Bhasa, the language of Nepal, because it is made up of several dialects of the land; a script known as Nepal Lipi, because it originated in this country; and a calendar era known as Nepal Samvat, because it was developed by astrologists of this land. Even the people of this land were integrated with diverse groups that came to live in Nepal, hence their being known as Nepami or Newar. If what Prithvinarayan stated was true, that he desired to make a Greater Nepal, he and his descendants should have respected and carried over the symbols of Nepal Mandala, which represent the Newar. But it is clear that Prithvinarayan displaced these symbols of Nepal Mandala State and the Newar nation. His first coin<sup>90</sup> bears the official declaration of displacement of the Nepal Mandala symbols, contrary to his stated desire to make a 'Greater Nepal.'

Following the tradition of coinage that symbolizes State power, Prithvinarayan also issued the first coin, a mohar, to commemorate his takeover of Nepal in 1769. The inscription on its obverse read 'Sri Sri'<sup>91</sup> Prithvinarayan Sahadeva' and the date 1691 SS, the Saka Samvat (Saka Era). On the reverse it read, 'Sri Sri Bhawani,' and 'Sri, Sri Gorakhanatha.'<sup>92</sup> His first coin attests to all his plans, or policies in today's terms.

The issuance of coins suggests and confirms the authority of a ruler and what is inscribed upon it is considered official, recognized as national symbols of a nation and the country. On the obverse of his first coin of Nepal, Prithvinarayan replaced the Nepal Samvat, the national era of Nepal Mandala, with Saka Samvat; on the reverse, he replaced Sri Sri Lokanatha, Sri Sri Karunamaya with Sri Sri Bhavani and Sri Sri Gorakhanatha (Walsh 1908: 714). He also replaced Nepal Lipi with Devanagari Lipi.

As we saw in the previous section, Nepal Mandala had a distinct Nepal Samvat calendar which symbolized the national identity of the state of Nepal Mandala. Replacing Nepal Samvat with Saka Samvat, the era he imported from India and used in his Gorkha

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<sup>90</sup> From the interview with Dr. Joshi, who is also an expert in coinage of Nepal.

<sup>91</sup> Honorific term, the more the number of sri in front of a name more the person is honoured.

<sup>92</sup> (Walsh:1908:740 in Regmi: 1962; 2007). Walsh Saka Samvat, 1695 was wrong. It should have been 1691 SS, as S.S. started in 78 A.D.

principality, meant that Prithvinarayan did not respect Nepal Samvat. Replacing Lokanatha, or Karunamaya, the national deities of Nepal, with Bhawani and Gorakhanatha also indicates that he did not accept the national deities of Nepal; hence, he replaced it with the Hindu deity Gorakhanatha that he respects. Replacing Nepal Lipi with Indian Devanagari Lipi also explicitly shows that he did not accept the State language of Nepal and its script. These policy measures he took at the outset of his rule over Nepal Mandala contradicts with his long cherished ambition to make this country a 'Greater Nepal.' How is it possible to make a 'Greater Nepal,' when the ruler does not respect the national symbols of Nepal such as its religion, calendar era and the state language, Nepal Bhasa? All of which had existed for thousands of years in this country? His initiatives did not convince us that he wanted to make Nepal a Greater Nepal, but that he simply desired to expand his Gorkha rule over other states and principalities together with Nepal Mandala. Two examples may support this view.

First, Prithvinarayan did not have a currency system in his Gorkha principality until he came into contact with the coin and currency system of Nepal Mandala. Regmi illuminates us below:

Before his [Prithvinarayan's] time Gorkha had no coins of its own. It depended on Kantipur [Kathmandu] and the other two kingdoms of the Nepal Valley for the supply of the medium of exchange even for internal markets. Gorkha first coin dates Saka 1676 (1754 A.D.).<sup>93</sup>

Regmi also states that the 'reference to Gorkha coins above is evidence of the economic advancement the territory had come to secure during Prithvinarayan's reign. But we have yet to find sources that support his own minting of coins before he conquered Nepal Mandala. The Gorkha coin Regmi noted above was the one struck after Prithvinarayan conquered Nakva, a part of Nepal Mandala in 1754. The story can also be traced from E. H. Walsh, who has studied the coinage of Nepal, that Prithvinarayan 'adopted the Newar system of coinage based on standard of a silver mohar, and with same fractional parts. The design of his mohar [...] which has continued to be the standard design ever since, was also taken from the Newar coins' (Walsh: 1908: 713). This reveals that Prithvinarayan only adopted the Newar coinage system and even the design, but did not respect the national symbols of Lokanatha, the Nepal Samvat and Nepal Bhasa.

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<sup>93</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007:265).

The second example that supports Prithvinarayan's desire to expand Gorkha principality is the name he first attempted to change. It is said that he applied the name of Gorkha over the name of Nepal Mandala to show the superiority of Gorkha over Nepal. An MOU known as Dharmapatra signed by two signatories attests that the changed name was used during the time of his son Pratapasimha who ruled only two years after Prithvinarayan's death in January 1775. The MOU has been signed by the Dalai Lama of Tibet and Pratapsimha Shah of 'Gorkha Nepal,'<sup>94</sup> not Nepal. The two examples above provide considerable support to the view that Prithvinarayan's cherished desire was to expand Gorkha territory, its religion, calendar and his Gorkhali language by conquering Nepal Mandala without recognizing the religion, the calendar and Nepal Bhasa of Nepal Mandala, the native country of the Newar. The MOU is also considered to be an important document that attested the resistance of the Newar against the deletion of Buddhism, Nepal Samvat and Nepal Bhasa. I shall elaborate this point in the next section.

#### **2.3.4. Rana Policies: Oppression of Literacy and Language**

Since 1769, the Gorkha ruler has been the ruler of Nepal, and he named the latter as 'Gorkha Nepal.' Prithvinarayan and his descendants ruled this country directly until 1847, when an army officer appointed by the then King Rajendravikrama as the minister turned against the latter. The officer seized State power taking advantage of the internal conflict between the two parties in palace politics from 1837 (Bajracharya 1996: 36). The army officer turned Chief Minister Junga Bahadur Kunwar reduced the king to a titular position and introduced hereditary prime ministers from his family. He rose to such power that he banished the queen to Varanasi and imprisoned the king who made him both chief of the army and the minister. From 1846, he ruled 30 long years with an iron hand to the extent that people got used to complaining and comparing any harsh treatment to be like Junga Bahadur Rana's or of his descendants'. The 'Rana regime,' and his ten descendants ruled Nepal for a 104 year long rule until they were overthrown by a peoples' revolution at the end of 1950. During their rule, they kept five generations of Shah kings under their control, and ran an unprecedented autocratic rule over the people, rather than being concerned about developing smooth state-society relations. They banned any kind of literacy or language learning except for the palace school education limited to Rana families and their

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<sup>94</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007:510-513); Sayami (2007:3-4). The MOU was written in Nepal with Nepal Lipi and dated with Nepal Samvat.

children. It is said that their harsh rule triggered a resistance movement wider and larger than their predecessor Shah rulers. Their rule can be outlined as follows:

First, no sooner did Junga Bahadur take power at the court than he eliminated tens of his opponents and likely opponents at the palace massacre he led on October 31, 1846 (Bajracharya: 1996: 22). He also imprisoned King Rajendravikrama in July 1847 and punished whoever he suspected of opposition. He did not even spare Buddhist monks who preached the Buddha's messages of peace in His own land. Two groups of Buddhist monks were expelled from Nepal during the century long Rana oligarchy.

Second, the Ranas feared the slightest opposition to their rule, hence punishing even a writer of a two line hymn suspecting that he acted opposing the Rana regime. Among those arrested, punished, and penalized were a great number of Newar, as they were the majority in the city at the time. Nepal Bhasa was banned by the Ranas only to trigger unexpected resistance from 1904 when Chandra Shumsher Jung Bahadur banned any events celebrating Nepal Samvat New Year, writing or distribution of any reading material in the Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) in Nepal Bhasa. The Rana regime put the writers into jail, imprisoned and tortured, only to expand the resistance against themselves. Some believe the Ranas to have been harsher than Prithvinarayan in their treatment and policies toward the citizens. Though the Ranas acted against their own masters, they continued Prithvinarayan's Gorkha expansion under the goal of 'Greater Nepal,' and replaced Buddhism with Hinduism and Nepal Bhasa with Gorkhali Bhasa throughout their rule. They became extremely harsh to the extent that several resistant activists, including three Newar, were soon killed by the Rana government. As a result, the people's power retaliated. The peoples' revolution movement overthrew the Rana regime in December 1950. I shall return to this in detail in Chapter Seven. Next I shall outline another autocratic rule which emerged after some time following the overthrow of the Ranas: the Panchayat Autocracy.

### **2.3.5. Panchayat Policies: Advent of Single Language, Hinduism and the CHHE**

We have witnessed that since the Gorkhali conquered Nepal in 1769, they took over Nepal's policies and displaced Newar symbols, including Nepal Bhasa, so important to their identity, and also the state language of the country. The Rana policies that followed not only nullified the deeds and documents written in Nepal Bhasa but also officially

imposed a ban on its public use from 1906. In return, the century-long Rana repression was ousted by a 4–decade-long resistance and the revolution in 1950. Consequently, a new era of democracy dawned in Nepal for the first time in 1951. The Democracy Period (1951-61) institutionalized several democratic ideals such as the introduction of a parliamentary system, multiparty elected government, recognition of Nepal’s reality of linguistic diversity and its use in education, public services and mass media. Nepal Bhasa, which had faced the worst oppression in the past, regained its vigor during the Democracy Period. All these new opportunities for freedom the Newar had long awaited suddenly collapsed with the emergence of the Panchayat Government, led by a ruling monarch, at the end of 1961, as the Newar only just began to make achievements.

The Panchayat policies adopted by King Mahendra after his coup d’état on December 15, 1960 led the government to introduce a ‘one nation-one ruler, one religion-one language,’ a Mahendra version of ‘one nation-one language policy.’ The Panchayat Policies retracted all the achievements gained during the short-lived Democracy Period.

First, the ruling monarch, and the self-assumed head of the government, formed a party-less government banning all the political parties such as Nepali Congress, Praja Parishad, United Democratic Party, Gorkha Parishad and several communist parties while barring the formation or running of any political party. As a result political parties either dissolved to join the Panchayat Government system or were forced to go underground as most leaders, including the prime minister, were imprisoned.

Second, his policies (hereafter Panchayat policies) imposed Khas/Nepali as the national language making it the medium of instruction in education, public services, and mass media. The Panchayat policies disbanded the teaching of other languages (e.g. Nepal Bhasa and Hindi) and restricted the use of anything except Khas/Nepali at school. Children were reprimanded for speaking their mother tongue among peers at school. The restriction also applied to publication of newspapers and other books than Khas/Nepali language. Violators were penalized, imprisoned and tortured, reminding the public of the past Rana repression. The Panchayat Government also revoked public services in Nepal Bhasa, which was in use in the municipalities in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley), and the Maithil language in use in the southern districts of Dhanusha and Janakpur. The Panchayat policy disbanded the only radio program in Nepal Bhasa. This was the last public usage of Nepal



Bhasa. By 1965, the Panchayat Government closed down all avenues of development for Nepal Bhasa, subjugating it to the external forces of the state policy. Languages are endangered due to external forces such as this.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, Nepal Bhasa was reduced to a ‘definitively endangered language,’ an indication that the Newar have fallen victims in their own country of origin.

Third, the Panchayat policies demeaned the teachings of the Buddha in his own land by declaring Hinduism the state religion. The government not only tolerated a campaign that derogated Buddhism into a branch of Hinduism, but also the army’s gunning down of a peace pagoda in Pukhula (Pokhara) in 1975 built by a Japanese Buddhist mission. Both incidents instigated vehement national and international protests regardless of religious differences.

Moreover, the Panchayat policies marked a period that brought disaster for the diverse nationalities of Nepal, other than the Khas nationality, in general and a second dark period for Nepal Bhasa, its speech community and Buddhism in particular. The Panchayat policies did not tolerate Nepal Bhasa, the Newar or Buddhism, as they were the backbone of Nepal Mandala. The Panchayat policies implied that only the destruction of this backbone would pave way for the Gorkhali victory for the Khas nationality, their language and religion in the territory they conquered. These policies also confirm that King Mahendra finally fulfilled his forefather Prithvinarayan’s third wish<sup>96</sup> to convert Buddhist Nepal into an ‘Asali Hindustan’ (meaning ‘true Hindu country’). The government’s willful actions attest to it. The Panchayat Government provided state funding for the promotion of the Khas/Nepali language from primary school to university, established Sanskrit education free of charge up to university level with full scholarship, established the Public Service Commission (PSC) that trained Khas/Nepali speaking bureaucrats, which rose to the ruling class of elites named CHHE by scholars in Nepal. They also used state funding for restoration of Hindu temples while diverting Japanese donations received for Buddhist temples to Khas/Nepali schools.<sup>97</sup> Through land reforms, the Panchayat Government took

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<sup>95</sup> UNESCO (2003:2).

<sup>96</sup> First two wishes of the Gorkhali king were ‘to possess Nepal for himself’ and to ‘expand Gorkhali empire.’

<sup>97</sup> From interview with the chief prelate of Nepal, the Venerable Aswaghosh Mahathero January 17, 2012.

over the lands belonging to individual Newar and placed their Guthi<sup>98</sup> lands under control of a Guthi Sansthan (state authority over Guthi lands) from 1964.<sup>99</sup> In short, the Panchayat policies benefitted only two groups: King Mahendra reclaimed the unlimited power Prithvinarayan had exercised at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century within the short period of a decade and consolidated it for his family, which his son King Birendra carried over what he had gained while the CHHE who replaced the city-elites asserted its dominance over the diverse population of Nepal within the past three decades from the inception of the Panchayat system in 1961.<sup>100</sup> Further, except for the CHHE, claiming one's fundamental basic right to speech in one's mother tongue was branded as communalism if not penalized for violation of the constitution. The violators were imprisoned and tortured, similar to the time of the Rana repression. But to surprise of many ardent supporters of the Panchayat policies, all their repressive actions brought about the downfall of the Panchayat and the monarchy in 1990.

Beginning with the Nepal Bhasa resistance movement launched by the Newar against state oppression of Nepal Bhasa in 1965; the religious resistance movements against the derogating of Buddhism into a branch of Hinduism and gunning down of the Japanese built peace pagoda in 1975; the failure of sound economic policy and lack of political freedom; all culminated into the mass uprising of the peoples' movement which finally overthrew the Panchayat Government in 1990. I shall expand my discussions on the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa and its speech community in Chapter Three, 'Khas/Nepali only' single language policy in Chapter Six, state society relations under several regimes including the Panchayat in Chapter Seven and resistance movements in Chapter Eight.

#### **2.4. Democratic Governance: Remarkable Policies and Subjugation to Hegemony**

The advent of democracy in Nepal in 1951 after a decade long resistance against Rana repression heralded the first taste of democratic principles. Although the infancy of democracy lasted not more than a decade, a praiseworthy foundation was constructed by some remarkable policies in the political history of Nepal. For the first time, the people tasted the meaning of freedom and basic human rights in the democratic system of

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<sup>98</sup> Trust founded for management of temples and their cultural activities.

<sup>99</sup> Nepal Guthi Sansthan (2011).

<sup>100</sup> Savada (1991).

governance thanks to both lawmakers and law implementers of the time. But in 1960, the taste of democracy was suddenly discontinued halfway by an unexpected coup d'état of King Mahendra, who is also one of the stakeholders of democracy. Although the path to democracy discontinued afterwards for three long decades under Panchayat autocracy, the peoples of Nepal returned to the street to topple Panchayat repression led by King Mahendra and carried over by his son King Birendra in 1990. The multiparty system, developed from an infant level after the revolution in 1950s, was nurtured to a mature level during 16 years of democratic practices and experience of governance by several right leaning parties until 2006.

With uprising of Maoist insurgency, palace massacre and King Gyanendra's attempt to resume his father's old strategy of running the government directly, the second opportunity to democratize the Nepali Government failed. However, during the 16 years of multiparty governance, several praiseworthy initiatives taken by the governments have promoted human rights and multiparty democracy another step forward. If not for the ill-advised attempt of King Gyanendra's to return to Panchayat autocracy, multiparty democracy would have fostered a spatial state for the constitutional monarchy, too. Conversely, the changed circumstance paved way for opportunity to promote multi-culturalism, linguistic diversity in a new atmosphere of inclusive democracy and secular federalism. However, what we must not forget to notice together with these achievements is also the parallel growth of the Caste Hill Hindu Male (CHHE), the ruling class which was nurtured during the 3 decade long Panchayat autocracy. Every CHHE is inherent of a mentality that every Nepali elite constitutes the CHHE. They manipulate the culture of Hinduism that uplifts them as high caste members of society; the ideology that high caste has better opportunities for power, and the power of Khas/Nepali deter other speakers from accessing the political ladder. Unexpectedly, the democratic ideals of equality and justice have been subjected to the hegemony of the CHHE. My effort here is to study how the power of Khas/Nepali has been manipulated to subjugate other languages of Nepal, with special reference to Nepal Bhasa and the Newar, the speech community of that language. However, it is evident that the hegemony that manipulates the culture, ideology and the power in a diverse country like Nepal is not maintained by the CHHE alone. It is sustained with the support of subjugated people like Newar and others similarly unconscious of their

own disparities. It is also apparent that subjugated peoples are not fully ignorant of their disparities. Not all of them let the ruling party manipulate the subjugated as the former wishes. They have time and again, periodically or regularly resisted against the hegemony with their own level of knowledge, unity and activism. Together with language hegemony of Khas/Nepali power, this study focuses on the resistance movement in Nepal. As the study is conducted from the Newar perspective, I examine their grievances and efforts to resist the Khas/Nepali hegemony. This will expose generally the spatial state of the diverse nationalities in Nepal. Next, after outlining the resistance movement of Nepal in this chapter, I shall devote a full chapter to it.

## **2.5. Resistance Movement: A Long Way from Language resistance to demand for Autonomy**

The history of resistance movements starts from time and again at different periods of history as the reality of present Nepal reflects a nation of diverse nationalities made up of many cultures and languages. I shall explore a general history of Nepal related to the mosaic of this nation. However, this study's scope is limited to a selected coverage of the time and space. Hence, I shall be examining the problem from the Newar perspective, an important portion of Nepali society that reflects the impediments of similar nationalities of this nation.

Generally, historians locate the origin of resistance during the Rana regime (1846-1950). Some start with political impediments that the Rana regime has hindered during 1940s while others locate incidents specifically related such as the Lakhan Thapa's resistance which occurred early in that same Rana regime. However, my findings reveal that the origin of resistance movements dates back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century during the time of Prithvinarayan's father Narabhupala Shah of Gorkha, when Gorkha and Nepal (Mandala) were two different principality and state.

The first resistance can be traced from an offensive attack by Narabhupala Shah on Nakva (Nuwakot), the northeast hill court of Nepal Mandala. Narabhupala is said to have been frustrated when his army, led by several army officers, was defeated at their attack on Nakva. The Newar army repulsed the attack. Regmi has elaborated on how Narabhupala was frustrated at the defeat. 'In 1737 headed by the Panthas, Khasas and Magars, the army

of his father Narabhupala, was heavily defeated while fighting Noakot [Nakva], [...] he became insane two years later' (Regmi 2007:92). According to Regmi, Prithvinarayan was made a co-regency to look after the State affairs of his father during this time of insanity. Prithvinarayan was 16 years old then. In another event that took place 5 years later, the Newar army resisted the attack on Nakva, this time launched by Prithvinarayan himself after he became king of Gorkha in 1742. The same source in Regmi provides a clear picture of what happened in his first attack on Nepal Mandala. Prithvinarayan entrusted the command of his force to Kazi Vijaya Thapa to attack Nakva:

The Kazi however, would not cross the river Trisuli, though there was no resistance from the Newars, because he understood that the unfavorable nature of the uplands of Noakot<sup>101</sup> placed the defenders in advantage. But Prithvinarayana himself intervened and not minding the captain's advice, the forces crossed the Trisuli with Maheswar Pantha. But like his father he was heavily defeated by the Jayaprakasa's army...<sup>102</sup>

These were the two earliest incidents of resistance that can be traced so far in the history of Nepal Mandala, the original Nepal. The two resistance movements clarify two important points. One, the origin of resistance that repulsed the military attack by the Gorkha army who attempted to capture Nepal Mandala. Two, it became clear that the Newar would have to prolong resistance against Prithvinarayan's offensive attacks. Thus, Prithvinarayan continued to attack one village or other court in Nepal Mandala from one point of entry to another until he captured Nepal Mandala, while the Newar continued resisting and repulsing until they lost to Prithvinarayan. He finally took control of Yen (Kathmandu) on September 25, 1768, and continued to capture Khopa (Bhaktapur) in November 1769, ending the long history of Malla rule in Nepal.

Some historians call this tragic ending of the Malla Dynasty at the hands of Gorkha invaders, the beginning of the 'Shah Dynasty' while others assert it is the beginning of the 'Modern period' in the history of Nepal. With the advent of Gorkha rulers in Nepal Mandala, everything was changed: from dynasty name Malla to Shah, country name Nepal Mandala to Gorkha Nepal, Nepami, the term for people of Nepal Mandala to Newar, Buddhism to Hinduism, Nepal Bhasa to Gorkhali Bhasa (Khas/Nepali) and Nepal Samvat to Saka Samvat. As a result the military resistance also changed to subaltern resistance, though the military repression did not. We shall see this later. We shall also

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<sup>101</sup> Nakva (in Nepal Bhasa).

<sup>102</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007:97).

focus on the shift of resistance goals from demands for equal language rights to the right to autonomous rule. The declaration of an autonomous State of Newar on December 28, 2008 attests the shift from Nepal Bhasa resistant movement to the political movement of Newar activism. It aims to resist 240 year old centralized system of governance and the single communal government as well. We shall explore details inside the chapters to follow. Before I conclude this chapter, there is one last important factor to explore as to why the resistance movements continue lengthening in Nepal. As noted above the language resistance has shifted to the extent that the related speech communities have for past decades been active in working toward autonomous states. Similarly the Newar groups have formed a national alliance for achieving an autonomous State for the Newar, too. I shall return to this later (See 8.5.). However, one of the main factors for the prolonged resistance movement can be attributed to the law enforcement. Although policies are drawn through several mechanisms such as the Constitution, executive order, etc., neither policies nor laws are implemented as they are supposed to be. I shall examine below how laws are implemented in Nepal.

## **2.6. Law Enforcement and Nepal Bhasa**

Two government directives, one issued in September 1995 and another in November 1998, combined together, provide a somewhat clear picture about the state of law enforcement and Nepal Bhasa. They reflect the government's response, the discretion of the bureaucracy, and the speech community's helplessness in today's Nepal.

The State owned Gorkhapatra (daily newspaper) published the government's first directive in Khas/Nepali on September 9, 1995 with the title – '*Nepal Bhasa*' Hereafter – as follows:

September 9, 1995, Kathmandu: His Majesty's Government has decided to replace the term 'Newari Bhasa' so far used by government media with 'Nepal Bhasa' hereafter.

The decision was taken at the cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Manamohan Adhikari held at the TU Teaching Hospital, Maharajganj yesterday, said the cabinet secretariat.

Newars have been demanding [the government] to replace the term Newari with 'Nepal Bhasa' since the beginning. RSS.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> My translation from Khas/Nepali news article. See Appendix-4 for the facsimile of the originals.

The second government directive was titled – *Directive to use the term ‘Nepal Bhasa.’*

November 14, 1998, Kathmandu: Information and Communication Minister Radhakrishna Mainali has issued directives to all government media to use ‘Nepal Bhasa’ henceforth in place of Newar Bhasa...

It is noteworthy that though the decision was taken by the cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Manamohan Adhikari in September 1995 to use Newar people’s original language Nepal Bhasa in all government media, it has not been implemented...<sup>104</sup>

### ***The Government Response***

The first directive reflects the concern of multiparty democratic governments which responded to the demands of the people aspiring for basic human right of cultural pluralism, secularism and linguistic diversity when they supported the people’s movement in 1990 that overthrew autocratic Panchayat regime. The Newar were in the forefront demanding language rights and education in mother tongue for all citizens of Nepal. The demand to replace ‘Newari’ with ‘Nepal Bhasa’ was one of them. The Panchayat Government had declared Khas Bhasa as Nepali and official while labeling Newari as Nepal Bhasa in 1960s. The Nepal Bhasa struggle for language rights which goes back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, reinvigorated as a resistant movement against the imposition of ‘Nepali only’ policy in 1962. Despite the democratic changes in the country in 1990, the official media relayed as ‘Newari’ after the authorities reinstated the once banned news broadcast in Nepal Bhasa. The Nepali Congress Government formed after the first democratic elections held in May 1991 ignored the demands of the people for language rights. But after the second general election in 1994, the first communist government of Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari finally responded to the demand to replace Newari with its legitimate name, ‘Nepal Bhasa.’ The Man Mohan Adhikari decision replicated above was meant to rectify the incorrect label and replace it with the correct term Nepal Bhasa. Conventionally, the laws and policies are formulated through proposal, legislation, and cabinet decisions. As April Linton pointed out, language policy is formulated to ‘protect the rights of individuals or groups to learn, use and maintain languages’ (Linton 2009). But the government’s own agency and official mouthpiece, Radio Nepal, has so far ignored the law formulated by cabinet decision, and continued announcing ‘Newari’ in its broadcasts despite the call for rectification to ‘Nepal Bhasa.’

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

### ***Discretion of the Bureaucracy***

Conventionally, a decision made in a cabinet meeting led by the prime minister is an enforceable law. But the authorities of government agencies indicate that enforcement of such laws is at their discretions. The second directive from the previous section attests the indifferent attitude of concerned authorities in the official media. Despite the first directive of the Adhikari cabinet in September 1995, Radio Nepal continued willfully announcing the Nepal Bhasa news program as ‘Newari.’ The second directive was issued after a delegation of Nepal Bhasa Manka Khala (Nepal Bhasa General Association), the largest Nepal Bhasa advocacy group, met with the Minister of Information and Communication C. P. Mainali and handed him a memorandum on November 13, 1998. It is said that the minister, having received the Manka Khala delegation and listened to their grievances, had ordered the Secretary of the Ministry to immediately implement the directive to replace Newari with Nepal Bhasa. Nonetheless, Radio Nepal has not followed the minister’s directive for the past 15 years. In my recent double checking with the programme schedule of Radio Nepal, the news programme in Nepal Bhasa has been clearly printed as ‘09:10–09:15 Newari news’ and sometimes as ‘09:00–09:15 news in nepali/newari’ on the daily programme schedule available on Radio Nepal’s website<sup>105</sup>. It is not easy to guess the attitude of Radio Nepal, whether they are simply carefree or blatantly continuing to call Nepal Bhasa ‘Newari’ despite the double official directives of the nation’s cabinet: one from the prime minister, another from the Minister in charge of the Radio Nepal. Further, the secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication himself is the chairperson of the government owned Radio Nepal. One cannot call the actions of Radio Nepal fully blatant either, because a weekly programme is correctly printed as ‘10:05-11:00 *Nepal Bhasa ko program*’ (Programme in Nepal Bhasa) on Wednesday’s schedule. However, what has become crystal clear is that the government’s own agencies can disobey government directives. Despite the government directives being issued to official media long ago – the first directive in September, 1995 and the second directive in November 1998, Radio Nepal has not implemented the Adhikari cabinet decision to replace ‘Newari’ with ‘Nepal Bhasa.’ The government directives have been left to the discretion of the bureaucracy for the past 18 years.

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<sup>105</sup> Radio Nepal <http://www.radionepal.gov.np/programs.php>. Accessed September 21, 2013, 20:00 hours Nepal time.



## **2.7. The Incapacitation of the Speech Community**

The bureaucracy alone may not be irreproachable, but the incapacity of the concerned community, too. One explanation as to why the first directive was not implemented was that the government of Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari collapsed before the cabinet decision was passed to official media. The Adhikari government collapsed 4 days after said decision was taken. Yet it is difficult to imagine that the cabinet decision was not passed on to the government mouthpiece, Radio Nepal. According to Geoffrey Robertson, the law is enforceable and everyone in society is required to obey it as it is framed by the authority of government through legislature and executive decree, and faces punishment if the law is broken (Robertson 2006:90). But in Nepal, government agencies' executive attitudes imply the law is for the common citizenry to follow while the ruling class enforces it, and inaction of the bureaucracy passes the blame to the incapacity of the subjected to respond to or resist the indifferent stance. Government decisions in Nepal have stagnated at the policy level without being implemented into enforceable laws. The repercussions of this stagnation on the subjected are tremendous.

## **2.8. Summing Up**

This chapter explored definitions of some important terms such as Newar, Nepal, Nepal Mandala, Nepal Bhasa, and Nepal Samvat, terms that are inseparable from Nepal and Newar identity. Among them, this chapter elaborated on Newar and Nepal Mandala the two terms that have been rarely discussed enough in literature which focuses on Nepal. Many scholars both national and international explore matters related to Newar and Nepal Mandala through the third party information approach, not the participatory approach. Therefore, the terms have not been properly understood, particularly by non-Newar locals and foreign researchers. Needless to assert that it is of paramount importance to understand the meanings of local terms, the definitions explored above can be summed up as: Newar is a colloquial term for Nepal. It is also the name for both country and its people while Nepal Mandala refers to the State of Nepal and Nepami refers to the people of Nepal in specific local terms. However, the Gorkhali conquerors referred Newar or Newari to refer the Nepami and Nepal Bhasa in an attempt to separate them from original terms.

The Gorkhali conquest not only changed the name of the people but also displaced

the original identity of Nepal. They replaced 'Nepal' with 'Gorkha Nepal', Nepal Bhasa and Lipi with Gorkhali Bhasa and Indian Devanagari Lipi, Nepal Samvat with Indian Saka Samvat and Buddhism with Hinduism in addition to Nepami with Newar or Newari as implied by the coin issued after the conquest of Nepal by Gorkhali ruler Prithvinarayan. The term Gorkha Nepal was rejected by the British in 1816 hence Nepal remained its original name. Nepal Bhasa also remained the language of the State and the people for a long time despite its protracted discouragement, open suppression by Gorkhali (both Shah and Rana) rulers and until it was officially replaced by the Panchayat autocracy in 1962.

Having fought and weakened by the state power of Khas community led by CHHE at times, the Newar resistances have not only regained its vigor and determination but recently shifted the strategy also from Nepal Bhasa movement to demanding an Autonomous Newar State (ANS) reflecting the disparities faced by a major section of Nepali people. This chapter also highlighted the change from century long autocratic rule to multiparty and later inclusive democratic system of governance in the country but made point of reference to the ruling class led by the CHHE where the problem remains to troubleshoot. In the context of change of the governance system, drafting laws and policies in Nepal, the framers of law have shown enough competencies. But, despite political understanding of the changes required for the benefit of the people being recognized by the elected law makers, the urgency of implementing laws has not been understood by the appointed law enforcers whose majority is formed by the CHHE. This study attempts to find causes for these grave discrepancies and how they have affected a larger section of the diverse population of Nepal. For the purpose, a year long fieldwork was conducted in the Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) in addition to participatory observation and the literature study. I shall explore the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa reflecting on the fieldwork in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **SPATIAL STATE OF NEPAL BHASA IN NEPAL TODAY: REFLECTIONS ON THE LANGUAGE SURVEY**

Nepal Bhasa, the original language of Nepal has a long history. It has been spoken by the people of Nepal for three millennia. It has a fully developed written tradition. It was the State Language of Nepal (*Desa Bhasa*) since the Malla period (1200-1769). But since the ‘unification’ initiated with the invasion of Nepal in 1769 by Gorkha ruler and military take over by Rana military officer in 1846, Nepal Bhasa has been displaced from its position of the State language. By 1906, Nepal Bhasa faced restrictions imposed by a Rana ruler. Since then, the Newar people have struggled to revive their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa for the past hundred years. Despite the change in the governance system in Nepal from autocracy to democracy, the state of Nepal Bhasa has improved very little.

This chapter reflects the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa today from empirical data gathered at the language survey conducted in Swanigah (Kathmandu valley) area as a major part of fieldwork. Interviews (conducted with residents of different caliber) and participatory observations (of the events) in the area were other parts of the fieldwork. The fieldwork was conducted from early February 2011 to late January 2012. The report stemming from this fieldwork is divided into three parts. It reflects 1) Attitudes towards the use of Nepal Bhasa, 2) Legal consciousness, 3) Space of Nepal Bhasa in the state policy, as witnessed by the respondents in the language survey, and 4) Sustenance of Nepal Bhasa by community initiative and the profile of respondents to language survey. Before reflecting on the results of the language survey in detail, I shall make an overview of the language survey in brief.

#### **3.1. Language Survey: An Overview**

In order to understand the present situation of Nepal Bhasa in its land of origin, a) I interviewed several individuals of scholars, advocates, activists, common citizenry and students; b) conducted a questionnaire survey; and c) participated in as much as events of the Newar and that related to Nepal Bhasa during the fieldwork. These methods were

aimed at gathering empirical data from respondents' awareness and experiences about the Nepal Bhasa issue. The scope in this report is limited to the Newar community. But its result should substantially support my investigation on how the single language policy can affect the rest of the Nepali population in multilingual Nepal.

### **3.1.1. Interviews**

The most interviews were prearranged and limited to 10 specific questions<sup>106</sup> to ease the burden of the interviewee in consideration of his or her busy schedule and permitted time. The 10 questions can be summarized into the following:

The first 3 questions (1, 2, 3) focused on historical aspects of Nepal Bhasa, its origination, speech community, contribution to constructing Newar people as a nation, and the historical contributions to the progress of Nepal Bhasa.

The next 2 questions (4, 5) were about the historical development and decline of Nepal Bhasa under the changed political context of the past decades. They were about their experiences regarding the government language policy, which was once repressive and hegemonic, and how this affected Nepal Bhasa and the Newar personally.

The other 3 questions (6, 7, 8) were related to the present situation of Nepal Bhasa, attitudes of the Newar, particularly the youth, who have shown little enough enthusiasm about their own mother tongue. They asked about how the new laws related to language rights will benefit the speech community and about using Nepal Bhasa as a state language in the event of gaining Newar autonomy under the federalism oriented new Constitution.

The ninth question was about what would contribute to the future development of Nepal Bhasa, while the last question was about the literary work or socio-political contribution of the interviewee to the Newar and Nepal Bhasa. Many were reluctant to answer this question at the beginning as it sounded self-centered. But when I changed the question to one of individual experience, they happily shared with me their invaluable stories. A basic background of these interviewees will enhance the information I gathered from them.

Agewise, of twenty people I interviewed, the youngest respondent among women was 34 year old actress and a cinema director, and youngest among men was a 44 year old

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<sup>106</sup> See Appendix-2 for the questions.

journalist. The eldest among women was a 58 year old professor and the eldest among men was a 91 year old university chancellor. They were the residents of four specific locations I chose for the fieldwork during which I interviewed the respondents. The locations were three Durbar squares (old palace areas) in Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Lalitpur) and Khopa (Bhaktapur) and Keerti Mandapa Vihara (temple) area in Kipoo (Keertipur). All these four areas were accessible by public transportation within 30 minutes to 1 hour. All of the interviewees belong to middle class in terms of socio-economic status. Among them, there were several political leaders of different ranking in the party and the government such as one party president and two ministers; several university professors from lecturers to two chancellors, and several Nepal Bhasa and Newar organization leaders, officials and active members. Most of the respondents were well-known people who enjoyed high social respect. I approached them for interview since I knew some of them personally while others were introduced by my friends and acquaintances. The information collected from these respondents guided my investigation of the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa. I have quoted some of them directly in my research result.

The interviews were conducted mostly at the respondents' homes or at respondents' offices or at quite restaurants at an appointed day and time in the said locations. Most of these Durbar square locations are habitations of the Newar people who have lived in these areas since time immemorial. My experience of living near the Durbar Square of Yen (Kathmandu) provided me a kind familiarity with people I interviewed in this area. Similar locations (Durbar squares) in other areas such as Yala and Khopa were unexpectedly chosen as the respondents had one way or other acquaintancy with other respondents of mine. Thus, the interrelations with each respondent provided me an easy approach to the interview. But there were occasions where I had visited twice or thrice to the homes of my respondents for one, some were willing to respond me more than one time while a few others had forgotten that they had given me time to meet them because of their busy schedules. For example, I met a political party president two times at his home while I had followed him in several meetings he attended. And I met a senior journalist and leader of AFANS at my third attempt. The third attempt paved way for me to meeting several other respondents. The interviews conducted were recorded in a voice recorder while others were recorded in writing as some preferred my notetaking over recording their voice. Next, I shall outline the questionnaire in brief.

### 3.1.2. Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey was designed with 35 questions, dividing them into 6 categories. Thirty-two questions were multiple choice and 3 questions sought written answers from the respondents. The written answers provided the most important data, data I had targeted for this study: how the respondents viewed the status of their MT Nepal Bhasa, and how they viewed the single language policy in Nepal. The rest of the questions provided the background of the respondents, particularly regarding their educational qualifications, and hence their economic positions and social statuses in both Newar and larger Nepali society. The 35 questions were segmented under 1) identity regarding Nepal Bhasa, 2) legal consciousness of Nepal Bhasa and its future, 3) Nepal Bhasa and Newar territory, 4) Nepal Bhasa and religion, 5) profession and education of the Newar, and 6) miscellany, including personal interests and hobbies linking Nepal Bhasa and other periphery languages.

I adapted the questionnaire from a framework designed by two senior professors Naoki Ogoshi and Tooru Hayashi of the University of Tokyo, whose joint report on ‘Questionnaire Surveys of Korean/Japanese and Turkish German Speakers’ was published in November 2004 under a project of Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim of the Faculty of Informatics, Osaka Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan. Both questionnaire surveys conducted by Ogoshi and Hayashi have targeted foreigner or immigrant communities, studying ‘Attitudes to Language Use in a Multi-cultural Setting.’ Ogoshi targeted the students of Korean ethnic schools in Japan in 2001 and their parents or guardians (Ogoshi and Hayashi 2004:3). He aimed at understanding the ‘use and awareness of language and their changes’ among the Korean residents in Japan. Meanwhile Hayashi’s target was on ‘mostly German born Turkish students, who live in a district with a large Turkish population and whose parents value the connection with Turkey’ (ibid: 140). As both these surveys were conducted in multicultural settings, they give useful guidance for me to look at the problem of how survey respondents have maintained their mother tongues: Turkish for the German born Turkish in Germany, and Korean for the Japan born Koreans in Japan. In that sense, my study is quite analogous to the multilingual settings of both surveys. But the difference of this study is the target respondents. In both cases of Germany and Japan, the subjects were immigrants or the children of immigrants to. But the target respondents of this study are the native Newar of Nepal. There is a history of diverse

people joining the native Newar some millennia ago. But the Newar have been a single nation latest since the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD, when they became first nation to compile written law in the world.

### **3.1.3. Participatory Observation and Respondents**

This chapter will also reflect my observation and experiences I have gained at events, functions, meetings and personal communication with the respondents. My observations will stem from not only the time I spent with respondents at events I participated during my field from February 2011 to January 2012 but also from an accumulation of experiences I have had living with Newar people and visiting them often and learning from them for the past thirty years. But to differentiate individuals who participated in the interview, questionnaire and events from others, I have referred them as ‘respondents’ in this chapter and through out this study. With regard to the number of respondents and their reflection in the data, it is important to clear here that the numerical data retrieved from the questionnaire survey represent only as an example of the situation not the accurate number population in the whole area as data was collected only from 171 respondents. But the percentage of the data is helpful to get a general idea of the situation. As noted earlier, this is the first questionnaire survey conducted on the use of Nepal Bhasa in Swanigah.<sup>107</sup> Hence, there is no other earlier numerical data to compare with.

I shall now examine the special state of Nepal Bhasa with empirical data gathered from my respondents at interviews, questionnaire survey and my participation in the events I met many of them.

### **3.1.4. The Profile of the Respondents**

The respondents to the language survey were overwhelmingly residents of Yen (Kathmandu), followed by two other major cities in Swanigah and others. Forty one point 5 percent were from Yen, 22.22 percent from Yala, 15.8 percent from Khopa, 2.92 percent

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<sup>107</sup> Regmi (2011) refers to a previous language survey of Nepal but notes that no report has been published yet. In the interview with me, Professor Tejratna Kansakar, who has also been a member of the language survey confirmed the same. According to him, the survey related to Nepal Bhasa was being conducted outside Swanigah but inside Nepal Mandala. He was hopeful that the report once published may give some important data. No respondents in my survey seemed aware of any previous survey.

from Kipoo, 1.17 percent was from Sindhupalanchuka (Sindhupalanchok), and 0.58 percent each from Bhojpur, Surkhet, Bhota (Banepa), Thimi (Madhyapur), while 3 respondents from Kathmandu were originally from Tanahun, Bandipur, and Sankhuwasabha each, and one respondent from Bhojpur was originally from Yala. But 14.07 percent of the respondents have not indicated their place of residence in the questionnaire form. There is no good reason to avoid entering it. They must have simply missed the item out.

The respondents have provided their religious belief and tradition that 53.8 percent of them follow Buddhism, 18.7 percent Hinduism, an equal 18.7 percent Vajrayana, (Nepal's distinct religion integrated with Buddhism and Hinduism), 4.7 percent both Buddhism and Vajrayana, 2.36 percent both Hinduism and Buddhism, while 3 persons responded: 'Hinduism, Buddhism and Vajrayana', 'no religion' and 'neutral' to religion respectively.

The respondents were from diverse educational professional background. Some had administrative experience in running the government from the beginning of the history of Nepal. However, their present state and space differ from the past. The respondents disclosed that 38 percent of them were engaged in private sector as owners or proprietors of variety of businesses and trades. Fourteen percent work as administrative staff. One point eight percent works in semi-government professions. Others include 14 percent students, and 1.8 percent unpaid individuals professing religion and pursuing politics. The respondents included one law graduate involved in a human rights NGO administrative position. She also holds an executive position in a major Newar organization. Of the total 171 respondents 29.8 percent did not enter a profession. There were no respondent from the professions of military, police nor medical sector. Several doctors who participated in the questionnaire were Ph.D. holders.

Moreover, the educational qualifications of the respondents were spread out from primary level to the highest university degree, in which expert fields ranged from humanities and social sciences to management and education. Among them, the highest percentage of 35.6 were experts in humanities subjects, 19.3 percent in social sciences, 14 percent in management, 7 percent in sciences, and 2.4 percent in administration, while one respondent professed engineering. Aside from them, 2.4 percent replied 'other' while 17.5 percent did not respond the question. The respondents also shared their alma mater. Of



them, 88.3 percent had received education inside Nepal while 11.7 percent had received education abroad. They represented a number of foreign countries. Five respondents received higher education in India followed by three in the US and Germany, with one in Japan, Russia, Canada, France, Belgium, and Yugoslavia each. This ends the reflection on the questionnaire survey results conducted as a major part of the fieldwork in Nepal during one year period from early February 2011 to the end of January 2012.

### **3.2. Attitudes towards the Use of Nepal Bhasa**

Attitudes of both the concerned community and the responsible government in a country make notable impacts. Here, I reflect the attitude of the concerned community the Newar towards their MT: Nepal Bhasa, then move on to the attitude of the Government of Nepal.

#### **3.2.1. Community Attitude**

Generally, the Newar people living both inside Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) and outside have a positive attitude towards Nepal Bhasa as their MT, and also as their parents' or grand parents' MT. However, it is not so when it is assessed numerically. According to Census 2011, out of 1,321,933 Newar people (5% of the total population of Nepal), Nepal Bhasa is now the MT of only 846,557 Newar people (3.2 % of total population).<sup>108</sup> In other words, Nepal Bhasa is MT of 64% of the total Newar population. This suggests that 36% of the Newar population have shifted their MT to another language (most probably Khas/Nepali) reflecting that their attitude towards Nepal Bhasa is negative. Factors for declining of a language attributes to two major forces: internal and external forces. According to UNESCO experts of language endangerment, internal force refers to maintenance or abandonment of the speakers while external force refers to outside influences including the state policy. "National policy, including the lack of overt policy, has in any case a direct impact on the language attitude of the community itself."<sup>109</sup>

Swanigah (Kathmandu valley) as noted in the previous chapter is a major part of ancient Nepal (Nepal Mandala), the native land of the Newar. Despite the large migration

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<sup>108</sup> Census (2011) taken: June 22, 2011 while the preliminary report was out in November 2012.

<sup>109</sup> UNESCO (2003: 13).

of Non-Newar people from outside, the Newar people remain still the majority in the Swanigah area. But the language survey I conducted in the area for this study shows that external force has affected the language attitude of the Newar the most in their native land, itself. For instance, out of total 171, three respondents answered the questionnaire survey in Khas/Nepali because they neither spoke nor wrote Nepal Bhasa. Although the number is minimal here, the actual results show the general attitude among some sections of Newar people towards their MT Nepal Bhasa is diminishing. Let us now compare some data related to attitude towards the use of Nepal Bhasa by ‘with whom and where’ the language is used. The data in the table below will give a summarized picture of the use of Nepal Bhasa among Newar people while short analyses of each item will follow.

**a) Nepal Bhasa at Home**

Of those surveyed, 84 percent said that they speak Nepal Bhasa at home. (The lowest percentage where Nepal Bhasa was spoken was at school, we shall see it below.) Some respondents specified with whom they speak their mother tongue at home (See Table-9.). Of the 10 percent who specified, 9 percent showed that they speak Nepal Bhasa with parents.

Table-9: With whom or where do you speak Nepal Bhasa?

	Specified as	Unspecified	Respondents	Total	Ratio
a)	At home 18→ With my family (Parents - 16, Children – 1, Grandparents – 1)	126→	144	171	84
b)	With friends		115	171	67
c)	With neighbors		107	171	62
d)	At temple		78	171	45.6
e)	At office/work		64	171	37
f)	At school		42	171	24.5

This may depict a growing trend among the Newar that may mean the parents are elderly, while the respondents are of middle age, and speak Nepal Bhasa with their elderly parents but not with their children. Meanwhile, only one respondent showed that he/she speaks the

language with their children at home. This could mean one of two things: one, that the respondent is an elderly person who continues to speak Nepal Bhasa with his/her children. Two, the respondent is a middle aged person who wants to maintain the practice of speaking Nepal Bhasa, their mother tongue, among his/her children. Another specified response was that the respondent speaks Nepal Bhasa with only his or her grandparents. This is another side of the aforementioned growing trend of Newar parents (especially young parents) who do not use Nepal Bhasa when speaking to their children even at home. A comparison between two age groups, each with a similar number of respondents: 65 percent of the 15-20 age group speak Nepal Bhasa at home while 93 percent of the 61-70 age group speak it at home (See Table-10.). Thus, the trend of speaking Nepal Bhasa, the MT of the Newar, at home is in decline.

#### **b) Nepal Bhasa with Friends**

Friends are the second largest group that the respondents speak Nepal Bhasa with: 67 percent of the 171 respondents (See Table-9.). Here the friends should be understood as friends at school and outside school such as socio-cultural clubs and literary associations. The respondents constituted different ages from 10 year old primary students to 80 year old retired elders. They were from diverse professions as noted above (See 3.1.4.). I segmented them into eight age groups to understand the difference in usage of Nepal Bhasa with people and places (Table-10). The usage of Nepal Bhasa among friends is also in decline when comparing a younger age group with an older age group. Among the younger age group, 15-20 individuals that include mostly high school to university students speaking Nepal Bhasa, the survey disclosed that only 21 percent of them use Nepal Bhasa among friends. When comparing this percentage with the older age group of 61-70, 86 percent speak Nepal Bhasa with their friends. The 21 percent of 15-20 year olds was also found to be the lowest percentage while the 87 percent of the 41-50 age group was slightly higher than the 61-70 age group. The difference can be attributed to the larger number of 41-50 age group participating in the survey than the number of the 61-70 age group. But the data confirms the declining trend of speaking Nepal Bhasa among friends and implies the influence 'Khas/Nepali only' policy of the Government of Nepal.

Table-10: Nepal Bhasa Speakers by home friends, neighbors, temple, work/office, and school

Age groups	Home		Friends		Neighbors		Temple		Work/Office		School		Total Respondents		
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total
10~14	2	2	2		1							1	3	2	5
	40%	40%	40%		20%							20%	60%	40%	100
15~20	4	5	1	2	2	1	2	1			3		8	6	14
	29%	36%	7%	14%	14%	7%	14%	7%			21%		57%	43%	100
21~30	9	2	6	1	6	1	3		2		1		11	2	13
	69%	15%	46%	8%	46%	8%	23%		15%		8%		85%	15%	100
31~40	5	17	4	13	3	14	2	10	2	9	1	1	12	21	33
	15%	51%	12%	39%	9%	42%	6%	30%	6%	27%	3%	3%	36%	83%	100
41~50	10	33	11	29	8	28	6	18	5	17	3	11	11	35	46
	22%	72%	24%	63%	17%	61%	13%	39%	11%	37%	7%	24%	24%	76%	100
51~60	7	32	5	27	5	25	5	20	3	18	3	13	7	36	43
	16%	74%	12%	63%	12%	58%	12%	47%	7%	42%	7%	30%	16%	83%	100
61~70		13		12		11		9		7		5		14	14
		93%		86%		79%		64%		50%		36%		100%	100
71~80	1	2		2		2		2		1			1	2	3
	33%	67%		67%		67%		67%		33%			33%	90%	100

Note: •Percentage calculation Example:  $3/5 \times 100 = 60\%$

•F: Female; M: Male

### c) Nepal Bhasa Speaking Neighbors

Of the 171 respondents to the survey, only 62 percent replied that they speak their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa with neighbors. 38 percent indicated ‘no’ to whether they speak Nepal Bhasa with their neighbors. The children now speak least with their neighbors in Nepal Bhasa. Only 20 percent of the age group 10-14 used their mother tongue in their own neighborhood. While comparing the situation between the 15-20 age group and the 61-70 age group, the former scored 21 percent while the latter scored 79 percent. The Newar neighborhood is a construction of *Chuka, Nani, Baha*<sup>110</sup> structure built on the Newar culture of Buddhist art and architecture. For Newar children, *Chuka, Nani* and *Baha* are inseparable. They are places for play and sports; for families they are places to organize parties, festivals and places to cook small or huge feasts. For Buddhist gurus, the *Baha* is

<sup>110</sup> *Chuka Nani, Baha* (In Nepal Bhasa: courtyard, small courtyard, and temple courtyard).

both resident and religious practices; for devotees the Buddha shrine and the *Baha* courtyard are the place of worship. The entire Newar society has been constructed on *Chuka, Nani, Baha* structure since Buddhism arrived in Nepal and blended with Hindu religious practices to construct Nepal's distinct religion of Vajrayana. For the past half century, the Newar neighborhood has been experiencing noticeable changes in the language spoken in the area. Close to half the residents now do not speak Nepal Bhasa (See Table-3.).

The result of the survey of the Newar neighborhood shows that their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa is shifting away from their neighborhood. This suggests either Newar are giving up their mother tongue or the migrant population of non-Newar is gradually replacing the native Newar, and thus Nepal Bhasa, in the Newar neighborhood.

#### **d) Nepal Bhasa at Temple**

Only 46 percent of the survey respondents overall use Nepal Bhasa at temple. To compare age groups, 64 percent of the age group 51-60 speak their mother tongue at temple, while only 21 percent of the 15-20 age group uses Nepal Bhasa at temple.

*Baha*, or temple, (as aforementioned) is a part and parcel of *Chuka, Nani* and *Baha* structure of the Newar traditional habitation. No event, festival, rite/ritual or even birthday celebration began in the past without an initial worship at the temple. It is also an inseparable part of Nepal Bhasa. While many scriptures are in Sanskrit, most commentaries to them are found in Nepal Bhasa as it is the common language of the people, used by both Vajracharya gurus (priests) of the temple and their devotees. Religious sermons are given in Nepal Bhasa. But within the past fifty years the linguistic culture has been shifting towards decline. An important anniversary celebration of Vajracharya Preservation Trust (VPT), held while I was on my fieldwork in Kathmandu, attested to my observation of Nepal Bhasa's decline, even at temple activities. There is no doubt that the gurus still use Nepal Bhasa while many visitors to the temple continue to speak Nepal Bhasa. The change is the decreasing trend of the visitors. The event I happened to observe was held to celebrate the anniversary of the VPT at Mubaha (Mula Sri Mahavihara)<sup>111</sup> in Kathmandu on February 26, 2011. About 50 members of the VPT that

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<sup>111</sup> Every Buddhist monastery has both Nepal Bhasa and Sanskrit names. In parenthesis

included the most senior members of 45 main *Bahas* (temples) in Kathmandu and the executive members attended the annual gathering. Announcement of the meeting, welcome speech, annual report and (except accounts<sup>112</sup>) some other speeches were all given in Nepal Bhasa. But when it came time to hand over appreciation letters to two members who were selected for their contributions to VPT activities, a professor read them. He spoke in Khas/Nepali and read out the appreciation letters in Khas/Nepali. I realized later that it was unusual only to me, not to any of the Vajracharya gurus attending the gathering of the VPT, whose president was no ordinary guru but at a very respectable level among the Vajracharya, and a Nepal Bhasa scholar plus former advocacy leader. When I asked the General Secretary of the VPT at the tea party that followed the annual meeting whether it was usual to use Khas/Nepali in Vajracharya meetings, his answer was “no, but he is a professor who speaks better Khas/[Nepali] than Nepal Bhasa.” Vajracharya gurus have contributed not only to the promotion of Buddhism but also of Nepal Bhasa and its scripts. They were those who preached and compiled Holy Scriptures in Nepal Bhasa.<sup>113</sup> Pundit Nishthananda Vajracharya was the first Newar literati, who compiled and printed his book *Ekavimsati Prajnaparamita* (Buddha’s Teaching of Wisdom) with moveable type in 1909. He is credited for publishing the first printed book on his own in the history of printing books in Nepal Bhasa. But the use of Nepal Bhasa at Buddhist temples has declined to a level where some Vajracharya scholars have started to replace Nepal Bhasa with Khas/Nepali.

#### **e) Nepal Bhasa at Workplace/Office**

Among the respondents I sought answers from for the questionnaire, only 37 percent answered that they use Nepal Bhasa at their work/offices, while 63 percent answered ‘negative.’ Among the 21-30 age group only 15 percent answered ‘yes’ while the 61-70 age group maintains its majority in using their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa even at work. At least 50 percent showed that they use Nepal Bhasa at work/the office. However, the

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is Sanskrit (Allen 2005: 42).

<sup>112</sup> Account report is written in Khas/Nepali as it is submitted to government tax office. However, I found one cooperative run by the Newar entrepreneurs publishing the accounts in Nepal Bhasa.

<sup>113</sup> Professor Premshanti Tuladhar speaking at the Encoding of Nepal Script Consultative meeting held at Hotel Harati in Kathmandu on March 20, 2010.

environment is not yet conducive to working in Nepal Bhasa officially despite the laws that were enshrined since 1991 A.D. The Constitution 1991 recognized the existence of languages other than Khas/Nepali. The Interim Constitution 2007 has given future hopes for a possible upward trend in the use of Nepal Bhasa at work/offices located at least inside the Swanigah. But the situation will depend on both the Newar people and the State language policy implementation.

Most government offices are located in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) while major government agencies are concentrated in Yen (Kathmandu) City, which is the larger by both urban area and population. According to the Census 2001, the largest ethnic group is Newar (29.6 percent), while the rest included Matwali (25.1 percent Gurung, Tamang, Magar, etc.), Khas Brahmin (20.51 percent), and Chettri (18.5 percent).<sup>114</sup> The major languages spoken are Nepal Bhasa, Khas/Nepali and English. The CBS has changed the census method by eliminating the ‘city and district demography by caste/ethnicity and mother tongue’ since its Census 2011 with no proper explanation. Nepal Bhasa is not used as a language of official communication at work except in two situations: one at particular desks where Nepal Bhasa applications are submitted in offices such as Kathmandu Municipality, and a handful of sections at city offices in Yala (Lalitpur), Khopa (Bhaktapur), Thimi (Madhyapur), Kipoo (Kirtipur) and resumed at Radio Nepal and newly started at Nepal Television to relay Nepal Bhasa programs after the People’s Movement-II in April 2006. Further, in private companies, printing presses and some small workplaces with a lesser number of employees, Nepal Bhasa is spoken. However, such workplaces are gradually being replaced by non-Newar proprietor operated workplaces, factories etc. Kansakar pointed out that Khas/Nepali and English are used more frequently than Nepal Bhasa, and Hindi is used to communicate with Indian customers (2004:39) for two reasons. One, that the educated Newar speak several languages, and two, more Khas/Nepali is spoken at market places in the city.

#### **f) Nepal Bhasa at School**

Out of 171 Newar individuals, only 25 percent answered “yes” to whether the respondent uses Nepal Bhasa at school. In the detail study about the age groups, 21 percent of the

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<sup>114</sup> CBS (2002).

15-20 age group whose members are students indicated that they speak their mother tongue at school while 36 percent of the 61-70 age group indicated that they had used Nepal Bhasa at school. Another age group (41-50) responded that 31 percent of them use Nepal Bhasa at school. I later learnt that belong to an enthusiastic of Newar people who returned to institutes of higher learning after they have worked for a while. They join MA courses at the CDNB at TU, Yala. Their total number is yet to make an impact to improve the present situation of Nepal Bhasa at school (See Table-10.). Its future is bleak. This echoes situation of many languages in today's multi-lingual Nepal.

Today Nepal Bhasa is no longer a school language (medium of instruction) except in two schools in Yen (Kathmandu) and Yala (Lalitpur). In the past six decades, there were others schools that taught Nepal Bhasa irregularly while facing official ban, expediencies and intentional curriculum revisions. The first school that taught Nepal Bhasa and others subjects was Dharmodaya Kanya Pathasala (Dharmodaya Girls School: DKP) in Nagabaha, Yala (Lalitpur) City in 1947. It was opened by Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, the first journalist of Nepal and pioneer of advocacy for teaching Nepal Bhasa in schools. (I shall return to discuss contribution of Dharmacharya in Chapter Seven). The second school that taught in Nepal Bhasa was Jagat Sundar Bonekuthi (Jagat Sundar School: JSB) in Dallu, Yen (Kathmandu) after the Constitution of Nepal (1991) permitted the legal provision to open primary schools in national languages including Nepal Bhasa. A group of Nepal Bhasa advocates, academics and donors built the school together in 1992. It was started as a primary school and extended up to junior secondary level. In 2011, the first batch of students sat for the national level examination of School Leaving Certificate (SLC)<sup>115</sup> and passed the examination with distinctions. Principal of the school Maya Manandhar<sup>116</sup> was worried about her students at first when she sent them to sit for the SLC held in Khas/Nepali, as the students had received instructions in Nepal Bhasa. But the students convinced her that they were neither weak in Khas/Nepali nor in any other subjects offered. But Maya Manandhar's worry did not stop with these results, she told me. She was worried about admission of her students to higher level of study after SLC. As her school was a

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<sup>115</sup> Grade or class 10 (equal to the 1<sup>st</sup> year of three year High School education in Japan; and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (GCE/OL) of British Education).

<sup>116</sup> From the interview with Principal Maya Manandhar of *Jagat Sundar Bonekuthi* (Jagat Sundar School).



junior secondary, after taking the SLC students would have to seek admission for classes 10+2<sup>117</sup> elsewhere. This is one reason Newar parents think twice before sending their children to JSB. They are also not sure whether education in Nepal Bhasa alone would ensure their children's future. But the students of JSB proved that they were no different from students of any good school in the Swanigah. All of them received admissions to one higher secondary school or other to her great relief.

I also learnt that JSB students are taught Khas/Nepali and English under a carefully planned curriculum. Principal Manandhar also disclosed that her students were not all Newar. There are children from other communities as well. Among her students who filled the survey, one disclosed that he is Magar but his mother a Newar, hence his mother tongue is Nepal Bhasa. Manandhar also shared with us a story about one of her former students. A girl student of hers had sought admission to one of well-known senior high schools in Swanigah after her SLC, but her application was rejected as she was from JSB. She almost gave up her desire for admission to the school in question but a relative of her's had approached the concerned principal to grant her an interview before the girl's application was rejected. Manandhar later heard the rest of her former student's story from the very principal who had refused to admit her. At a later date, she received a call from the lady principal of the school in question. She apologized Manandhar for the former's prejudice against the JSB. She relayed the full story of the girl student and told her that the student was admitted. Manadhar was thrilled to hear this unexpected story. JSB's principal wishes to upgrade her school to a higher secondary level. But her limited resources cannot afford the manpower and infrastructure, or above all, the Nepal Bhasa curriculum for the 10+2. But I learnt later from another academic and advocate for Nepal Bhasa education,<sup>118</sup> that the curriculum of Nepal Bhasa for 10+2 education is ready except for the manpower and infrastructures, as the government has yet to provide any facilities for schools such as JSB.

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<sup>117</sup> Grade or class 11-12 (equal to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of three year High School education in Japan; and General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level (GCE/AL) of British Education).

<sup>118</sup> From interview with Professor Premshanti Tuladhar, Head of the Central Department of Nepal Bhasa (CDNB), Tribhuvan University (TU), Yala.

### **3.2.2. Government attitude towards Nepal Bhasa**

Government attitude towards any language in the country reflects in its policies. But in Nepal, there is no specific policy for either Nepal Bhasa or any other languages than the Khas/Nepali. Since the declaration of all languages spoken in Nepal as ‘national’ languages, and granted the right to preserve one’s own language in the Constitution of Nepal, 1990, another provision for the use of local language was added in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007. They have remained constitutional provisions with no further actions being taken. Since Khas/Nepali was made official in 1962, all government services such as education, administration, court of law and mass media are provided only in Khas/Nepali language (I shall return to this in Chapter Six). Consequently, the majority of the Newar remain mother tongue illiterate. The situation reflects in the answers provided by the respondents to: what is your age? Where did you learn Nepal Bhasa and which Lipi (script) do you use?

#### ***Place of Learning Nepal Bhasa***

Conventionally, a child acquires the language of the mother from the time of his/her birth, at home, with friends and neighbors, at school, temple and workplace. The survey showed how the Newar have lost and have been losing the chance of using their MT, the Nepal Bhasa. But every child born to a Khas mother is given the right to learn their MT and use it everywhere in Nepal today while mothers of other communities like the Newar in this very native land of theirs are being compelled to speak and teach their children Khas/Nepali. For example the Newar mother is being compelled to teach her child Khas/Nepali. The situation is so that the mother herself has to deprive her own child from learning his/her mother tongue. The government continues to impose Khas/Nepali language of the CHHE on the whole population regardless of other MTs in the country. The result of this policy has been affecting the children, youths and even the adults of Newar and Non-Khas communities. The survey reveals further repercussions:

The survey results is divided the respondents into eight age groups: 10-14, 15-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70 and 71-80 while the places of language learning into four categories: home, self-study, at school (formal education) and further study at the tertiary level.

Table-11: What is your age? Where did you learn Nepal Bhasa and which Lipi (script) do you use?

Age group	At home as mother tongue	Self-study	At School (formal school education)	Studied Nepal Bhasa upto B.A., MA level	Nepal Lipi	Deva-nagari Lipi
10~14	0	0	1	0	1	3
15-20	2	0	7	0	1	12
21-30	3	0	1	0	2	11
31-40	9	5	2	2	7	29
41-50	19	7	0	4	9	34
51-60	14	6	1	4	7	43
61-70	4	5	1	4	4	15
71-80	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total:171	53	24	13	14	31	150
Ratio	30	14	7	8	18	87

Among the 10-14 age group, only one responded that he/she learnt Nepal Bhasa at school. Among the 15-20 age group, two learnt at home as their mother tongue and 7 learnt Nepal Bhasa at school. Among the 21-30 age group, 3 learned at home while only 1 at school. Among the age group 31-40, nine persons learnt Nepal Bhasa at home as their MT, two self-studied, two at school, and two furthered at the tertiary level. Only among the age group 41-50, did we find nineteen persons have learnt Nepal Bhasa as MT, 7 self-studied, 4 furthered at tertiary level. The age group 51-60, still maintains the highest level of 14 persons having learnt Nepal Bhasa as their MT, 6 self-studied, 1 at school, 4 at the tertiary level. Among the age group 61-70, the number decreases into 4 having learnt Nepal Bhasa as their MT, and 1 through self-study only. The 71-80 age group only had the chance of learning Nepal Bhasa at home, and 1 through self-study. These figures imply that the Nepal Bhasa speakers are aging. Those who had the chance of learning Nepal Bhasa at the above places decline from older to younger and the last age group is in the trend of decline because of their old age. In other words those who had learnt Nepal Bhasa as their MT at home and other places are dying. No Newar children under 10-14 reported learning Nepal Bhasa as their MT in the survey. UNESCO refers this situation as the loss of chance to pass on the MT to the next generation. In other words the language is used ‘mostly by the

parental generation and up,’ another factor for endangerment of the language (UNESCO: 2003: 8).

### 3.3. Legal Consciousness of Nepal Bhasa: Role of the Speech Community

Language experts and activists equally assert the importance of awareness of one’s language. As Ewick and Silbey (1998) point out, legal consciousness provides understanding about law and how legal regulations may affect the speech community in their day-to-day life and a UNESCO language expert team points out that raising awareness about language loss can prevent language endangerment (UNESCO 2003:2). In line with these language discourses, the questionnaire survey asked the following question:

*Are you aware that Nepal Bhasa has been reinstated as a national language?*

In response 57 percent of the Newar respondents answered ‘yes’ while 33.3 percent replied ‘no’ and 8.8 percent were not sure(See the Table-12.). Those who responded ‘yes’ were fully conscious about the legal provision for the national languages of Nepal articulated in the Constitution of Nepal (1990) while the ‘no’ and ‘not sure’ answers can be attributed to a lack of access to information and interpretation of the legal provisions about language rights. There are reasons for this lack of access to information.

Table-12: Are you aware that Nepal Bhasa has been reinstated as a national language in Nepal?

	Respondents	Ratio
a) Yes	99	57.9
b) No	57	33.3
c) Not responded	15	8.8
Total	171	100

One, the government has no regular practice of disseminating government publications to the public, though the government publishes documents and books such as the Constitution, legislations and amendments. Such books are not sold in general book stores. Government publications are available only in two types of book stores. One is the government appointed Law Books Management Committee run book store. A single desk

inside the Department of Law sells the law books to customers visiting the desk from all over Swainagar (Kathmandu Valley). The Ministry of Law has strict laws barring the duplication of government publications. Another book store that sells law books is a private publisher of law books which has one branch store in Kathmandu.

Second, unless one is a legal advocate, officer, academic, student, a journalist in a field related to law or someone with something to do with law, most people will not be interested in the law or buy law books. Unless there is particular advertising by the government about a law, the general public is less than enthusiastic about law and its publications. The Department of Information and Communication does provide advertisements to media. But it is difficult to know whether such notices include information about important laws and their revisions.

The third reason for the lack of information and individual access to the law may be the lack of 'legal consciousness' or 'indifferent attitude' of the speech community towards both the law and language rights. Except some selected Newar youths, many are not conscious of, or are indifferent to, both issues of law and language for two reasons. One is that most Newar youth are educated in Khas/Nepali, speak the same language at school, public places and even home so that they hardly see any need to bother about language issues. On top of that, the law is 'remote' for them as Ewick and Silbey pointed out. Other reasons may be the social background of an individual, whether he is coming from a Nepal Bhasa speaking neighborhood or a Khas/Nepali speaking background. Depending on the language background one has, the attitude towards one's own MT differs. Table-3 and 4 show the details of with whom and where Nepal Bhasa is spoken today. In short, only 60 percent were aware of Nepal Bhasa's reinstatement as a national language of Nepal while 33 percent were not aware, and 8.8 percent did not respond. Next question asked was related to standardization of Nepal Bhasa.

*What needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standardized language?*

Answers to this question varied (See Table-7.). The majority, 34 percent, responded that the State must make a sound language policy; 22 percent indicated that the speech community must come forward to make necessary projects to make Nepal Bhasa a national

standardized language. Next 26 percent respondents marked ‘other’ and provided written suggestions each. 18 percent did not respond.

The total respondents can be grouped into two overall groups, one group who responded a, b, or c with a positive answer each and the next group not responding suggest the difference between the levels of legal consciousness among the respondents: one group having opinions about how their language must be standardized and the other group suggesting ‘no idea’ as to how it will affect them in their ordinary life. Before I analyze these responses, it is important to answer two related questions first. The main question here is “What needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standardized language?” which in turn asks ‘Why does Nepal Bhasa need to be standardized? Is it not a standardized language? Answers to these two questions came from my short dialogue with a taxi driver on my way back from fieldwork one evening. Although the public transportation to Khopa (Bhaktapur) from Yen (Kathmandu) has immensely improved thanks to the Bhaktapur highway built with Japanese Government aid, I still took a cab to return to Yen probably because it was a long day than other field trips to Khopa as I met several people during this trip. I asked the driver in Nepal Bhasa whether he would take me to Yen, he nodded and asked for a fare I agreed to pay. But he replied me in Khas/Nepali.

Table-13: In your opinion what needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standardized language?

	Respondents	Ratio
a) Speech community must come forward to make necessary projects.	37	21.6
b) The State must make a sound language policy	58	33.9
c) Other: 44 written views are summarized into 4 below	44	
c-1) Individual awakening, organisational initiative, planning and support	20	11.7
c-2) Mother tongue education	5	2.9
c-3) Linguistic activism, movements and Newar autonomy	10	5.8
c-4) Equality and justice	9	5.4
Responded	139	81.3
d) Nor responded	32	18.7
Total	171	100

The driver was a Newar youth of less than 24 years to my guess. Inside the cab, I asked him why he replied me in Khas/Nepali while he understood what I said in Nepal Bhasa. “Sir, we are reluctant to speak *Newabhay* with Newar customers from Yen because they ridicule us that *Khopabhay* is lower standard.” His answer explains a lot.<sup>119</sup>

First, the young driver is correct that the Newar from Yen do ridicule not only *Khopabhay* (Nepal Bhasa dialect of Khopa) but also *Yalabhay* (Nepal Bhasa dialect of Yala) until recently despite Yala being the adjoining city to Yen, though separated by a large river, *Vakamati* (*Bagamati*). Yen, Yala and Khopa were three city states separated from rivers flowing in *Swanigah* (Kathmandu Valley) but were ruled under a co-federative system of governance in the past and having areas beyond each city state under their jurisdiction. However, all these kings each called themselves “King of Nepal” and spoke Nepal Bhasa.<sup>120</sup> There is no apparent difference in their writing. But there are noticeable differences in the usage of spoken Nepal Bhasa among the three city dwellers. For example, Nepal Bhasa terms (in both Yen and Yala) “*masyu*” for “I do not know” is replaced by *Khopabhay* term “*masiya*.”<sup>121</sup> There are several other dialects of Nepal Bhasa such as *Dvalukha* (*Dolakha*), *Sindhupulanchuka* (*Sindhupalchok*), *Balami* (*Chitlang*). The prevalence of these dialects is ascribed not to a disintegrated identity of each area but to the official prevention of unitary development of Nepal Bhasa as a standard language by the State. The Gorkha rulers (1769) disbanded the use of Nepal Bhasa, the Rana (1906) banned it and punished those who defied the ban, and the Panchayat (1960) condemned Nepal Bhasa by both banning and imposing Khas/Nepali over Nepal Bhasa. The young driver’s problem lies in these three factors. The fourth factor is that the so called democratic governments are yet to notice the repercussions of the three said factors. But there have been some genuine efforts from individual academics of the speech community to standardize Nepal Bhasa. Several efforts can be cited.

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<sup>119</sup> *Newabhay* is colloquial term for Nepal Bhasa while *Khopabhay* refers to Khopa dialect of Nepal Bhasa.

<sup>120</sup> From interview with Dr. Tuladhar.

<sup>121</sup> A few more sentences should clarify the difference between the two dialects of Yen and Khopa. Read them as Yen/English/Khopa dialect order respectively:

- 1) *yomha* /one [I] liked/ *yomhā*;
- 2) *chhu yānāchonā*?/what are [you] doing?/ *chhu yānchang*?
- 3) *humkana suthen*?/who is over there?/ *humkā suthen*?
- 4) *chhitā yakva subhāy du kā nhīn* /Thank you so much/ *chhitā yakva subhāy dahkā nhen* (From communication with a Newar local resident from Khopa.)

The first effort was made by Shukraraj Shastri, the writer and activist of Nepal Bhasa, when he wrote *Nepal Bhasa Vyakarana* (Nepal Bhasa Grammar) in 1927.<sup>122</sup> Another Nepal Bhasa grammar book was written by Hans Jorgensen<sup>123</sup> of Denmark in 1939<sup>124</sup> while other important contributions were made by a group of academics when Nepal Bhasa education was introduced in the schools during the Democracy Period (1951-1960). A listing of three works of their should suffice to attest to their historic contributions to standardizing Nepal Bhasa: *Subodha Nepal Bhasa Vyakarana* (Comprehensive Nepal Bhasa Grammar) by Pushparatna Sagar (Tuladhar) in 1072 N.S. (1951); *Lidhansa* (Reference) Part 1, a complete guidebook for School Leaving Certificate (SLC) students, who offer Nepal Bhasa as a subject of their Oriental Language Programme (OLP). The compilation of *Lidhansa* was a joint effort by Pushparatna Vajracharya and Laxmibhakta Joshi in 1079 N.S. (1958 A.D.). Part 2 was compiled and published by the same authors in 1084 N.S. (1963 A.D.). Moreover, Sagar was a writer and language activist. He established his printing press to publish books of his own. He is also known to be the first epigraphist who created both a typewriter for Nepal Lipi and Nepal Lipi type letters for the printing press. Vajracharya was a teacher at Durbar High School, the first school open only for Rana children, and Joshi was also teacher at another high school, which was promoted to Patan College later. Another contribution, *Nepal Bhasa Vyakarana*, in Khas/Nepali was published by Dr. Sundar Krishna Joshi, Head of the Central Department of Nepal Bhasa, Tribhuvan University in 2003.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to these Nepal Bhasa texts, there are dictionaries of both classical and modern Nepal Bhasa compiled by another group of scholars. The first effort at making a dictionary goes back to 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. titled the *Amarakosha* (Amara Dictionary),<sup>126</sup> a dictionary of Sanskrit in Nepal Bhasa. Another early Nepal Bhasa dictionary was compiled by Hans Jorgensen of Denmark in 1935 before he compiled his *Nepal Bhasa Grammar*. A first *Concise Nepal Bhasa Dictionary* was published by Panna Prasad Joshi in 1954 (2011

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<sup>122</sup> 1048 N.S.

<sup>123</sup> A Grammar of the Classical Newari - Hans Jorgensen published by Sktkoshas in 1939 (1060 N.S.).

<sup>124</sup> 1060 N.S.

<sup>125</sup> 2060 V.S.

<sup>126</sup> Joshi (2009).



V.S.). A second *Concise Nepal Bhasa Dictionary* published by Pushparatna Sagar in 1118 N.S. (1997 A.D.) filled the long gap of the earlier publication. Two other voluminous dictionaries—one classical, another modern—worthy of reference are *A Dictionary of Classical Newari* by Professor Kamal Prakash Malla et al in 1120 N.S. (2000 A.D.) and *Practical Nepal Bhasa Dictionary* (Nepal Bhasa to Nepal Bhasa) by Indra Mali, in 1130 N.S. (2009 A.D.). These textbooks on Nepal Bhasa and others (I have avoided listing) attest that Nepal Bhasa is not a language that needs textual standardization. The main question we asked was how to standardize Nepal Bhasa as a national language at least among Newar residents in different parts of the country so that the gap between dialects is minimized. I shall examine their responses hereafter.

### **3.4. Space of Nepal Bhasa in State Policy**

The majority of the respondents in the questionnaire survey asserted that the State must make a sound language policy. In other words, thirty four percent of respondents think that the State of Nepal or its government lacks a sound language policy. What is a sound language policy? Why does the Government of Nepal lack a sound language policy? I shall find some answers for these 2 supplementary questions to analyze the respondents' answers and beliefs, awareness and experience towards their opinion that the Government of Nepal should adopt a sound language policy. In the view of Gramsci, the Italian Marxist theorist, language is an important element of common sense. It is also an indication of intellectual activity. Italy is also a country of diverse nationalities and multi-lingual nation like Nepal. He was concerned about the lack of a national language and Italy's linguistic diversity. But he rejects imposition of a particular language upon a linguistically diverse people. Although Italy became one nation in 1861 by merging with several parts of Austria, Germany, Spain and others such as Sardinia, Florence etc., people continued living peacefully until the government in Italy imposed the Florentine dialect to be the national language for the whole country of diverse nationalities. The Italian Government started funding grammar books and dictionaries based on Florentine and started training teachers to spread the dialect of a particular group in Florence. This reminds one of how the Gorkha Bhasa was imposed by the Rana regime in 1908, how the Gorkha Bhasa publication committee was established in 1914 and how its publications were funded by the

Government of Nepal.<sup>127</sup>

In Italy, Gramsci was a leading figure who vehemently rejected the Florentine dialect as the national language for the whole nation of Italy. This does not mean that he was against making a national language for Italy. He rejected only the imposition of a language of a particular community on whole of other communities. Instead, Gramsci views that a national language should serve for the diverse of people of Italy as it is a country of not one particular nationality but diverse nationalities. For Gramsci, it was evident that one particular language would not serve the interest of diverse nationalities. He advocates that as language is an important part of common sense, concerned social groups viz. the speech community, experts and activists must join together to critically reflect upon a systematic and coherent conception to build a new common sense of people. He implies that a national language must also be based on such systematic and coherent conception. Gramsci, citing an example of Sardinian language how it is important to people of that region, asserts that the concerned community should have the freedom of its own development. He supports a national language provided that it serves the diverse people of Italy and advocates that one must preserve one's language but not impose one's language upon others. Nepal depicts exactly similar picture of Italy. Khas Bhasa has been imposed on diverse people of Nepal. Therefore, the Newar today, the most affected 'subaltern social group' in Gramsci's term seek a sound language policy in multilingual Nepal. Gramsci also cautions the subaltern group that it will be detrimental to them to accept what is imposed. Similarly the Newar have sought equal treatment for all languages in Nepal.<sup>128</sup>

### **3.5. Sustenance of Nepal Bhasa: Community Initiatives**

Answers to questionnaire survey also reveal the interest among the respondents in taking initiatives to preserve or maintain Nepal Bhasa. They reflected in the answers provided by the respondents with written suggestions. Responding to the question: what needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standard language? A group of 44 respondents entered their views in writing, which I subsumed them into four broad categories to understand and analyze their views:

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<sup>127</sup> Sajha Publication (2014).

<sup>128</sup> From the interview with Dr. Tuladhar (February 23, 2011).

- a) Individual awakening, organizational initiative, planning and support
- b) Mother tongue education
- c) Linguistic activism, movements and Newar autonomy
- d) Equality and justice

***a) Individual awakening, organizational initiative, planning and support***

With regard to the standardization of Nepal Bhasa as a national language, a group of respondents to the questionnaire emphasized the need for individual awakening; that the individual must be awakened to, and practicing, the language. First, the ‘Newar must speak their MT Nepal Bhasa amongst themselves’<sup>129</sup> meaning individual, family and friends. The Newar ‘parents must speak Nepal Bhasa among themselves and teach their children.’<sup>130</sup> In other words ‘they must use Nepal Bhasa inside their Newar society.’<sup>131</sup> These views imply concern that many Newar are not using the language though they are able to speak and write. They have gotten used to speaking Khas/Nepali because many around them speak it. So these messages were meant for those who are either reluctant to speak Nepal Bhasa or tend to speak Khas/Nepali deliberately because speaking Khas/Nepali has become a habit. This reminds Bourdieu’s linguistic habitus which is made up of dispositions from the association with people and learning of languages from childhood. He points out that it is important to learn one’s MT and use it from the time of childhood. Similarly the respondents to the survey seem to be concerned. They view that everybody knows very well that our MT is valuable. But as pointed out by Gramsci, people take common sense for granted despite common sense being the product of the ruling class, which manipulates the diversity of the people. As Gramsci asserts that we must take common sense critically, some of the respondents sound very analogous to Gramsci’s cautioning. They state that people tend to not notice the importance of one’s MT, Nepal Bhasa in the case of the Newar. Therefore, they emphasize their role to ‘use the language first among those who know it,’<sup>132</sup> then have those who know how to ‘respect their mother tongue’<sup>133</sup> teach others, so that others will follow the teachers and ‘be awakened to the

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<sup>129</sup> Shared by a 60-year-old male, survey # 20.

<sup>130</sup> Shared by a 38-year-old female, survey #26.

<sup>131</sup> Shared by a 50-year-old male, survey #64.

<sup>132</sup> Shared by a 63-year-old male, survey #121.

<sup>133</sup> Shared by a 51-year-old male, survey #98.

values of their MT.<sup>134</sup> This will encourage the Newar children and adults to use Nepal Bhasa if they have not done so, whatever their reasons. All these can further ‘stimulate love for mother tongue.’<sup>135</sup> Hence their message to the Newar is ‘use it or lose it’ as a famous proverb reminds us. The ‘use of Nepal Bhasa’<sup>136</sup> will develop ‘a sense of keeping one’s mother tongue alive.’<sup>137</sup> Similarly, it will raise awareness about one’s language (UNESCO:2003:2).

Individual awakening should be the guiding organizational initiative for us to ‘work together for the progress of our language.’<sup>138</sup> ‘Our unity is so important’<sup>139</sup> that it is the unity, working as an organization, that ‘motivates our children to speak Nepal Bhasa,’<sup>140</sup> whereby we ‘contribute to the promotion of our language.’<sup>141</sup> The respondents also believe that organizational initiative must be supported by planned strategies. Therefore, without solely depending on the government to make policy, the respondents view that ‘the speech community’s organizations must also make policies and projects’<sup>142</sup> that will provide education in Nepal Bhasa and guidelines to use it in public services. One of such projects can be to ‘offer Nepal Bhasa as a subject up to at least SLC level’<sup>143</sup> so that students will get the opportunity to learn their own MT. For the success of these organizations, its ‘plans and projects, support of the speech community is indispensable.’<sup>144</sup> What is most important is ‘the will to come forward to help.’<sup>145</sup> Next most important is the awareness that ‘one is supposed to contribute to the cause of one’s own language.’<sup>146</sup> Third is to engage in what one can afford to. One simple example given by the respondent was the ‘dissemination of information by writing articles’<sup>147</sup> for the

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<sup>134</sup> Shared by a 36-year-old male, survey #85.

<sup>135</sup> Shared by a 49-year-old male, survey #145.

<sup>136</sup> Shared by a 45-year-old male, survey #150.

<sup>137</sup> Shared by a 34-year-old male, survey #168.

<sup>138</sup> Shared by a 36-year-old female married to a Chetri, who also speaks Nepal Bhasa, survey #108.

<sup>139</sup> Shared by a 19-year-old male, survey #130.

<sup>140</sup> Shared by a 34-year-old male, survey #156.

<sup>141</sup> Shared by a 29-year-old female, survey #163.

<sup>142</sup> Shared by a 62-year-old male, survey #165.

<sup>143</sup> Shared by a 61-year-old male, survey #124.

<sup>144</sup> Shared by a 47-year-old female, survey #36.

<sup>145</sup> Shared by a 51-year-old male, survey #71.

<sup>146</sup> Shared by a 16-year-old male, survey #2.

<sup>147</sup> Shared by a 55-year-old male, survey #78.

cause which can help awaken the people to notice the importance of standardizing Nepal Bhasa among the speech community that is spread out inside and outside of Nepal Mandala.

***b) Mother tongue education***

Mother tongue education is another important factor. The respondents believe that it plays an important role to the task of standardization of Nepal Bhasa as a national language among the speech community. But what is lacking in Nepal is the ‘mother tongue education’ itself with regard to Newar children. The situation is same with children of many other nationalities other than Khas/Nepali speaking children in this country. Therefore, the respondents pointed out the ‘priority that must be given to MT education,’<sup>148</sup> and ‘teaching the children their mother language,’<sup>149</sup> for which ‘schools must be established’<sup>150</sup> and ‘planning of education with a proper curriculum’<sup>151</sup> are indispensable. They assert that ‘mother tongue education should be introduced into the existing schools and campuses.’<sup>152</sup>

***c) Linguistic activism, movements and Newar autonomy***

It is natural that the citizens of any country place trust in the government about providing services for the benefit of the public. Specially making policies are not an easy task that an individual or two can accomplish. This must be one reason that the Newar respondents have suggested the citizenry are not only willing to support the government but also to contribute ‘by making even proposals for policies and persuade the government to put them into law and practice.’<sup>153</sup> But what is equally important for the government is to implement policies as enforceable laws as pointed out by Kilpatrick, enforceable law can only influence the implementation of a proposed policy to serve its intended purposes. Meanwhile, another respondent suggests that ‘the speech community must strive to have

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<sup>148</sup> Shared by a 42-year-old male, survey #41.

<sup>149</sup> Shared by a 34-year-old female, survey #100.

<sup>150</sup> Shared by a 39-year-old male, survey #82.

<sup>151</sup> Shared by a 37-year-old male, survey #34.

<sup>152</sup> Shared by a 68-year-old male, survey #10.

<sup>153</sup> Shared by a 49-year-old female, survey #122.

the government recognize the importance of such proposals to be made into policies.’<sup>154</sup> There is a responsible role for the Newar community to play if we want Nepal Bhasa to be given its due recognition by the government dominated by the CHHE. This can be done through different methods if the government, responsible for providing services for the citizenry—through whose mandate they come to power—does not fulfill its responsibility in providing those services. One is the language movement concerned activists have used for the legitimate right to use their own MT. One respondent suggests ‘group actions such as a language movement’<sup>155</sup> if the government is not willing to recognize our legitimate right to preserve our MT. This view is further supported by another opinion that such a ‘language movement should put pressure on the State of Nepal’<sup>156</sup> for a sound language policy in Nepal.

Nepal held the general election for a second CA recently (on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013) to complete the draft for a new Constitution, which the previous CA left uncompleted. The new Constitution is supposed to guide to restructure a new Nepal into a nation of inclusive democracy, multiculturalism, linguistic diversity and secular federalism. How it will turn out, remains to be seen. However, people in Nepal, except the CHHE, have been convinced that federalism is already a Hobson’s choice. The respondents to the questionnaire, in which we sought views for standardizing Nepal Bhasa as a national language for the Newar, suggest that ‘only way out is the establishment of a Newar autonomous state’<sup>157</sup> or ‘Newa Pradesh,’<sup>158</sup> another term for autonomy. They believe that it will be only after the establishment of a Newar autonomous state that sound rules and regulation<sup>159</sup> can be adopted benefitting the Newar, the native/indigenous people of this land, confirming that the centralized governance system under CHHE has failed.

#### ***d) Equality and justice***

Many respondents indicated that government policies are lacking equality and justice. No language is treated as equal as to Khas/Nepali though Nepal is a multi-lingual nation. The

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<sup>154</sup> Shared by a 57-year-old male, survey #161.

<sup>155</sup> Shared by a 55-year-old male, survey #12.

<sup>156</sup> Shared by a 41-year-old male, survey #35.

<sup>157</sup> Shared by a 54-year-old male, survey #7.

<sup>158</sup> Shared by a 51-year-old male, survey #47.

<sup>159</sup> Shared by a 44-year-old male, survey #79.

Census 2011 records 123 languages spoken in the country including several major languages spoken by over 500,000 people each. The Newar have demanded equality and justice for all languages of Nepal since long ago. But the government, run by CHHE, has deceived the people with promises of policies that are not implemented. The situation is reflected in the responses to the questionnaire survey. They pointed out that ‘all the languages of Nepal must be treated as equal as to Khas Bhasa, the MT of Khas people’,<sup>160</sup> ‘as every MT deserves the higher respect.’<sup>161</sup> ‘The government must draw policies to introduce Nepal Bhasa in the public offices’<sup>162</sup> where such services are necessary. ‘A well planned policy must not only be drawn for the sake of language projects’<sup>163</sup> but ‘it must also be implemented’<sup>164</sup> with ‘necessary budget for language promotion’<sup>165</sup> and ‘remuneration for those involved in the projects.’<sup>166</sup> These views of the respondents reflect government policies that are drawn but left at the discretion of heads of government agencies, who willfully ignore even the executive directives. Two other respondents suggested that ‘genuine attention must be given to promote the languages of our country. Their promotion and preservation must be guaranteed in the new Constitution.’<sup>167</sup> They must also be implemented for their intended purposes. Failures of implementation of law may incite conflicts leading to the ‘change of governance system.’<sup>168</sup> This appears that a considerable number of respondents are conscious about the situation of their MT and space in the state policy. They also appeared that they are determinant in winning their rights in one way or other if the Government of Nepal is reluctant to provide what the people deserve. The majority of the respondents were also clear about their identity as Newar is sustained on their identity of language and their historical territory.

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<sup>160</sup> Shared by a 52-year-old male, survey #19.

<sup>161</sup> Shared by a 51-year-old male, survey #98.

<sup>162</sup> Shared by a 38-year-old female, survey #118.

<sup>163</sup> Shared by a 24-year-old female, survey #32.

<sup>164</sup> Shared by a 58-year-old female, survey #151.

<sup>165</sup> Shared by a 60-year-old male, survey #59.

<sup>166</sup> Shared by a 62-year-old male, survey #136.

<sup>167</sup> Shared by a 47-year-old male, survey #77.

<sup>168</sup> Shared by a 41-year-old male, survey #86.

### 3.6. Language and Territorial Identity: Nepal Bhasa and Nepal Mandala

With the collapse of several democratically elected governments, under the influence of absolute monarchy and constitutional monarchy, and since the advent of democracy in February 1951, the Nepali people mandated the first CA elected in 2008 to abolish the monarchy and replaced the centralized administrative governance with a federal system. A government appointed committee drew up federal territorial demarcations with 14 states to be set up under the federation. There were also several proposals for different parts and sizes of federal states drawn by various academia, think-tanks and political parties. Most of them were new territories, some within the historical Nepal Mandala, though without its proper boundaries. In the questionnaire, the respondents identified the Newar territory as the following (See also the Table-14.).

Table-14: Which of the following should be the territory of future Newar state?

	Respondents	Ratio
a) Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Patan), Khopa (Bhaktapur)	36	21
b) The smallest among the 14 territories allocated by the Territory Allocating Committee	14	8.2
c) Historical Nepal Mandala that covers 12 districts of the present Central Zone (province).	108	63.2
d) Other (NSRMSS* proposed area)	1	0.6
e) Inapplicable	1	0.6
f) Not responded	11	6.4
Total	171	100

\* Note: NSRMSS (*Newar Swayatta Rajya Manka Sangharsha Samiti*) meaning Alliance for Autonomous Newar State.

Sixty three point two percent of the respondents identified Newar territory as the ‘historical Nepal Mandala that covers 12 districts<sup>169</sup> of the present Central Zone (province)’. Twenty one percent identified Newar territory as ‘Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Patan), Khopa (Bhaktapur)’, the 3 city-states known as Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley). Eight point two percent of the respondents identified Newar territory as ‘the smallest area among the 14 territories allocated by the Territory Allocating Committee’ while 0.6 percent identified

<sup>169</sup> Dharding, Rasuwa, Dvalukha (Dolakha), Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Kabhre, Sindhupalanchuka (Sindhupalanchok), Nakva (Nuwakot), Makwanpur, Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Lalitpur) and Khopa (Bhaktapur). See Map-1.



‘other (the territory proposed by CSC for ASoN),’ 0.6 percent were inapplicable and 6.4 percent did not respond. The division of federal territory was not settled as the first CA was dissolved (on May 28, 2012) without completing the draft of the proposed new Constitution. The second general election for CA was held on November 19, 2013. How the new government will resume the drafting of the new Constitution remains to be seen.

Next question (Table-15) in the questionnaire was ‘what must be the official language of the future Newar State?’ Seventy two point five percent of the respondents marked that ‘Nepal Bhasa, the MT of the Newar community’ must be the State language of the future Newar State. Twenty point five percent marked ‘Nepal Bhasa, Khas/Nepali and English’ while a distant 3.5 percent marked ‘Khas/Nepali language as before.’ Another 3.5 percent marked ‘other’ (See Table-15.).

The data also implies that the Newar have not yet been able to use the original script of their MT fully for several apparent reasons. One, the Rana Government of Nepal imported Devanagari Lipi, though Nepal had its own script, Nepal Lipi. As a result, even Nepal Bhasa was written in Devanagari Lipi. It was further influenced by the advent of the

Table-15: What must be the official language of the future Newar state?

	Respondents	Ratio
a) Khas/Nepali language as before	6	3.5
b) Nepal Bhasa, the mother tongue of the Newar community	124	71.9
c) Nepal Bhasa, Khas/Nepali and English	35	20.5
d) Other	6	4.1
Total	171	100

Notes:

- Item b) includes a respondent (82 ) who suggests other mother tongues [of Nepal] or international [English] for official language in additon to Nepal Bhasa in the future Newar state; another respondent (121) who suuggests that the right to speak one's mother tongue should be respected.
- Item c) includes respondent (35) who suggests Tamang as another official language in Newar state and another who suggests Nepal Bhasa and Khas/Nepali as official languages of future Newar State.
- d) includes one respondent (22) who suggests major languages of Nepal for official status in future Newar state; another respondent (36) suggests mothertongues spoken inside Nepal Mandala. While marking b and c, two (10, and 52) also suggest to make the mothertongues of indigenous nationalities official; another respondent (104), suggests to make NB and KN as official language of Newar state which is supported by another respondent (157) by marking a and b.

printing press which used only Devanagari script until Nepal Lipi was developed for printing purposes. Two, activities to promote Nepal Lipi have not been progressing, as such projects lacked funding and proper channels of promotion. Three, there is a wider generational gap in the way the Nepal Bhasa activists think. That is, the elder generation is still comfortable with the use of Devanagari Lipi in publishing Nepal Bhasa books. The practice of transliteration from Nepal Lipi to Devanagari is still widely used despite the availability of Nepal Lipi fonts for today’s computers. But the respondents view that the use of Nepal Lipi must be elevated. This is reflected in the responses to the question ‘Nepal Bhasa has been written in Indian Devanagari Lipi for some time, which script should be used in the future?’ Sixty-six point one percent stated ‘Nepal Lipi,’ 29.8 percent stated ‘Devanagari,’ while 4.1 percent did not respond (See Table-16.).

Table-16: Nepal Bhasa has been written in Indian Devanagari script for some time. Which script should be used in the future?

	Respondents	Ratio
a) Devanagari Lipi	51	29.8
b) Nepal Lipi	113	66.1
c) Not responded	7	4.1
Total	171	100

### 3.7. Summing Up: Reflections on This Language Survey

My quest to understand the spatial state of Nepal Bhasa in its land of origin with this language survey revealed that Nepal Bhasa, the MT of the Newar and the former state language of Nepal, is in general decline. The decline is attributed to both external and internal forces. However, the survey discloses that the internal forces that caused the decline of Nepal Bhasa were clearly affected by the state policy of single language favoritism: The Khas/Nepali only policy. The reflections of the survey can be summarized as follows:

First, the surveyed respondents have maintained a positive attitude toward their MT. Still, the survey is alarming because their positive attitudes alone do not prevent the decline. According to Census 2011, only 64 percent of total Newar people have retained Nepal Bhasa as their MT and the 36 percent shifted their MT to another (most probably to Khas/Nepali) language. Among the respondents to the language survey, Nepal Bhasa

remains the MT of the majority of them (96.4 percent). It is spoken in the inner domain with 84 percent speaking it at home, as opposed to outer domains. Only 24.5 percent of Newar surveyed speak Nepal Bhasa with peers at school, showing evidence that its literate population is aging while no young generation of Nepal Bhasa-literates are replacing them.

Second, besides the declining state of Nepal Bhasa, the survey indicates that the legal consciousness of the Newar, the awareness of law and policy related to their everyday lives, is limited. In responding to the question whether ‘they were aware that the Constitution of Nepal (1990) recognized all languages of Nepal as “national languages,”’ about 60 percent responded that they were aware of the fact that Nepal Bhasa has been reinstated as a national language while 33 percent were not aware of this fact. However, when asked ‘what needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standard language,’ 34 percent suggested the government must make a sound language policy, 22 percent stated the speech community must come forward with initiatives while 26 percent submitted several proposals to take community initiative to promote Nepal Bhasa and correct the ills in state policy of Nepal.

Third, in response to 2 questions related to the proposed restructuring of Nepal into a federation, one related to the territory of Newar autonomy and another to its state language, 63.2 percent of Newar respondents identified their homeland as the ‘historical Nepal Mandala,’ that covers 12 districts of the present Central Development Zone (province) while 72.5 percent of the respondents preferred Nepal Bhasa to be the state language of their autonomous state. With regards to the use of script for Nepal Bhasa, 66.1 percent preferred Nepal Lipi as opposed to 29.8 percent preferring Devanagari Lipi.

Fourth, the respondents represented 4 major areas of Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley)—Yen, Yala, Khopa and Kipoo—while a handful of respondents were from outer Swanigah areas. They also represented the three major religious denominations of Vajrayana, Buddhism and Hinduism and belonged to several professional fields depending on the educational background they had received in Khas/Nepali. Thus, the overall survey uncovers that Nepal Bhasa, the MT of the Newar people is declining under the single language policy despite the restoration of democracy in the country since 1999. The space for Nepal Bhasa, the former State language of Nepal is still restricted by today’s state policy.

I shall explore language situation elsewhere to identify language politics and state

policies in conflict, causes for the problems and solutions found by previous contributors in the ever growing literature on the subject. I shall review some of them in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LITERATURE REVIEW: LANGUAGE POLITICS & STATE POLICY

This chapter will review the literature on language ideology, a wide range of areas of inquiry that have focused on language politics, language policy and their peripheral links. The contributions to the literature reviewed herein have been selected randomly from those concerned with language politics and policies in multilingual societies in Europe, Africa, Australia, and South Asia to compare the nature of linguistic differences, conflicts and policies adopted in those societies to Nepal, and to understand how they have contributed to state-society relations. The review is also intended to seek what is inspiring and missing in the contributions so far published and how and why my contribution is significant to the literature of language politics and language policy in general and to Nepal in particular.

#### 4.1. Literature Review

Language politics and language policy are interrelated, and the difference between the two is not always clear-cut. Moreover, the two areas of study are interdependent as politics and policy can affect or influence each other. Language politics is a complex part of studies focusing on the politics of language, the purpose of which is directed either towards promotion and preservation of language rights or towards manipulation of language for power and prestige. Meanwhile, language policy focuses on policy planning and its practical implementation. State 'policies often reflect the tension between two contrasting types of language ideologies: ideologies that conceive of language as a resource, problem, or right (Ruiz 1984) and ideologies that conceive of language as plurastic phenomena' (Woolard 1998). The study of language politics and language policy has received considerable interdisciplinary attention for the past three decades from scholars of linguistics, anthropology, political science and economics. Social scientists such as sociolinguists and applied linguists and experts on international relations clearly favor language politics, hence a larger number of studies directed to language politics than language policy, to which economists and political scientists tend to contribute (Kymlicka and Green 2003). This is probably because much of contemporary research on language

politics and policy has embraced the discourse of ‘linguistic human rights’ (e.g., Skutnabb-Kangas 2000 in *ibid.*), leaving large tracts of language policy analysis to others (Kymlicka and Grin 2003).

Starting with the simple concepts of progress and efficiency to colonial languages, many countries in Asia and Africa either changed from a colonial language to a dominant language as their national or official language, while others retained colonial languages such as English, French etc. to overcome linguistic fragmentation or inadequacies of lexicons in the local languages soon after their independence (Recento 2000). This trend influenced even non-colonial countries like Nepal to follow language policies adopted by former British colonies like India. And the literature on language policy were those contributed by specialists of language policy, who adopted more critical representations, stressing in particular the fact that all forms of language use and policy framed were ‘socially embedded and enmeshed with power issues’ (*ibid.*). In the mid-1980s, the focus of the literature shifted to ways of accommodating various new issues such as the effects of large-scale migration, or a more acute concern for the accelerating rate of extinction of small languages. Some compared this situation to a loss in biodiversity while some parts of discourse branched off into the ‘discourse of linguistic human rights’ (*ibid.*) as noted above, expanding later to language ecology (LE) and to minority language rights (MLR) which developed into language right movements. Of this large range of language issues, I will review some selected contributions to the literature of language, its relations to nationalism, language policy and language politics, to guide this study.

#### **4.1.1. Language and Nationalism: An Anthropological Approach**

Language is an important link to the nationalism and cultural coherence of an ethnic group. Stephen Barbour points out that the link between a language and ethnic group ‘works in two ways: A distinctive language may help to demarcate the ethnic group from other groups, and a common language may facilitate communication and hence coherence within an ethnic group. Language can hence be extremely important for ethnic identity. The same applies to national identity and to nationalism, and it is the significance of language for nationalism and national identity’ (Barbour 1999 in May 2005).

Since Herder’s famous assertion in 1772 of language affinity to nationalism

among the Germans and the U.S. Senate approving English (Ives, 2004a) as the official language in 2006, the scholars have noticed the inseparably remarkable links between language and nationalism. We have also witnessed the contributions by Gramsci's opposition (Forgacs et al. 1991: 30) to the imposition of national language in Italy, and Bourdieu's warning against taking for granted the attitude of single language favoritism (Thompson 2001), leading many scholars to contribute to the literature on language and nationalism under a large framework of 'language ideology.'

Writing about Herder and his contribution to language and nationalism, John Edwards observed that Herder's contribution to the history of linguistics nationalism, considered by many to be seminal, asserted 'the possession of its own distinctive language [...] constitutes the touchstone of a people or *Volk*, the sine qua non of its national identity and spirit' (Bauman and Briggs 1999: 173; Edwards 1989). Edwards illustrates Herder's views rejecting the idea of 'divine origin of language and its origin in human invention that man was inborn with the capacity for reason and speech. Instead, Herder has emphasized that in an environment where the linguistic diversity is rooted for the variety of social factors, a group comes to share a common language and claims a distinct identity as a group and later even as a nation. However, Herder has cautioned that they will only survive as a separate group until they preserve their language as a collective inheritance and 'a nation's self-respect hinges upon its ability and willingness to defend itself, but its very existence is inconceivable without its own language' (cited in Edwards 1989). This attachment of language to nationalism reverberates in many contributions, while there are several other literatures that differ from Herder's idea.

#### **4.1.2. Ethno-linguistic Nationalism**

Eric Hobsbawm, a noted historian, traces the link between language and nationalism to the last decade of the nineteenth century. He views that 'linguistic and cultural community [...] was a nineteenth-century innovation' [and] 'the term "nationalism" was actually invented in the last decade(s) of the nineteenth century' (Hobsbawm 1994: 178). Differing on a statement that attributes language and nationalism to the 1<sup>st</sup> French Revolution in 1789 by a Marxian of Moravian origin, Hobsbawm points out that the statement - written only seventy years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> French Revolution in 1830 - confuses the 'principle of

nationality' that induced the rise of nation-states in Europe within 1830-1870 and changed its continental map. But he contends that the statement represents several factors stressing linguistic and cultural community; the nationalism that aspired to form or capture states rather than the 'nations' of already existing states; and claiming the paternity of 1789 among other things. Hobsbawm asserts that nationalism was invented as the result of 'a sharp shift to the political right of nation and flag' in the last decades of the nineteenth century, else during the period of 1880-1914. Due to the multiplication of rising 'unhistorical' nations during the same time, the ethnicity and language became the central, increasingly the decisive or even the only, criteria of potential nationhood' (ibid.). However, with regard to this ethnic-linguistic criterion for defining a nation becoming dominant, Hobsbawm observes that the criterion has not been often recognized for three reasons:

First, those linguistic movements that existed in the first half of the nineteenth century had no ambition either for self-determination or for a separate state. Although there was a central argument for the creation of a unified national state among the German and the Italian liberal middle classes, this was not the case elsewhere. According to Hobsbawm, the two most prominent non-state national movements in the first half of the nineteenth century were those of the German and the Italian communities. They were educated and united across political and geographical borders by the use of an established language considered then as high culture and by its literature. For these two communities, the national language was very important. It was not only a language of administration or a means of statewide communication but was what 'made them Germans and Italians [...] the language consequently carried a far heavier charge of national identity than, say, English did for those who wrote and read that language' (ibid.: 179). But this was not so in other cases. National movements such as those of the Polish, the Balkan peoples, were not based on languages. For those linguistic movements in Czech lands which had significant political bases, the national self-determination was neither an issue, nor was the establishment of a separate state a serious thought. Hobsbawm believes these organizations were motivated only by a desire for cultural recognition (ibid.).

Second, the cultural renaissance that swept over Europe with the cultural and linguistic revivalism of the late eighteenth century was not motivated by political activism. Though Hobsbawm does not deny the influence of the cultural renaissance that affected



many other nationalist movements, he points out that these movements, largely under German intellectual influence, provided the foundation for many subsequent nationalist movements. But they were not political movements nor did they imply any political aspirations or ambitions. Referring Hroch's counting of the cultural renaissance as the first phase, or 'Phase A,' in his counting the development of nationalist movements, Hobsbawm makes it clear that it is a mistake to confuse Hroch's 'Phase A' - the cultural and linguistic revival movements active from the 1780s to the 1840s - with his 'Phase B' - when a body of activists devoted to political agitation in favour of the 'national ideas' has come into existence, and still less his 'phase C,' when mass support for 'the national idea' can be counted on (ibid). Hobsbawm attributes these awakenings (the cultural or linguistic revivalism) to some enthusiast outsider ruling class or elites such as Baltic Germans or the Finnish Swedish. He cites some examples, such as the Finnish Literature society being founded in 1831 by Swedes. Snellman, the chief ideologue of Finnish cultural nationalism was Swedish while all the records of the records were written in the Swedish language. Hobsbawm also reiterates that cultural revival movements have nothing to do with politics, and nationalist movements have nothing to do with cultural revivalism. For example, he cites the cases in the British Isles, where its subsequent national agitation or movements of political nationalism may originally have had little or nothing to do with cultural revivalism. However, it was only after 1880, Hobsbawm points out, that the struggle for autonomy and for language and culture came to coincide among the Finnish and Swedes against the nationalist mode of 'Russifying' under Tsarism (ibid.: 181).

The third reason Hobsbawm points out as to why ethnic-linguistic criterion has not often been recognized for defining a nation concerns ethnic, rather than linguistic, identification. He asserts the problem lacks influential theories identifying nation with genetic descent. In the second half of the nineteenth century, ethnic nationalism received enormous reinforcements through a mass migration in practice and transformation of the central concept of the nineteenth-century social science 'race' in theory. Hobsbawm views that this reinforcement led only to division of mankind into a few 'races' such as 'Aryans,' 'Semites,' and Nordics, Alpines and Mediterranians among the Aryans. This division was aggravated by Darwinian evolutionism which came 'to be known as genetics-provided racism with what looked like a powerful set of 'scientific' reasons for keeping out or even,

as it turned out, expelling and murdering strangers' (ibid.: 182). According to Hobsbawm, all this developed later than the 1890s. For example: Anti-Semitism was not heard of until 1880; German and French racism (Vacher de Lapouge, Huston Stewart Chamberlain) belong to the 1890s, and 'Nordic' did not enter racist, or any, discourse until about 1900 (ibid.). Further, Hobsbawm observes that most languages were of mongrel origins and cites English as a good example, that it is made up of linguistic mixture of Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavian, Normans, Scots, Irish etc. He also informs us of how the subsequent use of 'race' and 'nation' grew closer and together created a 'practice of using the two terms as synonyms, generalizing equally wildly about 'racial' / 'national' character to the extent that a possible cordial relationship between the UK and France ended up in failure dismissing Anglo-French Entente Cordiale of 1904' (ibid.) thus reinforcing the linguistic and ethnic nationalism of each.

In summarizing Hobsbawm's views on language and nationalism, he is very clear about three points. The first is that the notion of nationalism is very new and dates back only to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Second, the linguistic movements are not originally oriented to political nationalism but cultural revivalism. The third is that those linguistic movements, originally not connected to, or motivated by, nationalist ideology were later radicalized by policies such as what Hobsbawm calls 'nationalist mode of Russifying' referring to Tsarism that attempted to Russify the Finns and the Swedes under the Tsar.

#### **4.1.3. Nationalism of Mass Education**

Earnest Gellner, a noted social anthropologist, connects language with nationalism through his work about individual citizen's literacy and nation-sized mass educational systems. He observes that only a person possessing literacy and a certain level of technological competence can claim to be a full citizen of a modern community. Literacy enables one to exercise his or her rights and to become affluent with a life compatible with the current notion of human dignity. It is only a nation-sized educational system that can produce such a full citizen because of its possession of human resources that include a sufficient number of specialists, teachers and intellectuals necessary to produce ground level teachers. This educational system must operate in some medium of language which will in turn shape its

products (Gellner 1994: 56).

In selecting a language for the medium of education, although vernacular languages do favor nationalist tendencies in Europe as vernaculars such as Hungarian are easier to turn into written language than teaching Latin to all Hungarian peasants, Gellner locates several problems in context elsewhere:

- 1) The vernaculars are often too numerous and diversified with no one having a manifest predominance to be used as the literate language. If one of them is arbitrarily selected still most of the population would suffer from a 'bifurcation' between the languages at school and home.
- 2) The selected language still would be of no advantage as it would lack necessary vocabularies and technical literature. As a result, to make it into the national educational system, it would need to borrow from literate language (from a colonial power) which is already equipped with all modern linguistic conveniences but at a disadvantage in terms of national pride.
- 3) Or borrowing from other non-European literate languages such as Arabic or Hausa or Swahili. Gellner traces similar examples in Europe that the present reasonably neat linguistic blocks of Eastern Europe replaced the earlier complicated patchworks.

These are the reflections on language priority Gellner places in selecting a suitable language to be used at school or in the educational system. He also cautions us about what waste it would incur if nationalism centered on a different language than the one used in school and the possibly that hostility to it may prevail: The investment of education in that particular language might be wasted. But he is more optimistic about his view on the value in using a language he calls 'literate' in the education system: An educational system and instruction in the said language do make a homeland (ibid.:58). Gellner's view reflects many contemporary educational systems in the developing world today although his assessment stems from his findings that date back to half a century earlier. As noted in an earlier section, many former colonies, except India and Singapore after their independence from their colonizers, introduced their education system either in a former colonial language or in a dominant language that would later induce a make or break from the homeland. This is mostly because of the nationalism that crystallizes around a particular

language, and how the nationalist leaders take liberty in the use of the language before and after they hold power over the state machine. If language X is centered in developing nationalism of a given multilingual state, leaders would incorporate even those speaking Y language expecting their children can be X-ified, and would not hesitate even to use power to X-ify after they come to power. In Gellner's own words:

[I]ndeed the leaders, once in charge of a state machine, do not object to employing forceful persuasion when canalising rustics, previously lacking in national consciousness or even tempted by a 'wrong' one, into the right national trough. In brief, they are perfectly happy to poach on each other's natural catchment area (ibid.).

This is another example that Gellner cites on how nationalism was understood and practiced in and around 1964 in a society which comprises a multiplicity of languages. Comparing societies similarly multi-lingual in nature such as Ottoman Turkey, where language was not an important issue as the language in use or privileged at court may not be identical with one privileged in religion, Gellner suggests that modernity has possible forms of impact on such a society. Modernity induces an increase in the proportion and importance of literacy; transformation of economic life; greater mobility of various kinds; and the emergence of an industrial proletariat. Above all modernity influences a particular language to be the language of modern organizations, of the new industrial, governmental and educational machines eroding the local structures (ibid.: 60). In short, while modernity places greater importance on literacy and a nation-sized mass educational system, Gellner suggests that it also influences the nationalism centered on single language favoritism in a linguistically diverse society.

#### **4.1.4. Print-language Nationalism**

In linking language with nationalism and nation, another prominent anthropologist, Benedict Anderson, argues that print languages played an important role in forming a new imagined community that laid a strong structure for the modern nation. He is of the view that 'convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility for this imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation' (Anderson 1991: 95). According to Anderson, today's many modern nation-states and self-conceived nations are the products

of a combination of ‘national print languages,’ capitalism and the national consciousness. Except for a small amount of the population, everyone uses national language in conversation and paper in some nations, many of them having national print languages as a common language. The first noticeable examples of such nations, Anderson points out, are the nation-states of Spanish America or those of the ‘Anglo-Saxon family,’ so formed with particular print languages while many nations, especially former colonies in Africa, emerged as the second such group. This is not to say that print language had no impact on the large cluster of new nations that emerged in Western Europe between 1776 and 1838. Anderson reminds us that they were the first to have self-consciously defined themselves as nations on the world stage and provided ‘the first real models of what such states should look like’ (ibid.: 96). It is useful to note here how print languages played a role in forming the imagined community in some detail.

Anderson postulates three distinct ways that the print languages laid the basis for national consciousness. The first: ‘unified fields’ that were created to facilitate exchange and communication among speakers of languages ‘below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars’ (ibid.: 94). This meant unprecedented opportunities for those speakers of varieties of spoken French, English, or Spanish to understand one another through the print language, if conversation might have been difficult to comprehend. The opportunity provided via print and paper was immense, that people came to know hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language field each belonging to one or other imaginable group. ‘These fellow readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally-imagined community’ (ibid.).

Second, a new fixity given to language through the combination of print language and capitalism, which Anderson informs us helped in the long run to build ‘an image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation’ (ibid.). Moreover, the printed book remained in a permanent form, facilitating unlimited number of reproduction both temporally and spatially. Consequently, writing, copying manuscripts, individualizing and ‘unconsciously modernizing’ habits of monastic scribes ended with printed books and records. Citing the example of how French written in the twelfth century differed markedly from that written in fifteenth century, Anderson explicates that the rate of change in the

language written in earlier manuscripts slowed decisively further in the sixteenth century and by the seventeenth century languages in Europe had witnessed the modern form of writing. Thus, print language facilitated permanency of what is written through the advent of printing. Documents published in the seventeenth century are accessible to us today in contrast to the words of the twelfth century ancestors of François Villon, a French poet of the fifteenth century. In other words, Anderson reiterates in his work (1991) that thanks to print-language we now have access to materials published some 300 years ago.

The third advantage print capitalism provided towards national consciousness is the power of language. Anderson observes that ‘print capitalism created languages of power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects inevitably were ‘closer’ to each print language and dominated their final forms’ (ibid.) meaning a dominant dialect became a print language gaining prominence over other dialects in a given country. Other languages or dialects, despite their assimilability to the emerging print language, lost caste in Anderson’s term because they failed or were unable to pursue their own print form: Bohemian-spoken Czech failed to gain print language status while spoken dialect Northwestern German gained at least a substandard of German. Other noted examples of those which gained a new politico-cultural eminence were: High German, the King’s English and later Central Thai among other languages. Anderson implicitly points out that these differences in the capacity of gaining access to print language became the case in point that fueled later linguistic struggle for certain ‘sub-nationalities in Europe to change their subordinate status by breaking firmly into print — and radio’ during the late twentieth century (ibid.: 95).

Thus, the interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity produced print languages which laid the bases for national consciousness in three distinct ways: Creation of a field of exchange and communication; fixing of print languages; and the power of a given language or the differentiation of status between the languages. Anderson views this process as a ‘largely unselfconscious one resulting from the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity [but points out that] as with so much else in the history of nationalism, once “there,” they could become formal models to be imitated, and where, expedient, consciously exploited in a Machiavellian spirit’ (ibid.). Some examples he cites are: Central Thai elevated to

national print language while the same government is indifferent to languages its hill-tribe minorities speak and actively discourages attempts by foreign missionaries to help the hill-tribe minorities to develop their own transcription systems and publications in their own languages. Turkey's incorporation of languages spoken by Turkic-speaking peoples inside Turkey and those living in a zone of Iran, Iraq, and the USSR, is another example of Machiavellian spirit. Besides incorporating, the Ataturk<sup>170</sup> Government imposed compulsory Romanization on the Turkish inducing a loss of comprehensibility among a family of languages through Arabic orthography. 'The Soviet authorities simply followed suit, first with anti-Islamic, anti-Persian compulsory Romanization, then, in Stalin's 1930s, with a Russifying compulsory Cyrillicization' (ibid.). Thus, Anderson on the one hand argues how print languages combined with capitalism contribute to nationalism through the concept of imagined community, and points out how the same print-capitalism strategy may be employed in a Machiavellian spirit on the other hand.

#### **4.1.5. Language as Meaning to Nationalism**

Contrary to Gellner's concepts of mass education and Anderson linking print communities to nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, a noted scholar of nationalism, views that language and culture serve to determine and demarcate communities, but they do not shape and color the content of nationhood. Smith contends that 'languages must be treated as part of the cultural ensemble that serves to create intimacy and communion between members of a population, as well as a sense of difference from those outside' (Smith, 2009: 83). In defining ethnicity, his list of six characteristics or dimensions did not include language as pointed out by another noted anthropologist (Gellner 1997:14). Smith's list included a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory and, a sense of solidarity as characteristics of ethnicity but not *a distinctive language* (ibid.). While expressing his doubt about the need to give importance to linguistic divisions given the fluidity of language and dialect, and many factors that affect the choice of language of a population, Smith also asserts that 'the limitations both in the English-speaking countries and in the Arab world, where a common

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<sup>170</sup> Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) was the founder and the first president of the Republic of Turkey (1923-38).

language has been insufficient to unify politically populations with separate histories over large areas and continents' (Smith 2009). However, Smith has revised some of his early views on language and updated the meanings of nationalism as well. He attaches importance to language in understanding nationalism (2010: 5-6).

Smith considers language one of the most important tools or methods to understand the meaning of nationalism. Defining the concept of nationalism, he suggests 'a language and symbolism of the nation' is one of several important references to nationalism. Other important signs he takes to mean nationalism are: 'A sociopolitical movement and an ideology of the nation' (Smith, 2010). Smith contends that recovery of history; revival of vernacular language through philology and lexicography; cultivation of its literature, especially drama and poetry; and restoration of vernacular arts and crafts, as well as music, including native dance and folksong, are important factors that help immerse a culture with the ideology of nationalism. They explain in understanding not only the meaning of nationalism but also the activism of any nationalist movement. Smith views that these are 'frequent cultural and literal and literary renaissances associated with nationalist movements, and the rich variety of the cultural activities which nationalism can excite' (ibid.: 7). He points out how a nationalist movement will attract people's participation through literary, research, music and cultural activities rather than through a demonstration of opposition alone. 'Typically, a nationalist movement will commence not with a protest rally, declaration or armed resistance, but with the appearance of literary societies, historical research, music festivals and cultural journals [referring us] to the kind of activity that Miroslav Hroch analyzed as an essential first phase of the rise and spread of Eastern European nationalisms' (ibid.). As Smith rightly points out, many similar nationalist and subsequent movements sprang out in colonial Africa and Asia. They remind us of several nationalist and sub-nationalist movements emerged in resistance to domestic language dominance in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. Similarly most of these resistance movements commenced with literary, academic and cultural activism. 'As a result, "humanistic" intellectuals – historians and philologists, artists and composers, poets, novelists and film directors – tend to be disproportionately represented in nationalist movements and revivals' (Argyle 1969; Hroch 1985 in Smith 2010: 7).



#### **4.2. Literature on Language Politics and State Policies**

Language politics and language policy are two separate yet interrelated areas of inquiry in the larger framework of language ideology, a concept used primarily within the fields of anthropology, sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies to characterize any set of beliefs or feelings about languages used in societies. Language politics are affected by government policies of standardization of a particular language or promotion of one or two languages into official status in a multilingual context. They 'reflect the tension between two contrasting types of language ideologies: ideologies that conceive of language as a resource, problem, or right and ideologies that conceive of language as pluralistic phenomena' (Ruiz 1984: 15-34). This tension, and other language-related policy studies, is reflected in a vast literature on language politics. For the past two decades, the study of nationalism, language and identity turned into a different domain with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. That ended the Cold War, and as those new nations in Central and Eastern Europe gained independence from the Soviet Union, and commenced rebuilding through promotion of their own culture and language distinct from Soviet culture and the Russian language. Similar examples can also be drawn from the Balkan Peninsula after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The policies of these newly independent nations were directed to reformation, standardization and revitalization of their languages while some nations proceeded to nation-build on the one hand, others to preserve linguistic diversity on the other hand. The delineation of borders of these nations retained their former multiethnic nature, spreading out among majority minority segregation in linguistic terms. Hence the policies of these nations not only contrasted from the task of rebuilding but also from reformation, standardization or even revitalization of their languages (Kymlicka and Grin 2003). According to Kymlicka and Grin, the policy formation of languages also differs from one country to another as a result of lingual diversity of the population. While some countries follow a traditional language policy of 'one nation and one language' only to face resistance, others adopt policies of maintaining linguistic diversity and revitalization of threatened minority languages following multilingual policies similar to those of the West. The status of languages also differs from titular to non-titular, titular on the sub-state level, threatened and language of minorities that have kin-states (ibid.).

Kymlicka and Grin observe that if there is one thing all these countries agree on, it

is their main aim of enshrining the preeminence of a titular nation and its associated language over that of a group generally perceived as national minority after separation from the Soviet Union. In other words, the legacy most of these new nations inherited along with independence from the Soviet Union was the Russian minority not speaking the titular language, and the powerful Russian language the titular nations carry back. These diverse language policies are reflected in recent studies undertaken by several specialists of the area.

Policies being implemented for the past two decades in many new nations in Central and Eastern Europe particularly have promoted titular nations over a national minority language and their associated languages. These policies clearly 'reflect an intention to shake off traces of earlier submission to a former imperial power which is now the kin-state of a national minority' (Kymlicka and Grin, 2003: 6). The titular language vs. national minority language dynamic turns out to be very important for these new states.

Slovakia and Romania are two examples that aim to promote their titular nations along with their associated languages over national minorities (Daftary and Gal, 2003). Assertion of this sort of privileged position for a titular language not only coincides with the traditional 'one state, one language' nation-building ideology but also reminds one of many examples of Asian and African states embracing the 'one state, one language' ideology, and either promoting the dominant language as official or retaining the language of the former colonial power as lingua-franca as we noted in a section above.

Besides promoting a titular language to preeminent status, the other chief concern of some new nations is the revitalization of a threatened minority language. The threatened language in some cases is a titular language at the sub-state level, which is reflected in studies of two new nations, Kamykia and Tararstan, which separated from the Soviet Union (Grin, 2003; Garipov and Faller, 2003). Language policies of these two nations resemble those Western European experiences with the protection and promotion of threatened languages.

Another example of state language policy that promotes the titular over other languages yet with a different objective is reflected in the Baltic States where Jarve (2003) shows the aim of Estonian state language policy is employed at protecting an endangered language. Estonia would be an example that aims at privileging its threatened titular

language over a dominant foreign language like Russian, which it carried back along with its independence from the Soviet Union. The state policy of Estonia is in part privileging a titular language over other languages and also attempting to protect and preserving a small and threatened language of the titular nation. The situation in Estonia is quite similar to efforts being made to protect threatened minority languages such as Catalan and Basque in Spain, Welsh or Gaelic in England, from world languages such as English and Spanish.

#### **4.2.1. English Hegemony and Indigenous Subalternity**

The hegemony of English as a cultural carrier and its influence on indigenous languages are the subject of another domain of contributions in the literature of language politics and policies. The contexts of New Zealand and Africa have special cases in point. ‘The hegemony of English as a cultural carrier is evident not only in contexts where it is taught as a foreign/international language but also in contexts where an indigenous language is influenced’ (Alazzam-Alwidyan 2008:1-3). The status of the Maori language in New Zealand presents a strong case where language plays significant symbolic and pragmatic roles in constructing an indigenous minority’s cultural identity. However, despite the efforts of New Zealand’s policy to revitalize the Maori language through the formal education system, the language, from the perspective of its indigenous speakers, has lost its purity and authenticity. Richard Benton (2007) points out that the ‘Maoriness’ of the language is being constantly threatened by the influx of lexical and semantic borrowings from English—in the name of modernization. The perception of English as the language of science and technology potentially threatens both the linguistic and thus the cultural identities of Maori speakers and stigmatizes the learners. Benton’s analysis of the indigenous Maori language of New Zealand should serve a paradigm for a number of cases in multicultural and multilingual contexts, where the minority, especially the indigenous, languages are manipulated by the State to achieve national unity and cohesiveness. He also points out that internal nationalist efforts could lead to repressive practices against linguistic minorities, and hence asserts that a sound national language policy needs to consider the values of liberty and individual freedom.

Among language policies in Africa are other examples analogous to the Maori case in New Zealand. Two recent studies (Heugh 2008; Ngcobo 2007): one on the latest

language policy and educational developments, another on language planning, policy and implementation in South Africa, assert that the multilingual constitution and planning of policy have stagnated despite South Africa's committed legal guarantees in its constitution, which is known to be the best multilingual law in the world. The new government declared 11 languages as official languages in all domains replacing English and Afrikaans, which had marginalized all other African languages in the past. However, Kathleen Heugh highlights how the potential of the new ostensibly multilingual South African Constitution is being undermined by an increasingly de facto English-language education approach. Meanwhile, Mtholeni Ngcobo (2007) argues that policy implementation is still the most problematic area of language planning in South Africa. He attributes these problems to the government failure to take concrete steps, allocate enough financial resources, devise time schedules for completion, evaluation, and assessment of the policy, planning and implementation that are meant for the maintenance of linguistic diversity.

Further, two earlier studies indicated that problem with language endangerment or loss lies not with the colonial languages but with the 'big' languages in Africa (Adegbija 2001) and the absence of visionary scholarship in the concerned country (Newman, 2003). Working on the Oko language in Africa in an effort to save threatened languages, Adegbija asserts that problems related to language policy in multiethnic societies in Africa are not simply a sociological concern but a political matter that no foreigner should be embroiled with. He attributes the problem causing endangerment of local or small languages to the spread of large indigenous languages, rather than the influence of colonial languages. Adegbija points out that those languages spoken by larger populations and officially recognized in many parts of Africa constitute a threat to languages spoken by small populations. According to Adegbija, the speakers of the larger languages are the power brokers and decision makers. Thus their decisions, given more weight in favour of the big languages they speak, threaten the very existence of languages spoken by minority communities (Adegbija 2001).

Another study (Newman 2003) on endangered languages points out two important factors that hinder prevention of languages becoming endangered. First, most students studying linguistics or another discipline related to language preservation are not those students from the minorities whose languages are endangered, but are from those dominant

groups who are privileged to have these opportunities (ibid.).

Second, there is an absence of informed scholars who foresee possible endangerment of their own minority language, or that that loss will have repercussions for their own language, culture and the intellectual advancement of their community. Newman cautions that ‘in the absence of visionary scholars who fervently believe that language loss is indeed a culturally and intellectually catastrophic matter, language centers in Africa including Asia and Latin America will continue to devote their energies to the promotion and development of large national and regional languages, with scant attention to the languages that are speeding towards extinction’ (ibid.:10-11).

#### **4.2.3. South Asian Experience**

As in many countries, language politics and policy studies are a very new discipline in South Asia. The conflicts stemming from and related to language were studied as a part and parcel of ethnic problems, and in several perspectives until recently. One of the earlier works is language conflict and national development through which Jyotendra Das Gupta analyses the group politics and national language policy in India and how Indian language associations such as Hindi, Urdu and Bengali language movements influenced Indian national politics and the political community in general. Here, he analyzes how the Hindi movement started from a series of agitations launched by eminent intellectual leaders in the 1830s, and why Hindi became the court language in Bihar in the north-central part of India by 1881 (Das Gupta 1970). Das Gupta also explores the formulation and implementation of a national language policy and the language policies of nationalist and of separatist groups both before and since the independence of India. Differing from the conventional concept of national integration among the diverse communities, Das Gupta perceives that: ‘[V]iable political community can be built in India on the basis of recognition of separate yet related language communities. The process of asserting distinct linguistic pride at the same time has been related to a system of coordinated community based on the convergence of interests rather than on amalgamated integration’ (ibid.: 269-270).

Das Gupta’s finding reflects the tension between two contrasting ideologies of language policy that conceive of language as a resource, problem or right and ideologies that conceive of language as pluralistic phenomena; he ultimately compromises between

the two. He demonstrates that language politics in general and language associations in particular provide crucial support in building the national community and furthering representational institutions in a multilingual context such as India.

Sri Lanka's single language domination and its repercussions are dealt with in a study of communalism and language in politics. Robert Kearney (1967) analyses the ethnic divisions of Sri Lankan society on the basis of language and examines the problem in a historical perspective, since independence. His analysis focuses on the Tamil demand for parity of status for their language with Sinhala and their success and failure in their attempt. Another relevant contribution is in religion and politics by Urmila Phadnis (1976) in which she deals with ethnic composition and racial relations. Phadnis analyzes the role of Buddhist organizations in safeguarding the Sinhala language, religion and culture against immigrants' dominations while S. J. Tambiah (1986) elucidates the revival of Sinhala and Tamil nationalism and identity through recollection of old myths and historic memories. Another important study of the Sri Lankan case is about how language difference formed an obstacle to integration and compartmentalized the Sinhala and Tamil communities soon after independence when the Sinhala language was made the official language in Sri Lanka. Subhash Nayak (2001) points out how language difference leads to conflict that becomes the most critical problem, pitting the Sinhalese against the Tamils only to raise unambiguous communal issues.

Literature on Bangladesh language policy is another special case in point. Bangladesh is a lone example where the language movement played an important role in establishing an independent state in 1971. The Bengali language movement launched in 1952 resisted the single language policy that imposed Urdu as the sole national language on the Bengali people. The language resistance movement was a forerunner to the nationalist movement that forced the Pakistan-run government to relent and grant official status to the Bengali language in 1956, and establish an independent state in 1971. In tribute to the sacrifice rendered to the language movement by the Bengali people and for the ethno-linguistic rights of people around the world, UNESCO declared February 21 as International Mother Language Day.

The language conflict this country faces today differs from the nature of what its multilingual neighbors face – the single language domination and state repression of

indigenous and minority languages. Bangladesh is still not entirely free from this challenge. Yet the nature of the problem lies with the state policy on national education. Recent studies on language policy in education reveal that ‘despite the political success of the Bengali language movement, English remains the most important medium of instruction in schools for the elite and in higher education’ (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007). Hossain and Tollefson analyzed the role of Bengali language in the ideology of Bengali nationalism and the forces that contributed to the spread of entrenchment of English among the elite and the state policy in higher education. The two scholars stress that there is an unprecedented tension between promotion of mother-tongue education in Bengali and English medium education: English medium education is promoted for the elite and in higher education over Bengali mother tongue education. The system bars access for Bengali medium students to higher education thus deepening the social divide between the *haves* and the *have-nots* (ibid.).

### **4.3. Nepali Context**

The study of language politics and policy is a new academic exercise in Nepal. Most scientific studies, conducted largely by foreigners, for the past half a century focused mainly on social anthropology. Since Nepal was open to the outside world only after its political transformation in 1950-51, foreign scholars visited Nepal for field work. Nepali scholars followed suit after the establishment of Tribhuvan University (the first state funded university) in 1959. Contributions to the literature on language politics and policy were seen a decade and half later. It was only after the people’s movement in 1990, followed by the formation of a language recommendation commission by the Government of Nepal, that full scale academic interest shifted to ethno-politics including the language. Both foreign and domestic scholars have taken keen interest in the field since then. However, looking at the number of contributions on language politics and policy for that past few decades since the debut of social scientific research in 1950-51, it calls for the need of further in-depth research. A brief examination of social scientific research will be useful to understand the situation before we undertake reviewing some of the important contributions to the literature.

A large number of contributions have added to the literature of social sciences that

includes ethno-politics in Nepal since its debut in the 1950s. Specialists isolate three distinct phases of social scientific research conducted for the past six decades: The structural-functional phase (1950-70), conflict phase (1970-90) and public debate phase (since 1990). According to Krishna Bhattachan (2013), the first phase of research was conducted on various caste and non-caste ethnic groups on the structural-functional approach. They included anthropologists C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, Jiro Kawakita, Shigeru Iijima and John T. Hitchcock, from the West and Japan, who studied mountain and hill peoples such as the Sherpa, Thakali, Magar and Newar. The domestic social scientists of the time were Dor Bahadur Bista, Gopal Singh Nepali, and Bed Prakash Upreti. Bhattachan observes that the reason for this concentration apparently was the infancy of social science in Nepal and political sensitivity. 'The positive contribution of this phase was the systematic documentation of various caste and non-caste ethnic groups: the *People of Nepal* (Bista, 1967) was a product of this genre' (Bhattachan 2013: 37).

The second phase of the contributions to the ethno-political literature is considered more significant for a breakthrough in revealing caste and non-caste ethnic conflicts at village, regional, and national levels, that were not taken up earlier. Bhattachan points out that 'these studies began to demolish the myth that there has always been ethnic harmony in Nepal.' The scholars that worked in the second phase include Lionel Caplan (1970) who analyzed the Hindu tribal conflict particularly between the 'immigrant' high-caste Bahuns and the indigenous Limbus on the former's taking over the latter's traditional *Kipat* (communal) land in eastern Nepal. Patricia Caplan (1972) studied a far-Western village conflict between high-cast Bahuns and untouchable caste cobblers ('*Sarki*') (ibid.). However, until 1973, there was no literature related to language issues. It was during this phase that studies on language initially focused on the importance of linguistics and later on the politics of language. Kamal P. Malla (1973) contributes one of the first studies on language politics analyzing the history of languages, the values of multilingualism in Nepal and the policies adopted by the government. Frederick Gaige (1975) was first to conduct studies on Madhesi (the people of Indian origin) living in the Tarai belt in southern Nepal over a number of issues including language, citizenship, and land ownership. Although Nepal was open to outsiders in 1950-51 after the revolt by the democratic forces that reinstated the monarchy, the sudden reversal of power to monarchy



at the end of the decade changed the situation. Consequently, foreign scholars were not allowed by the partyless Panchayat government to study the conflict aspect on the grounds that such studies would disturb a 'continuing tradition' of communal harmony in Nepal. Bhattachan (2013) calls this phase the conflict phase in the history of social scientific research in Nepal. Studies conducted by Western scholars under difficult conditions and their findings were ignored by politicians, ethnic and Madhesi leaders and Nepali social scientists until the uprising of the people's movement in 1990.

The third phase, the public debate phase, began soon after 1990 with freedom returned after a democratic government was installed. With the publication of *Fatalism and Development* (Bista 1991 in Bhattachan 2013), full scale academic interest shifted to debate on ethno-politics, with new contributions to the literature. By 1993, debates on the ethno-politics of language intensified as the government formed a commission to make recommendations about the national language policy (Bhattachan 2013). We will review several contributions that have appeared since then, some of them for the guiding purpose of this study: Language politics and state society relations in Nepal from a Newar perspective. The contributions will be reviewed in two parts. First, language politics and policy in Nepal; second, Newar and the Nepal Bhasa Movement; which will be followed by an explanation on the importance of this research.

#### **4.3.1. Language Politics and Policy in Nepal**

Analyzing Nepal's language situation and state policy in a multilingual Nepal, Ram Kumar Dahal (2000), a political scientist and one of very few scholars who are keen on politics of language and minority issues in Nepal, views that 'linguistic stratification has led to the class distinction and political and social inequality in Nepalese society' (2000: 164). Despite the advantage of a national language, which has potential to add to the integrity of Nepalese society, the indifferent attitude of the dominant groups toward the grievances of the minority linguistic groups and the reflections of the former's attitude in the state policy, Dahal observes, has hindered integration and nation building in Nepal. However, if needful and proper measures are taken, he is of the view that the acute problem can be prevented from aggravating into a severe one.

Nepal is a multilingual society with over 61 recognized linguistic groups.

However, Dahal points out that the Nepali language has potential to integrate this diverse society as a national language as it is accepted by the majority of people for a number of considerations: ‘common cultural background, as an accessory to sustain livelihood, for state patronage, and/or regional comprehensiveness (Gautam 1991: 129-131 in Dahal 2000:164). According to Dahal, the Nepali language is endowed with characteristics of a national language for a nation-state. Conventionally, he views that a national language is selected for a nation-state on various grounds and characteristics unique to it: Effective for interactions among different linguistic groups, flexible in its function. Other characteristics of a national language are that it ‘tries to maintain political neutrality; ensures social justice; [...] works as the official and working language, medium of instruction, link language, and so on’ (ibid.). He points out that Nepali language has all these potentials ‘but its actual capacity to homogenize different cultures is doubted (Dahal 1984: 4; ibid.). This he attributes to several factors to which the government of Nepal has yet to pay proper attention.

Firstly, there ‘has been no systematic and scientific language planning in Nepal’ (ibid.:171) unlike in other multilingual countries. Despite language rights being an important demand in the revolutionary uprising in 1950 and in the peoples’ movement in 1990, the Government of Nepal ‘stressed on one language policy and encouraged Nepali undermining others. Even after the implementation of the 1990 constitution, language planning has not been done properly’ (ibid.).

Secondly, the continued process of Nepalization exerted influence on speakers of minority languages to adopt the Nepali language and eventually lose their mother tongues. As a result, ‘several languages including ten Rai languages have already decayed/died and another twelve ones are on the verge of extinction’ (Yadav 1996: 233-239 in ibid.: 173). Dahal asserts that this is ‘hara-kiri,’ if not the ‘suicide of language identity’ that has forced lesser known languages to face an identity crisis thanks to the dominant languages – Nepali and English. There are legal provisions for promoting and preserving the interests of the linguistic minorities that include the endangered linguistic groups, but Dahal points out they are inadequate (ibid.).

Thirdly, the attitudes of the dominant groups towards spoken languages and the medium of instruction in educational institutions have led to an attitude of neglect,

humiliation and depreciation toward local or nonstandard languages (ibid.: 174). Dahal shares the views of linguists who point out that the ‘concept of a standard language has somehow reduced the spoken language to a symbol of backwardness. The whole education has a very hostile and demeaning attitude towards spoken languages [...and t]he rise of regional linguistic identities had developed themselves as a reaction to the domination of standard language’ (Saxena and Mahendroo 1995: 144-157 in ibid.: 175). Dahal observes that the languages of the minority groups remain neglected for two obvious reasons: That the textbooks are written only in standard Nepali, which is not the mother tongue of the students concerned, and above all that the teachers prefer to use standard language in school instruction.

In view of the language issues and conflicts affected by the government policy emerging as an acute problem and to prevent it from growing into a severe one, Dahal suggests that ‘languages in Nepal must be studied in three dimensions: language as a problem, language as a right and language as a resource’ (ibid.: 181). He reiterates that ‘language problem, as other problems of the society, [can] be studied, resolved peacefully and handled positively by the government in consultation with various linguistic groups of the nation. Their right to develop their own languages must be recognized in practice’ (ibid.). He advocates to language activists that they ‘should try to pressurize the parliamentarians to amend the constitutional provisions concerning language and create a strong lobby and public opinion on their favor’ and stress that the government is duty-bound to encourage and promote the languages of 61 *Janajatis* (i.e. nationalities) in the country. Thus, Dahal suggests that ‘it is important for the government to accord due place to each language and cultures so that linguistic diversity in the nation attempts to foster purpose politics of nation building. It is equally important to overcome a sense of alienation, seclusion and discrimination and form broader identity’ (ibid.: 182-183).

Dahal rightly remarks on Maithili (i.e. Maithil), Newari (i.e. Nepal Bhasa) and Limbu as languages having rich written tradition (ibid.: 173) and that only government encouragement is enough for codification and standardization of Nepal Bhasa and Limbu while other smaller languages should be treated appropriately depending on their needs. However, there is a wider gap in conceiving the difference of problems being faced even by those languages that have written traditions. Nepal Bhasa is a notable example to which

I shall return later.

Lava Dev Awasthi, an expert on multilingualism and an education policy planner explores the origin of language policy making in Nepal with a special focus on mechanism the first democratic government makes use of to frame language policies in education. He analyses how the framework drawn in 1956 by the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC), led by Dr. Hugh B. Wood and hence known as the Wood Commission, is still having its impact despite the language policy in education being revised in response to the aspiration of people who changed the government from autocratic to democratic for the past two-and-a-half decades. Awasthi investigates the implications of the NNEPC language policy in education practices in Nepal and considers how the vast language resources can be utilized as a peace dividend for post conflict Nepal with a specific agenda for democratization, inclusive growth and sustainable development (Awasthi 2011: 73). Awasthi's comparison between Macaulay's *Minute* and the Wood Commission Report particularly serves as a useful guide for our area of inquiry, the state language policy of Nepal.

Awasthi views that multiculturalism in Nepal is an indigenous construct while the monolingual construct is an import from the West, nurtured by high level senior government officials for the wellbeing of Khas/Nepali speaking (K/NS) children that leaves the non-Khas/Nepali speaking (K/NNS) children behind. This is a noticeable picture of today's multi-lingual Nepal; how a single language is being imposed by the government policy planners on a linguistically diverse population advantaging the K/NS children over a larger group of K/NNS children. While drawing this picture, Awasthi explores the root cause for this predicament. The single language policy has not only disadvantaged a larger group of K/NNS children but also put their mother-tongues and cultures and the traditions associated with their languages at risk. Awasthi attributes the systematic destruction of local languages to the work of Macaulay's *Minute* of 1835 in India at the regional level, which led to the creation of a prototypical report of NNEPC also known as the Wood Commission Report of 1956 in Nepal. 'Macaulay's *Minute* of the British India and the Wood Commission Report of Nepal had the same mission to accomplish: the spread of English and the spread of Nepali, respectively' (ibid.: 74).

No sooner was the new government formed after the 1950 revolution that

dislodged the autocratic Rana regime, than it formed a Nepal Education Board (NEB) to formulate language policy in education in response to the aspirations of the people for promotion of education and establishment of schools necessary for the purpose. The NEB formed NNEPC which appointed Dr. Wood from the University of Oregon in the United States to advise the commission to frame the educational language policy. The NNEPC is historic and has an overarching influence on the language policy in post-NNEPC Nepal. According to Awasthi, it is 'historic because such a commission was formed for the first time in the country, and that it still forms the basis for Nepal's present educational policy. Its legacy is still in the move and has been playing in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of Nepal's language policy' (ibid.: 76).

Summarizing the Wood Commission Report, Awasthi reveals that it set the tone for the entire education system and was seen as a step forward in the Nepalese education system. It emphasized the universalization of primary education and the improvement of educational service delivery system across Nepal. He views that the Wood Commission Report also acknowledged the role of education for social transformation and empowerment and painted the picture of Nepal as multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual. It looked into the issues from policy to pedagogy and highlighted the issues of the K/NNS children in Nepal. But Awasthi points out that 'the Wood Commission Report failed to capture the spirit of the political change in the country and recognized the need for multilingual education. It followed the path of linguistic reductionism, and suggested strategies to reduce multilingualism in schools. The report saw the spread of multilingualism as a threat to the Nepali nation' (ibid.).

Pointing out the nature of Nepali society and its linguistic diversity which existed harmoniously for thousands of years until monolingualism was constructed, Awasthi asserts that multilingualism is part of the Nepali people's everyday's phenomenon, rooted to their cultural construct. Thus, the reduction of multilingualism is not an indigenous construct of Nepal. He points out that Dr. Wood played a major role in shaping the reduction of multilingualism in this country. Awasthi cites Dr. Wood's view which displays his monolithic mindset:

[...] that two hundred years before, the very problem had stared then in the face in the United States of America, which at that time had a multiplicity of spoken languages: but that after the War of Independence, English was given due prominence as the medium of instruction and that today there was no problem of language.

(Caddell 2000 from a press release quoting Dr. Wood; *ibid.*: 77).

Awasthi points out that these remarks clearly reflect what Dr. Wood had in mind when he advised NNEPC in planning Nepal's language policy – non-Nepali ideology of a monolingual State. This is entirely different from the desire for change in the spirit of the revolution of 1950. This also proves that one-language [*ek bhasa*] is the construct of NNEPC and an example of how a non-Nepali ideology was imported to transform Nepal into a monolingual state.

Comparing the Macaulay's *Minute* of British India and Wood Commission Report of Nepal, Awasthi points out how Nepal's educational language policies were heavily influenced by the language policies of British India. He cites some striking examples in five categories:

1. *Assimilation*: Both Macaulay's *Minute* and the Wood Commission Report assimilated the people ruled by the dominant into the language and culture of the rulers. Awasthi finds that the *Minute* in India has adopted the 'downward filtration model' and in Nepal, the Report has employed the 'submersion and subtraction model' (*ibid.*: 79). In British India, the English rulers assimilated Indians to the English language and culture so that the Indians would remain loyal to the English language, culture and the rulers. But they would still look Indian to Indian eyes. The English rulers also took advantage of the inferiority complex of the native people, and were not reluctant to ridicule the natives by stating that 'the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic [native languages]' (Macaulay in Edwards 1967: 4; *ibid.*: 79).

The Wood Commissions Report advocates similar assimilation in Nepal. In teaching Nepali (the name of the language itself is another construct of NNEPC), the report recommends that 'Nepali' must be taught to children at an earlier age so that 'other languages will gradually disappear, and greater national strength and unity will result. [...] Local dialects and tongues, other than standard Nepali, should be vanished from the school and playground as early possible in the life of the child' (2011: 79). Awasthi calls this a

submersion and subtraction model.

2. *Destruction*: Awasthi finds both Macaulay's *Minute* and the Wood Commission Report aimed wiping out indigenous languages and cultures from the land they originated in, that were flourishing freely in India and Nepal. Both the *Minute* and the report are similar in their persuasive method of systematic destruction of native languages and cultures. Awasthi observes that Macaulay pursues this through 'conversion' and Wood through 'homogenization.' Macaulay was so sure in his scheme that if his plan is followed in India 'there will not be a single idolater among the respected classes 30 years hence' (Macaulay in his letter to his father dated 12 October 1836 as cited by V. Ravi Kumar; *ibid.*: 80).

The Wood Commission Report seemed not to hesitate to replicate the Macaulay *Minute* to enforce destruction of the native languages of Nepal. The report emphasized 'if Nepali is to become the true national language, then we must insist its use be enforced in the primary school' (NNEPC 1956: 96; *ibid.*). The report insisted upon the promotion of 'Nepali' at the expense of the mother tongues of K/NNS children, of their culture and historical tradition.

3. *Perpetuation*: British India's rulers took advantage of the ignorance of the local aids who simply followed the orders of the English ruling class to the extent that Macaulay states that he has 'never found one [...] who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia (Macaulay in Edwards: 1967: 1). The Funds which thus be placed at our disposal enable us to give larger encouragement to...schools in which the English language might be well and thoroughly taught' (*ibid.*: 81). This is nothing other than belittling the native languages, literature and culture by misusing the propaganda and state machinery to perpetuate language power. Awasthi terms this action as 'linguistic rejectionism' and Wood's as 'imposition.' The Wood Commission simply replicated the idea and replaced the word 'English' with 'Nepali' in its report and emphasized imposing Nepali in primary school.

4. *Possession*: This is another category in which Awasthi tallies Macaulay's *Minute* with the Wood Commission Report. Both documents monopolized access to intellectual wealth and glorified the language of power at the cost of language(s) without power. (e.g. English over native languages of India; and Nepali over native languages of

Nepal). Awasthi observes here that the Macaulay *Minutes* showed its single ‘intellectual supremacy’ without a single note on the linguistic wealth and the richness of other languages but claimed: ‘[w]hoever knows that language [English] has access to all the vast intellectual wealth, which all wisest nations of earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations’ (Macaulay in Edwards, 1967: 2; *ibid.*: 81). In the case of Nepali, Awasthi views that the Wood Commission Report employed ‘control over knowledge and information’ and simply imposed that ‘...the techniques of reading and writing should be developed only in Nepali [...]. If we accept the goal of mass education, such extravagance [inclusion of additional languages] cannot be justified on any ground’ (NNEPC, 1956: 97; *ibid.*).

5. *Restriction*: The restriction method was applied by Macoulay through directly ‘prohibiting printing’ of Arabic and Sanskrit books while Wood applied restrictions on languages and cultures of Nepal by taking ‘control over material’ in favor of printing and production materials only in Nepali, allowing no chance to print in other languages of Nepal. Awasthi cites two other examples of the similarity in the objectives of Macaulay’s *Minute* and Wood Commission’s Report:

...I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanscrit books, I would abolish the Madrassa and the Sanscrit college at Calcutta. Benares is the great seat of Brahmaninc learning; Delhi of Arabic learning. If we retain the Sanscrit at Benares and the Mahometan college at Delhi, we do enough, and much more than enough in my opinion, for the Eastern languages.

(Thirumalai 2003; *ibid.*: 82)

and

‘... printed and manufactured aids must be produced in the Nepali language, and be designed for Nepal’s schools’ (NNEPC, 1956: 186; *ibid.*: 82).

The comparison of the two documents that influence language policy in India and Nepal above by Awasthi shows how power can willfully destroy the languages and cultures of the powerless by mechanism imported and implemented by the very policies of governments that are supposed to protect, preserve and advance the languages of the land. In Nepal’s case, all the members of NNEPC and the Wood Commission were learned people of Nepal except Dr. Wood, who was only an advisor of the commission. Why and how can a commission full of learned Nepalese simply nod to Dr. Wood’s advice in framing an important language policy that will have an impact for an overarching policy



for the whole country? Nepal is not a land of one single ethnic people but a home to people of diverse nationalities. Awasthi has the following answer:

‘There is no doubt about their [the members of NNEPC] good intention. However, the effects of their work were different from what they intended. Despite being very knowledgeable and high level senior government officials and extremely well-qualified professionals, it appears, from the results of the report that they happened to be the carriers of the colonial cultures of the British India’ (ibid.: 83).

Mark Turin, a scholar on minority language rights examines the situation of minority languages and government policy in Nepal with a special reference to the Thangmi<sup>171</sup> language. He observes that Nepal’s minority languages such as Thangmi ‘are endangered with diminishing fluency and compromised linguistic ability among younger speakers’ and that ‘language death remains a complicated issue.’ He attributes the situation to three major factors: ‘Fragmented nature of scholarship on Nepal’s diverse linguistic communities’; ‘increased literacy, education and the dominance of the national language’; and a government language policy prone to political pressure. To resolve the problems endangering and killing the nation’s minority languages, Turin believes that the very fragmented nature of scholarship on Nepal’s linguistic communities can provide a fertile ground for discussion and formulation of a progressive course of action. He also agrees with the view that ‘actual development has positive sides’ when explored from ‘the perspective of an emergent modern nation-state.’ He observes that ‘linguistic rights are emotive and political issue in all multi-lingual nations’ and suggests that ‘language policy in Nepal must move beyond the banning or promotion of individual languages’ from ‘political pressure groups to an informed approach’ (Turin 2004: 1).

Exploring the situation of minority languages of Nepal, Turin finds the fluency among the younger generation is endangered in many, with compromised linguistic ability diminishing. Some are surviving only with their own awakening and initiatives. Although there are legal provisions for protection and preservation of languages with educational facilities and economic support to some extent, not many minority languages have benefitted from those provisions. With the revival of ethno-linguistic awareness after the

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<sup>171</sup> The Census of Nepal 2001 records Thami for Thangmi language. Turin is examining only to indicate another example that the census takers willfully name the languages of Nepal at their pleasure. Other noted example is Newar/Newari for Nepal Bhasa.

1990 people's movement, Turin finds the Thangmi language is maintaining its survival. At the time of sad stories being told about genocide, suicide and extinction of languages, he has a story showing signs of hope with regard to Thangmi, a mother tongue of thousands of Thangmi adults and children still spoken in three particular villages across the Dolakha and Sindhupalchok districts, in the Central Development Region of Nepal. Though undoubtedly threatened, Turin points out that the Thangmi language is still vibrant and growing. There is a new revival in the use of Thangmi language from 'Thangmi kids composing songs and rhymes about their lives, families, and friends; parents giving their children names of culturally important plants and animals, or of well known Thangmi *jhankri* (shaman) from times past; young men and women create new Thangmi words [...] catch on and become adopted in a matter of days' (2004:8). While Thangmi first names have replaced *Krishna* (boy's name) and *Shanti* (girl's name) of the old generation and new vocabularies are being accumulated in the Thangmi lexicon. Some recently evolved words for example are 'aeroplane,' 'video camera' and 'Maoist' among others while many loan words from Nepali are contributing to documentation project such as 'word collection (lexicon hunting)' leading to dictionary compilation that will preserve the indigenous terms and encode oral tradition in the Thangmi language. Turin himself is involved with the project together with some local enthusiasts. Thangmi seemed to have had no *lipi* (script) of its own. However, Turin notes that the real search is for a script in the belief that a *lipi* will somehow 'validate their claims to antiquity and autochthony.' Turin notes that many have completely reconciled to using Devanagari to write the Thangmi language, while some of the 'more militant members of the community are desperately trying to unearth any indication of a uniquely Thangmi script' in the logic that there must have been a *lipi* for the Thangmi language as well. Another possible reason Turin suggests for the search for a *lipi* seems to be the difference between the criteria of languages 'having' and 'not having' a written tradition. According to the National Language Policy Recommendations Commission (NLPRC) established in May 1993, Thangmi language ranks in the third position of a four-fold stratification of languages spoken in Nepal. The 4 positions are: First, languages with elaborate and well-attested written traditions, such as Khas/Nepali, Newar/Nepal Bhasa, Maithil, Limbu, Bhojpuri and Awadhi; second, languages 'in the process of developing a written tradition' such as Tamang, Gurung and numerous others

(Sonntag 2001: 169; in *ibid.*: 9); third, those languages without a written tradition; and fourth, languages that are dying such as Raute. The Thangmi language has survived a long time. While being challenged and eroded by the widespread use of the Khas/Nepali language, it is now on the march of progress or in the process of at least ‘word hunting’ in Turin’s term for a documentation project. In comparison, this is not the case with many other minority languages.

According to Turin, causes for language endangerment and death remain complicated. Turin locates 3 major factors. First, although Nepal has been constitutionally recognized as a multilingual nation, there is no agreement as to the number of languages spoken in Nepal among the scholars, citizens and government. He notes that a conservative estimate suggests that there are 65 ethnic groups but they are segmented by languages spoken into between 85 to 100. There is no reliable nationwide linguistic data, but Turin finds the published surveys focused on specific areas, particularly on the Rai language groups in Eastern Nepal, give scholars reason to believe the higher estimates. The Census of Nepal 2001 report provides the number of languages spoken as mother tongue as 92 plus a handful unidentified languages. The *Ethnologue* figure published by the Summer Institute of Linguistic in Dallas, Texas has recorded the total number of languages spoken in Nepal to be 120. (2004: 4). Turin believes that ‘this very fragmented nature of scholarship on Nepal’s linguistic communities provides a fertile ground for scholars, ethnic activists, and the national government to meet, discuss, and formulate a progressive course of action for the coming years.’

Second, ‘increased literacy, education and the dominance of the national language.’ The single language policy biased towards Nepali has oppressed other languages in Nepal. People have no alternative than to get literate in Nepali as the education provided by the Government of Nepal (GoN) is based on Nepali only. Changes after uprising of the people’s movement in 1990 have embodied constitutional provision, education facility and economic support for the indigenous communities for their rights to preserve and promote their mother tongues. However, many have yet to benefit from these facilities. Turin uncovers that lack of knowledge of these provisions among the indigenous and minority communities themselves has added fuel to the indifferent attitudes of the ruling class and their domination over other communities of different languages leading

them to endangerment and death. Although Turin stops short of analyzing how literacy, education and dominance of the national language have caused the endangerment and death of languages in Nepal, a part of the recommendation of the first National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC) published in 1956 he cites illustrates the impact:

No other language should be taught, even optionally in the primary school because: few children will have need for them, they would hinder the teaching of Nepali

(Pandey et al. 1956: 104 in Turin 2004: 9).

The NEPC recommendation clearly stated that the natural and preferable state for Nepal was nothing else but a monolingual one in which minority languages were consciously disregarded or even overpowered' (ibid.: 9). Turin also shares the view that the 'actual development has positive sides' when the situation is explored from the perspective of a new modern nation-state. But he differs with the views of Ray Taras who advocates the creation of a 'national' language at the expense of other languages in the pretext of a situation where only 'minority' ones exist, and loss of minority languages is an inevitable byproduct of the cause of nationalism and unity (1998: 81 in 2004: 9). Contrary to Taras, Turin shares Sonntag's view that 'language is an important if not determining characteristic of groups in Nepal' (2001:170 in 2004: 9).

Third, the government language policy is prone to political pressure. Turin views that single language policy biased towards Nepali was introduced at the recommendation of the National Education Planning Commission appointed in 1954, even though the new government had been installed by democratic forces of political parties that overthrew the Rana Oligarchy. Moreover, the language policy was changed to multilingual reality of Nepal by the pressures of the people's movement in 1990. Though the constitutional changes recognized the rights of linguistic diversity, achievements are yet to be seen in practice. Turin suggests that 'since languages are always in flux and linguistic identities are anything but rigid, linguistic policy therefore, should remain equally flexible' (2004: 1). Turin also points out that 'linguistic rights are emotive and political issues in all multilingual nations and Nepal is by no means an exception. Therefore, he reiterates that 'language policy in Nepal must move beyond the banning or promotion of individual languages according to political pressure groups to an informed approach that considers

and incorporates local needs and indigenous ethnolinguistic perspectives' (ibid.).

Yogendra P. Yadava, a noted linguist exploring the context of envisaged federal structure of Nepal and its need for restructuring language policy suggests an inclusive language policy favoring two official languages: A lingua franca and a regional language if the country is restructured into linguistic states. While acknowledging Khas/Nepali as a legitimate choice for an official language as the majority of people speak it, he also suggests Hindi as an additional lingua franca for regions like Terai in southern Nepal, as the majority of people in the region speak it. This will provide a choice between Khas/Nepali and Hindi in each state where the regional language serves as another official language. Moreover, the inclusive language policy Yadava suggests also includes a language policy for a 'transitional bilingual education' that will first facilitate learning in mother tongue, then switch to a lingua franca for broader communications and eventually switch on to an international language for global communications and access to science and technology (2007:14).

Discussing the need for two official languages for the envisaged linguistic restructuring of Nepal, Yadava attributes the circumstances to two major factors. First, Nepal is a mosaic of cultural and linguistic diversity. It is home to a people made up of '100 officially recognized caste and ethnic groups who speak around 92 languages officially recognized by the state' (CBS 2001; Yadava and Turin 2007 in ibid.: 3). Of these languages spoken in Nepal, some have literate traditions while others do not, but have taken to developing literate traditions. They have also been trying to produce materials in their own mother tongue. Citing a survey of attitudes towards their mother tongue, Yadava points out that 'the majority of the responses (97 percent or 56 language organizations out of 58) have a strong positive attitude toward their mother tongue. The people surveyed responded that they feel more prestigious to use their mother tongue and that they did not feel embarrassed about speaking their native languages in the presence of speakers of the dominant language' (ibid.: 10).

Secondly, Nepal is a multilingual nation, yet a single language is given power, recognition and prestige by an assimilationist state policy while minority languages were looked down on as inferior and have been suppressed for the past 240 years of rule after the Gorkha conquest of Nepal (ibid.: 14). Yadava points out that 'despite being

multicultural and multilingual, Nepal enshrined 'ethnic,' instead of 'civic,' nationalism in its task of nation-building (Oakes 2001 in *ibid.*: 10). The suppression started with the naming of what was known as Gorkhali or Khas language previously as 'Nepali,' enforcing it into the national and only official language while banning other languages like Newar/Nepal Bhasa and Hindi languages. Yadava asserts that 'it was a deliberate plan to eliminate all but one language, the Khas/Nepali. It is also evident from the suppression of language movements such as Newar/Nepal Bhasa and Hindi (*ibid.*). He cites further evidence that the government motives were clearly reflected in its education policies adopted from recommendations of the National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC). The NEPC recommended that: no other language than Khas/Nepali should be the medium of instruction from primary to higher educational institutions, and that they should not be taught even optionally; if the younger generation is taught Khas/Nepali, other languages will gradually disappear. Hence, 'local dialects and tongues other than Khas/Nepali should be vanished [banished] from playground as early as possible in the life of the child' (*ibid.*: 11).

Yadava also notes that the single language policy was reflected in many government moves and stances: The K. I. Singh government of 1957 further reinforced the use of Khas/Nepali in education; the Panchayat government policy of one nation and language was imposed not only on education but also on administration and the media followed by the Company Act passed in 1964 forcing companies to keep their records in Khas/Nepali or in English. Examining the changed situation after the people's uprising in 1990, Yadava finds that the trend of entrusting Khas/Nepali with all power and prestige as lingua franca was continued and consolidated further even by the democratically elected governments. Changes in the constitution after 1990 enshrined provisions for linguistic rights, and policy planning on the use of language in local administration, education and media. However, those provisions have proven problematic when it comes to the level of their implementation. Soon after the enactment into law, the Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 which deputed to local bodies the right to preserve and promote local languages, the Supreme Court ordered a *certiorari* on June 1 of the same year declaring the use of regional languages in local bodies were unconstitutional and illegal (*ibid.*). Yadava also cites the text books that are published by the Curriculum Development Commission (CDC)

for primary schools. The text books are simply translated versions of the books written in Khas/Nepali with contents of cultures not familiar to children of non-Nepali speaking students; the allocation of air space in the programs for other languages than Khas/Nepali in Radio Nepal is very nominal though there are provisions for 18 languages. Thus, state policies so far have failed to meet the expectations of people of a nation made up of diverse languages and cultures. Yadava points out that despite legal provisions guaranteeing multilingual rights in the country, Khas/Nepali alone is given priority in all official domains, education and media, the power and prestige of which only excluded minority languages and marginalized their speakers. This will further negate multilingualism and naturally give rise to a sense of antagonism. Yadava cites examples of Madheshi activism and language movements as byproducts of such exclusion and marginalization (Pattanayak 1995: 51 in *ibid.*: 12). But he is confident that a multilingual nation like Nepal can still remain united provided the State recognizes linguistic pluralism and proposes the formulation of an inclusive language policy through which he believes speakers of different language communities can have an equal access to the national system (*ibid.*: 13).

In formulating an inclusive language policy, Yadava proposed the policy be categorized into ‘official language policy’, and policy for ‘transitional bilingual education.’ In the first category, he proposes two official languages favouring a bilingual language structure in every state: a lingua franca and a regional language as it is generally understood that many of the proposed states in Nepal are linguistically diverse. He shares in the view that linguistic diversity ‘has always set the stage for the development of lingua francas’ (Samarin 1972: 660; in *ibid.*: 14). While acknowledging Khas/Nepali as a legitimate lingua franca to communicate across linguistic barriers (probably) in the Himalaya and mid-hills areas, he suggests that Hindi can also serve as an official language in Terai for the reason that Hindi is often used as a lingua franca among Terai people (*ibid.*: 13). If the states are created on a linguistic basis each of them may use its regional language as another official language apart from Nepali or Hindi. Some possible options from among regional languages he suggests include Maithil, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newar/Nepal Bhasa, Magar, Avadhi, Bantawa, Gurung, and Limbu. Other options are some minor languages (such as several Rai languages, Dhangar, Santhali, Urdu, Bhujel,

etc.) confined to just one or more specific Village Development Committees (ibid.: 14). Yadava further suggests that in each non-Nepali or non-Hindi administrative area, local languages can be used for the administrative purpose of the locality provided that the local languages are translated into the two official languages. He views that the proposed 'provision will ensure equal linguist right to every language community together with territorized individual rights and, such an inclusive language policy recognizes the same rights to all members of a community within a specific region' (ibid.).

In the policy for 'transitional bilingual education,' Yadava stresses the need for providing primary education through mother tongues as the basic right of children. Citing the School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal (2005), Yadava points out that out of the 4,502,697 students that went to primary schools in Nepal, 1,602,047 were from indigenous groups, 35.57 percent of the total primary level students, and that most of the school dropouts as well as those who have no access to school, and debarred from the right to basic education, belong to the non-Nepali speaking communities. He suggests that it is desirable to envisage a policy such as 'transitional bilingual education,' which will provide the children their basic education in their mother tongues at the start and 'switch to a lingua franca for broader communications and eventually switch to an international language such as English for global communications and access to science and technology' (ibid.). Yadava is of the view that the proposed provision should facilitate the opportunity to have better learning as children can engage more actively in understanding and learning activities through their mother tongues and achieve greater proficiency in them. He shares in the idea that children will feel at home with the use of their mother tongues in education (UNESCO 1951) that this policy will attract the out-of-school children from indigenous and minority language groups to return and attract others to go to school.

In proposing the inclusive language policy for linguistic restructuring of Nepal, some important backups Yadava asserts are the needs of preplanning projects that will undertake 'corpus planning'; linguistic and ethnographic documentation; authentic linguistic survey and a regulatory body to formulate, evaluate, and implement the language policy (ibid.).



#### 4.3.2. Newar and Nepal Bhasa Movement

One of the earliest contributions to the literature on languages of Nepal was about the Newar community and their language studied together with their caste, religion and territory. David Gellner analyses Newar identity and language movements whose single most important demand was the right to official recognition for their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa. First, Gellner refutes the misnomer that Newar is a tribe, their language is Tibeto-Burman and racially Newars are predominantly Mongoloid, but argues that ‘Newar culture, taken as a whole, is clearly and unequivocally South Asian’ (Gellner 1986: 114). He cites the fact that ‘Newar culture and the Newari language [Nepal Bhasa] have been firmly within the greater South Asian culture area for at least 1600 years and possibly longer. The Newars are not, and have not been within historic memory, a tribe’ (ibid.). Nepal Bhasa until the modern period borrowed many words from Indo-European languages and accepted them until in the modern period it was decided that the forms of Nepal Bhasa with the most Sanskrit words were the most honorific, impressive and desirable. Gellner asserts that race ‘need not have anything to do with beliefs about race as is clearly shown by the origin myths of most Newar castes, which derive their descent from the “Aryan” south’ (Gellner 1986:118).

Second, referring to Nepal Bhasa Movement<sup>172</sup>, Gellner points out that the language movement has been hampered by two huge disadvantages, one being the lack of traditional value placed on their language and the other being the attitudes the members of language movement have toward politics. Despite the same members being individually active in politics, they have preferred to confine their language movement activities to literary activities, hoping thereby to avoid government censure (ibid.).

Third, Gellner observes that whereas modern cultural nationalist movement has to base itself on language, the language was only unconsciously an element in Newar identity. Further, differences in dialects, religion, caste and territorial rivalries have divided Newars. ‘All this explains why Newar ethnic solidarity has been conspicuously absent in the past’ Gellner concludes (Gellner 1986: 145). However, for the past two and half decades since his study, the situation of Nepal Bhasa, and the Newar attitude to politics has changed. There has been unprecedented interest and awareness among Newars toward politics, and

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<sup>172</sup> (See 8.3.2.).

ethnic and linguistic consciousness, than ever than before. Gellner discovers the change among Newar activism which has led form a number of caste-based organizations and notes that ‘although Newars have been surprisingly (at least to some) slow at organizing as an ethnic group or “nationality,” they are probably relatively ahead of other groups in Nepal in the development of modern caste-based organization’ (Gellner 2003: 107).

Kamal P. Malla, a linguist and historian, is known to be the first national/local scholar who has studied language with an interdisciplinary approach. He traces a history of language from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Prakrit to today’s working language of Nepal, the Khas/Nepali. In between Prakrit and Khas/Nepali, his analysis focuses on how Sanskrit and Nepal Bhasa<sup>173</sup> played noteworthy roles in promoting the language of the land from epigraph to court language (Malla 1989). The analysis includes ancient and medieval epigraphy, beginning with the earliest evidence of language, the sandstone pillar from about 250 B.C. erected in Lumbini, Nepal (by Indian Emperor Ashoka to commemorate his visit to the birthplace of Siddhattha Gotama, the Buddha). According to Malla, it was only after a long span of 700 years that the earliest evidence of language was found in Nepal again. It was also a victory pillar erected by King Manadeva in A.D. 464 at Changu Narayan temple<sup>174</sup>. The language of this inscription is classical Sanskrit and the script is Gupta, a script used in north India at the time.

The topography of languages in Nepal into Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic that Malla developed is also considered to be the earliest. Analyzing the language situation and state policy of language in a multilingual society like Nepal, he advocates the importance of linguistic diversity through political unity and cultural pluralism. With regard to possible language policy, he has suggested three options: 1) assimilation of the minority languages, 2) toleration of minority languages and 3) encouragement of minority languages. Malla equates the first policy as ‘nationalism with uniformity; the second language policy equates it with positive tolerance or neglect—benign or malignant—while the last alternative equates nationalism with a unity based on cultural pluralism and diversity’ (ibid.: 463).

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<sup>173</sup> Nepal Bhasa is the original term for the language of the Newar. Non-Newar and foreigners use Newari instead. The government of Nepal has officially reinstalled its correct name but old habits die hard, and some still use it willfully. The correct term is used on all pages of this study.

<sup>174</sup> Located in Changu Narayan Village in Khopa (Bhaktapur) district, Nepal.

Prem Shanti Tuladhar, an economist and linguist, contributes to language from the perspective of Nepal Bhasa literature and its history. Her seminal publication in 2000 is regarded as single most important study of the history of Nepal Bhasa literature. She analyses stories, prose, poetry, songs and music and documents and the literary contributions made by well known writers in the Nepal Bhasa literature field. Some particularly noteworthy ones are: Literati Nishthananda Vajracharya (master of prose), great poet Siddhidas Amatya, educationist Jagat Sundar Malla, poet Yogavir Singh, martyr Shukraraj Shastri and activist Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, who are considered to be the ‘four pillars’ of Nepal Bhasa literature, and the history makers in the epoch of 1847-1941 (Tuladhar 2000). They were known not only as the major contributors to Nepal Bhasa literature but also to language politics and advocates to the language resistance movement against single language domination by the state.

Sanuraja Shakya in *Nepal Bhasa Movement: Towards Newar State from Language Rights* analyzes the Nepal Bhasa Movement and its aims and activities, achievements and failures while focusing on the organization of the movement, particularly during the time of the people’s movement II (*Jana Andolan II*) of 2006 in Nepal. Summarizing the event and activities of the movement until 2006, Shakya observes that the Nepal Bhasa Movement is lacking theoretical and practical organization. Despite the movement’s long history, it has yet to achieve some of its important aims.

First, Shakya examines the aims and activities of the Nepal Bhasa Movement that is known to have launched from 1909 with a focus on activism from an appeal<sup>175</sup> to the royal authorities not to ban radio news and programs in Nepal Bhasa in 1962. Eventually came an important junction where the Nepal Bhasa Movement stepped up to adopt the right to demand a ‘national autonomy.’ Shakya outlines the aims or the demands (Shakya 2011: 14) in the explicit terms of Nepal Bhasa Movement to be as: 1) ‘Newari’ is a misnomer for ‘Nepal Bhasa,’ hence it must officially be revised to its correct name ‘Nepal Bhasa’; 2) all Nepali people speaking different mother tongues should be provided education in their mother tongues; 3) state media should allocate space for news and programs in mother tongues; 4) Nepal Samvat (Era) must be officially used as it is the only calendar launched by a patriotic businessman of the land; 5) abolish Sanskrit as a

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<sup>175</sup> This is one of many appeals, petitions, memorandum submitted to the authorities in Nepal against the state language policy (2011:61).

compulsory subject from school curriculum and news broadcasts in Sanskrit. That last demand was pursued jointly with the Janajati Mahasangh (e.g. Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities: NEFIN).

Secondly, Shakya explores changes in the demands and activities of the Nepal Bhasa Movement to the extent that it demands self rule of Newar State in the new Nepal being proposed for inclusive ethnic federation by the people's movement. The Nepal Bhasa Movement expanded its demands from language and cultural rights to group/nationality rights in retaliation to the supreme court's verdict in 1999 that imposed a ban on the mother tongue being used in regional bodies: Nepal Bhasa in Kathmandu municipality; Maithil in Rajbiraj Town Council and Dhanusha District Office; despite the new Constitution of 1990 guaranteeing the rights to and the use of mother tongues in local bodies (2011: 79). By 2006, when the people's movement II agitated calling for an end to monarchy and framing of an inclusive new federal democratic constitution, the Nepal Bhasa Movement adopted the right to demand for self-rule of a Newar state joining in hands with many other ethnic groups soon after the people's movement. It is a well known fact that the success of the people's movement itself is largely attributed to the daring support of Newar people (Gellner 2008: 164 cited in Shakya 2011: 36). Thus, the Nepal Bhasa Movement expanded its area of demand from language and cultural rights to group/nationality rights and to 'national autonomy' turning a new page in the history of the Nepal Bhasa Movement.

Thirdly, while assessing the success and failure of the Nepal Bhasa Movement, Shakya asserts that any movement must be clear on three factors: a) articulated demands; b) political path; and c) necessary organizational development. Shakya points out that the Newar Movement lacks all three qualities. He illustrates several factors for this conclusion. First, he points out that 'despite the fact that the [Newar] movement is more than a hundred year old movement since its inception in 1909, no achievement has ever been analyzed. This is a movement of a long term, aimless, unorganized, eventful and unclear aspiration. Until contemporary and main problem of Newar and solutions are not decided, the campaign will remain only limited to slogans' (ibid.:101). Shakya cites an example of a confusion caused once by a message from a sitting prime minister that asked the movement leaders to submit their demands. The movement leaders were confused, not knowing what demands to put forward to the prime minister.

The second factor Shakya asserts for the failure of the Newar Movement is that though movements related to rights of language and ethnicity often originates as a social movement and gradually changes into liberation movements, the Newar Movement has remained unchanged. The idea of a liberation movement developed during the time of the people's war launched by the Maoists. The Newar Movement did not develop ideas or organizational changes to move ahead as a liberation movement. As members of the movement have been active in politics individually, there were suggestions of political actions (ibid.:101). However, the majority opted to keep the movement apolitical. Hence, Newar Movement remained unable to be free from simply pressuring the government alone. This fails to follow a political path. For this reason, Shakya points out that several social and political analysts view that the Newar Movement has not yet been able to free itself from the movement of emotion (ibid.:131).

The last factor for the current failure is the lack of necessary organizational development. Shakya explicitly points out that without a particular political path, it will be difficult to have organizational development in a movement. He observes that the Nepal Bhasa Movement possesses indignation and passion, but the movement is being run with emotion more than anything. He cites several examples of events of protest programs where the movement fails to give due attentions to the theoretical side, and protests end with only chanting slogans. There are also occasions where struggles continue but without any achievements because of the failure in coordinating between the compromise and the struggle. Another factor Shakya points out is that the Newar Movement is not one single organization but a convergence of several organizations and individuals political as well as apolitical. Hence, a lack of following up compromises that are achieved by the struggle, finally ending up without any concrete achievement. As a result, Shakya pointed out that despite the change of constitution to a multiethnic and multilingual one, no government agencies have transformed into multilingual agencies that provide services to people in their mother tongue.

However, he is optimistic about the future of the Newar Movement and cites several noted achievements: Resistance against government imposition of the Sanskrit language, demand for mother-tongue education and partial success encouraging the movement; partnership with people's movement that finally repealed the 240 year old

autocratic monarchy, and *Janajati Mahasangh* that forced the government to retract the imposition of Sanskrit on school education. Thus, the awakened Newar Movement realized the values of group/nationality rights to liberation and finally to demand self rule by the end of 2006 (ibid.:132). Shakya's analysis of the Newar Movement ends at an important junction where the movement expands its area of struggle towards a Newar State from the language rights, leaving the rest for others to undertake.

Bal Gopal Shrestha and Bert Van den Kock (1995) in their *Education in the Mother Tongue: The Case of Nepal Bhasa (Newari)*, focuses on the language situation in Nepal after the 1990 people's movement reinstalled the democratic government that drafted a multilingual friendly constitution. They point out three important factors that reflect the language situation in the country. They are: 1) how the constitution embodied new provisions of recognizing all mother tongues spoken in Nepal as national languages and the right to an education in mother tongue; 2) how an unexpected introduction of Sanskrit causes outburst, and 3) how education in mother tongue was left unattended (Shrestha et al. 1995).

With the return of multiparty democracy, the newly formed government in 1990 drafted a new constitution and embodied provisions for recognizing mother tongues and granting right to education in mother tongue by abolishing the 'one language, one nation' policy. Like many other communities, the Newar community was so hopeful of government support that they opened a primary school initially on their own at a locality in Kathmandu attracting children to receive education in Nepal Bhasa. But the community finds that the government provides zero support, and that the concerned community has to bear all the burdens in running the school. Hence, within a period of five years since the new provisions in the Constitution of 1990, there was only one more such school established: A primary school for Magar children in Kaski district in 1995.

Shrestha et al. also point out how the government acted against what is supposed to promote the mother tongue education. Instead of government providing support to needy schools, a new policy was formulated to impose Sanskrit language in all schools in 1992. Sanskrit is a holy language associated with Hinduism like Pali with Buddhism and Latin with Catholicism. Despite public protest against the imposition of Sanskrit, the government introduced a new curriculum in September 1993 making Sanskrit obligatory in grades six

to eight ignoring the issue of the mother tongue medium education (ibid.).

Shrestha et al. also caution how language discrimination can cost a nation citing examples of Gorkhaland, Jharkhand and Sri Lanka where violence has continued for decades. But he suggests that a progressive policy should solve the problem and promote mother tongue medium education instead. Among several recommendations he makes, two of them are quite convincing: 1) to start with appointing teachers to public schools and advocate private schools also to introduce mother tongue classes, which will cost less than opening new schools; and 2) importance of lifting restrictions on sitting SLC exams in mother tongue medium. Shrestha rightly asserts ‘only then will education in the mother tongue be successful (ibid.).

#### **4.3.3. Summing Up**

After the conquest of the Nepal Mandala by Prithvinarayan Shah in 1769 A.D., the Shah rulers diminished Nepal Bhasa, the language of the land, and replaced it with Khas Bhasa named as Gorkha Bhasa. The Ranas banned Nepal Bhasa, nullified the deeds and documents written in Nepal Bhasa, and promoted Gorkha Bhasa as Nepali Bhasa. Consequently for the past 240 years, ‘the gap between the spoken and the written Nepal Bhasa began to widen to the extent that ‘not many educated Newar can read [Nepal Bhasa] literature nor can they decipher the scripts in which it is written’ (Malla, 1989: 447). Whether they like it not, they have no alternative other than learning Khas/Nepali to survive. Thus, the break in the continuity of the onetime golden age of Newar culture and its Nepal Bhasa literature has come to a halt for the past 240 years. However, the Newar, the indigenous speakers of Nepalbhasa continued their struggle to sustain their language with the culture. The Nepal Bhasa Movement that came to the limelight in 1965 is the reflection of long time repression of the past regimes. As seen in the review above, several studies contribute to the literature of the language politics and state policy of Nepal. However, no contribution is focusing on documenting the events and activism of the Nepal Bhasa Movement that has a long history of resistance against the single language policy of Nepal. I believe the documentation of the Nepal Bhasa Movement’s long history of over a hundred years is the need of the time. Depending on the time, movements and state policies can be categorized into several periods such as

- i) Gorkhali/Early Shah (1769-1845)
- ii) Rana Oligarchy (1846-1950)
- iii) Panchayat (1960-1990)
- iv) Multiparty Democracy (1951-1960; 1990-2008)
- v) Inclusive Democracy (2008-present)

What else is missing from other literature reviewed above is an in-depth study and analysis of Nepal's single language policy and its impact and repercussions on its own Non-Khas/Nepali Speaking people, their mother tongues and cultures. This study is a contribution to such reflection from a Newar perspective.



## **PART II – HEGEMONY AND RESISTANCE**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LINGUISTIC HEGEMONY

In drawing a theoretical framework to guide my study, I refer to Gramsci's hegemony with a particular reference to his concepts of cultural hegemony, common sense, language and subalternity, which provide important insight for my study of language politics affected by single language hegemony in Nepal. I also follow key concepts of Bourdieu who has analyzed language and its relationship with power and politics which helps to understand the language situation in Nepal. In addition, theories of law and policy, and legal consciousness, are explored in some detail. Moreover, seminal works of Marcus Green and Peter Ives' scholarly interpretation of Gramscian concept of language, hegemony and subalternity serve stimulus to this study. Of a larger and growing literature on Gramscian and Bourdieu theories on language and power, I am particularly fascinated by two important studies that have been conducted by Michael Doshier and Kerim Friedman as their interpretation of power and language support to design my own theoretical framework of linguistic hegemony. Further, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's interpretation on subalterns provides useful guidance in my application of the term subaltern to the Newar who face discrimination and marginalization in Nepal. In this chapter, I first, explore Gramsci's concepts; followed by Bourdieu's concepts and examine Spivak, Doshier, and Friedman's application of Gramscian and Bourdieu theories in their seminal work, and how I could employ their wisdom in describing the concept of an imagined linguistic hegemony of this study.

#### 5.1. Gramsci's View on Language Politics and Policy

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), the Italian Marxist theorist known for his powerful concept of cultural hegemony, provides his valuable insights on language politics and policy as important topics in his analysis. According to Green and Ives, Gramsci has devoted two special notebooks<sup>176</sup> to analyze language and subaltern social groups, his analysis on both

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<sup>176</sup> Gramsci's Notebook 25: *On the Margins of History: History of Subaltern Groups* (1934); and his last Notebook 29: *Notes for an Introduction to the Study of Grammar* (1935) cited in Green and Ives (2009:4).

topics appear throughout his *Prison Notebooks* (Green and Ives 2009). His combined concept of common sense with language and subalternity provide important guidance for analyzing the linguistic hegemony and the subjugated social groups affected by state language policy in multilingual societies. Gramsci's analyses on language policy in multilingual Italy and subaltern social groups serve as a valuable guidance for understanding how a single language policy can affect diverse nationalities in multilingual Nepal, the main objective of this study. I shall explore below the cultural hegemony Gramsci has developed and how his analysis of hegemony, subalternity, common sense, and language will guide us to understand single language hegemony in Nepal, its impact on affected social classes and resistance against it.

### **5.1.1. The Concept of Cultural Hegemony**

Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony describes how the ruling class dominates a culturally diverse society by manipulating the culture of that society: The beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values and mores. The ruling class intellectually dominates subordinate social classes with an imposed worldview that is accepted as the cultural norm. It becomes the universally valid dominant ideology that justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural and inevitable, perpetual and beneficial for everyone, rather than artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class (Bullock: 1999). Gramsci, in developing the cultural hegemony, discovers that the prevalent cultural norms imposed by the ruling class are bourgeois cultural hegemony, and cautions that they must not be perceived as natural and inevitable, but must be recognized as artificial social constructs. Gramsci advocates that these social constructs must be investigated to discover their philosophic roots as instruments of social class domination through the 'War of Position,' one of the two mechanisms, the other one being the 'War of Maneuver' to achieve revolutionary socialism.

Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is based on an original conception of cultural domination of Marxist philosophic analysis of an economic class. Karl Marx in 1848 had proposed that the economic recessions and practical contradictions of a capitalist economy would provoke the working class to proletarian revolution that would depose capitalism and restructure societal institutions (economic, political, and social) per a

rational, social model, and thus begin the transition to a communist society. But Gramsci's strategy pursues the War of Position aiming at winning the 'War of Manuevre.' For Gramsci, the War of Position is a struggle pursued intellectually by the anti-capitalist revolutionary for the creation of a proletarian culture whose value system counters the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie (Cohn 2004). The proletarian culture will propagate revolutionary theory, class consciousness, and historical analysis and expand the organization among the social classes so that the number of people who share its view increases. Thus, by winning the War of Position (the support of ordinary people) the socialist leader would have necessary political power and support to launch political maneuver warfare of revolutionary socialism. Gramsci advocates a Passive Revolution by maneuver warfare to bring about the defeat of the opposing force – the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie – more efficiently than by war of attrition that destroys enemy forces until they can no longer fight.<sup>177</sup> Gramsci uses these terms as metaphor 'for the type of struggle that he thinks the Italian working class and communists will have to wage against Fascism and capitalism'<sup>178</sup> one day.

### ***What does Gramsci aim at?***

Gramsci's academic wisdom in history, linguistics and Marxism, his practical experience in journalism and communist party activism, allows him to postulate his theory of cultural hegemony to counter bourgeois imposed ideology and liberate the proletariat. While disclosing impediments of subaltern groups, Gramsci proposes a proletarian culture to be created through the praxis of knowledge of intellectuals from both workers in the town and peasants in the country, and through their cooperation, which is indispensable for the intellectual and political liberation of the proletariat. He asserts that the proletarian culture will specifically address the social and economic needs of the social classes.<sup>179</sup> In short, Gramsci aims at helping create a working-class worldview; developing a unity between the peasants and the workers; and building their own intellectual socio-cultural class that will be capable of countering the bourgeois cultural hegemony.

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<sup>177</sup> See Maneuver warfare.

<sup>178</sup> Sassoon (1987:193-204) in Ives (2004:107).

<sup>179</sup> See cultural hegemony.

### ***How is cultural hegemony established?***

Cultural hegemony is established by the ruling class or people in power by manipulating the culture of a diverse society and imposing the dominant ideology on the subjugated states, social groups and people. In Ancient Greece, it was established by one hegemon city-state controlling other subordinate city-states. In the nineteenth century hegemony was established by imposing European colonialism on the Americas, Africa and Asia. In the twentieth century, two world powers fought a Cold War to establish hegemony over the globe while dominant ruling classes ruled subordinate classes of the same society or the country in many parts of the world. Similarly, 'linguistic hegemony' is established by declaring the language of hegemon (the ruling class or a dominant group) a lingua franca and giving it official status so that it controls, limiting both information and the use of other languages among the subordinate linguistic communities in many multilingual societies. A striking example of linguistic hegemony in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is English and its impact on IT and globalization. This study will examine the impact of the Khas/Nepali language on other national languages in Nepal. I shall return to this in the proceeding chapters.

### ***How is cultural hegemony maintained?***

Cultural hegemony is maintained by the continued control over culture manipulated by the ruling class, ideology they created and impose on the subordinate social classes who the dominant class continues to exploit. Cultural hegemony is maintained through a process of stances, each of which is indispensable to maintain hegemonic dominance over subordinate groups. Michael Dorsher drawing from Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony developed a theory of 'Hegemony Online,' which he defines as 'a cybernetic process whereby people in power deepen their dominance by using online communication to negotiate for the consent of the subjugated (Dorsher 1999; 2001). He has shown in his study how power can be utilized not only in political spheres but also in online communication. He points out that those who have established their power online have the upper hand in their negotiations with the medium's users (Dorsher 2001). His application of Gramsci's theory on how hegemony is maintained provides useful insight to this study, particularly the five facets which he calls five steps in his application on the online communication: (a) making

dominance transparent and common-sensical, (b) maintaining status quo, (c) co-opting resistance, (d) negotiating with resisting elements and (e) marginalizing any remaining resistance. I shall elaborate more when I apply the process of five facets on developing a theoretical framework for this study in reference to linguistic hegemony. Below I explore further how Gramsci aims to counter the cultural hegemony imposed by the bourgeois, the ruling class or the dominant group.

### **5.1.2. Counter Hegemony: Pluralism**

Counter hegemony may mean an alternative process which people interested in gaining dominant power use by countering, co-opting and compromising dominant culture. This is neither what Gramsci intends to develop nor the opposite of hegemony. 'It is merely someone else's hegemony – one that has not yet become dominant (Williams 1977 in Dorsher 2001). From Gramsci's experience with hegemony, he does not want to recreate another hegemony but a proletarian culture which will provide knowledge, unity and activism among the subaltern groups. He advocates proletarians from the town and peasants of the country to work together to build up an organization that will attend by itself to the needs of subaltern social groups against the culture, power and ideology the dominant group creates, manipulates and imposes. Thus, Gramsci's counter hegemony differs from alternative hegemony that replaces another hegemony but pluralism that is opposite of both hegemony and counter hegemony as it shares power among groups and individuals (Kweit, M., & Kweit, R. 1981:33 in Dorsher 2001). It is important to explore who the subaltern groups Gramsci meant to refer to are.

### **5.1.3. Subaltern Social Group**

In Gramsci's term the subaltern denotes a group of people that have no dominant power but are subjugated to the dominant. They are neither in power nor of the status of bourgeois. Instead, the subalterns in modern Italian history are ineffectual in their political activity. Their activity rarely goes beyond certain limits. They are incapable of achieving permanent victory or maintaining a level of political power. Gramsci comes to this conclusion as he adduces the factors that add to their circumstances of subordination and exploitation particularly in economic and cultural spheres. He examines subaltern way of thinking such

as worldviews, culture and their level of political organization and attempts to identify what hinders them from acting politically effective and overcoming their subordination to the dominant and preventing their exploitation (Green and Ives 2009: 8-9).

### *What are their impediments?*

Gramsci finds a chain of impediments against the subaltern group that are interdependent on one another. One major impediment he recognizes is the lack of proper organization for the subaltern social group. Even if there are several such organizations, they all lack conscious leadership. Gramsci is well aware of some elements of conscious leadership existing within the spontaneous political movements of the subalterns, but he finds ‘none of them predominates or goes beyond the level of the ‘popular science’ – the ‘common sense,’ that is the [traditional] conception of the world – of a given social stratum’<sup>180</sup> meaning that none of them are successful in achieving even an expected target level of common sense in a given social stratum. Lack of conscious leadership fails to provide coherence and direction. Gramsci attributes this deficiency of coherence and direction to the composition of subaltern culture and consciousness, which are affected by common sense, worldview and the related language the subalterns are given. Gramsci uncovers that all of these are fragmented. As a result, the subalterns not only fail to overcome their subordination to the dominant group but also hinder effective political organization to counter exploitation. Gramsci cautions that fragmented common sense, worldview and language are politically detrimental for the subaltern social group. In developing his theory of cultural hegemony, Gramsci perceived not only the hegemony that dominated the subjugated through their manipulation of culture, power and ideology, he also advocated countering bourgeois hegemony by developing a proletarian culture through knowledge, unity and activism of the working class of the town and the peasants of the country.

Subaltern later gained currency as an important term in the fields of political and social sciences including critical theory and post-colonialism. I shall return to it after the end of Gramsci’s concepts I have so far examined. Next, I shall look at the common sense.

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<sup>180</sup> Gramsci (1996:48) in (ibid: 9).

#### 5.1.4. Common Sense in Gramsci's View

Gramsci views common sense as fragmented; hence it is a political detriment for subaltern social groups. Fragmented common sense hinders effective political organization and the countering of exploitation.

Generally, common sense is cumulative knowledge of ideas and customs taken for granted as good sense which enables one to make sound judgments in daily practical matters in a given social stratum. It is the traditional conception of the world in a particular social structure. It is understood as good sense and sound judgment in practical matters (Pearsall 1998:370). It is also the 'routine knowledge we have of our everyday world and activities' (Marshall 1996: 70), and an 'ability to think about things in a practical way and make sensible decisions' (OAAED). Further, there are different sociological approaches and attitudes to understand common sense. In the central concept of Alfred Shutz's phenomenological sociology, common sense is referred as 'Organized "typified" stocks of taken-for-granted knowledge, upon which our activities are based, which, in the 'natural attitude,' we do not question.'<sup>181</sup> For ethnomethodologists like Anthony Giddens, 'commonsense ... [is a 'tacit'] knowledge and a constant achievement, in which people draw on implicit rules of 'how to carry on' which produce a sense of organization and coherence.' However, some sociologists differ on the importance of commonsense in sociology. Emile Durkheim for example views that 'sociology must break free of commonsense perceptions (prejudices), before we can produce scientific knowledge of the social world' while for Marxists, common sense is an important ideology of the revolutionary party to organize and guide the working class (Marshall 1996:70).

Green and Ives illustrate Gramsci's views on common sense as a 'fragmentary collection of ideas and opinions drawn from differing philosophies, ideologies, religion, folklore, experience, superstition, and from scientific notions and philosophical opinions which have entered into common usage. Common sense is composed of both a variety of truth and elements that tend to be disjointed, incoherent, and contradictory' (Green and Ives 2009:12-13).

Gramsci attaches importance to folklore in understanding common sense. He suggests the need to study both common sense and folklore as one would study a coherent

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<sup>181</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's general theory of society (*The Social Construction of Reality*, 1967) is based on this idea.



philosophical worldview, since they inform the worldview of the masses and influence the composition of their worldview.

Gramsci also attaches importance to the relationship of philosophy to common sense because he views common sense as the 'philosophy of the people' meaning the 'philosophy of non-philosophers' or philosophy of the common people (ibid.:13). Common sense is the conception of the world and modes of thought practiced by the masses. For Gramsci if 'philosophy' is a coherent worldview, 'common sense' denotes the popular thought and speech of the people. They provide a point of reference to thought and action because common sense operates similarly to a coherent world view even though it is incoherent compared to philosophy which is coherent (ibid.:14). According to Green and Ives, 'philosophy constitutes a coherent conception of the world and mode of thought whereas common sense actually represents "a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions and one can find there anything that one likes"' (ibid.). All this can be summarized in Gramsci's words:

Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is (ibid.).

Thus with the analysis of common sense in comparison with folklore and philosophy, Gramsci attempts to ascertain the content and meaning of common sense, to understand how the masses perceive their life, the world, and politics. He proposes to transform common sense into a new common sense by providing subaltern groups with the intellectual tools of knowledge, unity and activism necessary to confront dominant hegemony that manipulates culture, power and ideology. In short, common sense is fragmented because it is an accumulation of fragmentary ideas and customs from all over. Common sense is indistinguishably attached to folklore while, though incoherent, common sense is analogous to coherent philosophy. Fragmented common sense affects the culture and consciousness. As a result, subaltern groups will lack the critical elements required to provide conscious and organized leadership to cause necessary actions. Common sense thus provides no adequate foundations for establishing an effective political movement

capable of producing political change. In other words, common sense is a major factor that hinders the subalterns from asserting political autonomy and overcoming their subordination to dominant exploitation. However, this conclusion of Gramsci's does not mean that he rejects common sense in its entirety or that there exists some 'philosophy' outside of 'common sense' by which 'common sense' can be judged and corrected. Rather, Gramsci suggests that Italians need to accept common sense critically (ibid.).

### **5.1.5. Language in Gramsci's View**

Gramsci views language as an important element of common sense. Like common sense, language is also fragmented but plays an important role in how a person conceives of the world. He employs language to develop his notion of common sense both metaphorically and literally. For him, language is also an indication of intellectual activity. Hence, he pays a great attention to the institutional aspects of language such as national language policy, educational policies, the writing of dictionaries and grammar books, and the power relationships involved in language (Ives 2004:32).

Gramsci is concerned both about the lack of a national Italian language and Italy's linguistic diversity as language politics in Italian society is very important. But he rejects particular methods of attempting to create such a language which cannot serve as a truly popular language for the diverse peoples of Italy.

Italy was politically unified in 1861. But it was not until 1868 that the Government of Italy had appointed a body to look into creating a national language by unifying the dialects spoken in the unified Italy. Italy was unified with a number of city-states, republics and regions that were sometimes parts of Austria, Germany and Spain and ruled by local houses of lords for decades if not for centuries. At the end of *Risorgimento* (Unification of Italy) in between 1850-70, Massimo d'Azeglio<sup>182</sup> made a famous proclamation: 'Italy is a fact, now we need to make Italians' (Ives 2004:35). Some imply this proclamation to be the beginning of a call for standardizing the Italian language, though the statement clearly indicates an Italian nation in the making. However, it is not difficult to understand the direction unified Italy was taking when it saw unifications of England, French and German language-led European powers before Italy's own

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<sup>182</sup> Massimo d'Azeglio (1798-1866) was prime minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia from 1849 to 1852.

unification. During this time, it was estimated that only 3 percent of the population spoke anything that could be considered ‘standard’ Italian (Lewis et al. 2013). Many dialects (languages) were not mutually intelligible from north to south. While literary Italian (primarily influenced by Latin) had existed for centuries as a written language, a language that can be considered a truly common, national language for most Italians did not exist. Above all only about 25 percent of Italians were literate, while regions like Sardinia in the South had only a 10 percent literacy rate.<sup>183</sup> Gramsci comes from Sardinia where Sardinian dialect is spoken but his academic expertise in linguistics at the University of Turin in the North under Professor Matteo Bartoli<sup>184</sup> provided him a balanced view on different dialects spoken in regions from north to south of Italy. With this balanced view he achieved, he advocates a language that is developed and popularized by the people as a national language rather than one imposed by the government-appointed body.

Gramsci opposes the Government of Italy’s imposition of Florentine, a dialect spoken by people in Florence (once a city-state in the Tuscan region in the northern Italy) as the national Italian language for several factors. First, it was a unilateral preposition of an individual, who recommended his own dialect to make it a national language of Italy apparently because of his fame. In 1868, the Government appointed Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), one of Italy’s most renowned authors as the head of a government commission on linguistic unification. Manzoni proposed to make Florentine ‘standard’ Italian, fund dictionaries and grammar books based on Florentine, and recruit school teachers for all of Italy from the Tuscan region. As a model, he rewrote his classic novel, *I Promessi sposi* [*The Betrothed*], spoken in bourgeois Florentine suggesting it to be the ‘Italian’ language. Gramsci was very critical of this ‘solution’ of making the Florentine dialect the sole standard Italian language. In 1918, he launched an attack on it through *Il Grido del Popolo*<sup>185</sup> while comparing it to Esperanto, a proposal to make it a common language in the communist party international communes he ridiculed as absurd.

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<sup>183</sup> See De Mauro (1986:43) in Green and Ives (2009:17).

<sup>184</sup> Matteo Bartoli (1873–1946) is known to have engaged in debates with the neo-grammarians school from which Ferdinand de Saussure emerged and ‘structuralist’ linguistics was created.

<sup>185</sup> Gramsci, ‘La Lingua Unica e l’Esperanto,’ 16 February 1918, in Gramsci 1985, pp. 26–31 in Green and Ives (2009:17).

Second, for Gramsci, the imposition of one dialect as the national standard language for the whole population of Italy is not acceptable because unified Italy is made up of several linguistically diverse nations, not of Florentine people alone. His objection to imposing one dialect of a particular area as the sole national language for the whole of Italy reflects the circumstances of the hegemonic power of Florentine spoken author and resistance against his manipulation. Third, the imposed Florentine dialect was neither a language that was developed and popularized by the people as a national language nor one created a national language by unifying the dialects spoken in the unified Italy. According to Green et al., ‘central to his criticism is the rejection of any solution to problems of political, social, and cultural fragmentation through the external imposition of a structure, organization or language’ (2009:12). But Gramsci finds that the subaltern groups fail to develop any political strategy to effectively organize and act against their exploitation by the dominant group.

Gramsci attributes these circumstances to the common sense of the subaltern social groups, training them to be uncritical, unreflective, unsystematic, and to operate with an incoherent conception of life and the world. He instead proposes the need to transform common sense and develop it into a ‘new common sense’ with a truly transformed language founded upon awareness that is a critical, reflective, systematic and coherent conception of the world, through which one will understand one’s history, position, and activity in relation to dominant and prevailing structures of power. Gramsci stresses that this transformation is not possible without engaging with current ‘common sense’ and its various and contradictory elements, and for subaltern groups to understand the historical and political origins of their conditions, instead of ‘assuming their circumstances are the result of some sort of natural or spiritual determination or inferiority, which the Catholic Church’s worldview tended to reinforce’ (ibid.).

I explored the theory of cultural hegemony and its concepts of subalternity, common sense and language, which provided me wider guidance to understand and explain the hegemonic influence being exercised over multilingual societies by the people in power. In order to employ Gramsci’s theories into this study, it is also important to explore how other contributions have applied Gramsci’s theory in other work. Among them, Doshier’s contribution is a very important one. I shall make an outline of his contribution.

## 5.2. Dorsher's Hegemony Online

Dorsher applies the Gramscian concept of hegemony to develop a theory of hegemony online. It is defined as a cybernetic process whereby people in power deepen their dominance over the subjugated on the internet. The dominant negotiate for the consent of the subjugated by using online communication. Hegemony has a five-facet process: (a) making dominance transparent and common-sensical, (b) maintaining status quo, (c) co-opting resistance, (d) negotiating with resisting elements and (e) marginalizing any remaining resistance (Dorsher 2001). He views negotiation to be the primary concern of the dominant to maintain the power over the subjugated with the consent of the subjugated. The dominant provides the subjugated a part of what they want, the process which lessens the resistance of the subjugated who otherwise can overthrow the dominant class. The negotiation ultimately strengthens the hegemony. Negotiation becomes primarily important online because unlike the one-way mass media, the internet 'allows its users easily communicate their concern and questions to the establishment powers in the media, government and even business. Consequently, the users have greater control over the time they spend on the media, and those wishing to strengthen their hegemony by dominating online media are forced to negotiate with the medium's users' (ibid.).

What is unique to the hegemony online concept is that the dominant online publishers conduct negotiations making use of the Internet's networked architecture that lets them silently and cheaply 'gather a vast stream of passive feedback about the interests and predilections of their sites' users. Through the use of "cookies" and other web page tracking software, every online move a user makes potentially becomes another bit of data that can be sold directly to advertisers or used to tailor the site's content in ways that attract the biggest or best-tuned audience for advertisers' (ibid.). All this is done with the consent of the online users. The hegemony online is thus maintained by the online publishers of websites at the consent of their site users. Thus, in Dorsher's term, in this hegemony 'online communication reflects and reinforces the off-line hegemony found in society, better than any medium before it' (ibid.).

Next, I shall also examine another study by P. Kerim Friedman that employs both Gramsci and Bourdieu's theories.

### **5.3. Friedman's Language Markets in Taiwan**

Examining the language situation of the aborigine communities in Taiwan and the state language policy on educating them, Friedman draws upon Gramsci's hegemony and Bourdieu's linguistic markets. He explores the contemporary linguistic markets and language policy in terms of the historical process of state information dissemination, class alliances and identity politics. Friedman applies Gramsci's concept of 'historical block' in examining the power structure established during the Japanese colonial era and one similar structure adopted by the (Chinese National People's Party-led government known in Chinese as Kuomintang but popularly known as) KMT that replaces Japanese nationalism with a Chinese version. Friedman examines the language policies, which throughout both periods were coercive, and argues that legitimacy for the functioning of the state and creation of language markets in the National Language was central to the manufacture of consent. He looks at how the language issue plays a key role in the debate of Taiwanese identity that took place between Taiwanese and Chinese nationalism that resulted, in the 1990s, to the adoption of Taiwanese identity that encompasses local communities, 'the nation, then the greater Chinese community, and eventually the world' (Friedman 2004: 21). First being the adoption of Latin orthography for the Chinese language, and second, English education. Both these debates are attributed to the balance of power that shifted in favor of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Both debates were considered anti-Taiwanese nationalism. As a Mandarin speaker, rather than a speaker of the local Hoklo language, Friedman explores the question of whether such attempts are genuine efforts to solve language issues in Taiwan or yet 'another avenue for imposing Taiwanese linguistic nationalism' (ibid.).

Moreover, working on the policy of promoting 'local' languages and culture, Friedman examines the multiculturalism policy of the Taiwanese Government and how such policies are actually implemented in the community. Reporting the results of fieldwork he conducted in the community around a small primary school with a predominantly aboriginal population in the eastern region of Taiwan, he draws on Gramsci's theory of 'intellectuals' to explain how the local intellectuals end up implementing state-based cultural initiatives. Another equally important concept of Gramsci is the subaltern. I shall explore how the concept has developed in India and outside in the 1970s and beyond, in the next section.

#### 5.4. Subaltern and Subaltern Studies

The term subaltern became widely used first in the historiography of South Asia in the 1980s and in many different fields of disciplines subsequently. Since then the term has been used to explore political-actor roles of men and women of the mass population whose role is differed from the political role of the ‘social and economic elites.’ Meanwhile, the term *Subaltern Studies* came be known to the world through the first three volumes of essays edited by Ranajit Guha called *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, published by Oxford University Press in New Delhi, starting in 1982 (Ludden 2002:1).

A discussion on subaltern by a small group of British and Indian historians held in London in 1970 attracted the attention of many scholars. Beginning with a series of essays<sup>186</sup> that described subalterns in India and elsewhere first published in 1982, many writings on the subject accumulated inside and outside the subaltern project. As a result, a distinctive school of research was formed in 1986 by those scholars who were later known to be the ‘subalternists’ or simply ‘subalterns.’ Further, with the publication of *Selected Subaltern Studies*,<sup>187</sup> by Oxford University Press New York and Oxford in 1988, Subaltern Studies spread out across Europe, North America, and Australia while the second subaltern study group after India was formed in Latin America. Since then, Subaltern Studies has become a hot topic among multi-disciplinary scholars (ibid.). In addition to critical theory and post-colonialist theory, ‘subaltern’ is now an important term used in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, human geography, and literary criticism (Prakash 1994).

Although Gramsci used subaltern identity to theorize the class struggle, the *Subalternists* have used the term in diverse perspectives. Historians have used it to write social history ‘from below’ or conduct ‘bottom up’ studies of people whose history had been previously ignored. Contributions such as *English Working Class* (Thompson 1963), *Indian History of the American West* (Brown 1972), *The World the Slaves Made*

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<sup>186</sup> The new studies attracted so much attention that the readers of the group led by Guha Published three additional volumes of thirty-four essays and fifteen books on the topic by 1989. A small group comprised of some marginalized academics gained international prestige by 1993. And by the end of the millennium, the *Subaltern Study* group completed their tenth volume.

<sup>187</sup> The publication by Oxford University Press New York and Oxford was edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with a forward by Edward Said.

(Genovese 1974), and *Women's History Sources* (Hinding 1979) are a few of many that can be cited as examples (Ludden 2002: 3).

In post-colonial theory, the term subalternity renders a person without human agency<sup>188</sup> – when subalternity labels a man or woman, they lose their opportunity to act though they bear the capacity. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a literary critic and theoretician, and also a former member of a *Subaltern Study* group discourages applying the term unnecessarily broadly. She views that *subaltern* is not just a classy word for ‘oppressed,’ for ‘[the] Other, for somebody who’s not getting a piece of the pie’ (de Kock:1992). She finds the post-colonial term of subaltern which theorizes that ‘everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern prompted every one wanting to be subaltern’ (ibid.).

Raising the question of woman as subaltern, Spivak suggests that the manipulation of female agency excludes the possibility of collectivity itself (Spivak 1988: 78). The first part of her preposition was that the phased development of the subaltern is complicated by the imperialist project. She charges that collective intellectuals who may be called the *Subaltern Study* group confronted her project. She asserts that they must ask, ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ In interpreting who are subaltern, Spivak disagrees with definitions constructed by intellectuals led by Ranajit Guha, who suggests ‘the people,’ a non-elite class of people, as subaltern and the politics they conduct as ‘the politics of the people.’ (ibid.:79). Spivak rejects Guha’s interpretation of subaltern as those dominated by the elites as she finds that the ‘same class or element which was dominant in one area ... could be among the dominated in another’ (ibid.). Elaborating the difference of dominance, she points out that the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. She also asserts that if ‘in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and can not speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow’ (ibid.: 89). Given the condition of a woman as subaltern, she has reinvented the problem in a sentence she has put together: ‘White men are saving brown women from brown men’ suggesting the double origin in the history of repression on subaltern woman: One from the ‘hidden maneuverings behind the British abolition of widow sacrifice in 1829, and the other lodged in the classical and Vedic past of Hindu India, the *Rg-Veda* and the *Dharmasastra*. [She

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<sup>188</sup> Young (2003).



believes that there must also be] an undifferentiated preoriginary space that support[s] this history' (ibid.: 93).

Citing the actual case of a woman who hanged herself in India, Spivak brilliantly takes the opportunity to revisit the repression on 'the oppressed' of colonialism, and the Hindu traditional ideology practiced in India to show how a subaltern is doubly oppressed when she happens to be a woman. She shares the story first:

'A young woman of sixteen or seventeen, Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, hanged herself in her father's modest apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhuvaneswari was menstruating at that time, it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly a decade later, it was discovered that she was a member of one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had finally been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself' (ibid.:103).

Spivak then informs us that Bhuvaneswari rewrote the social text of *sati* (self-immolation by a widow on her dead husband's pyre) in an interventionist way referring to the preplanned way she had taken her life. As the latter had known that her death would be diagnosed as the outcome of illegitimate passion, she had waited till her menstruation. Spivak reads that the deceased woman's suicide 'generalized the sanctioned motive for female suicide by taking immense trouble to displace (not merely deny) in the physiological inscription of her body, its imprisonment within legitimate passion by a single male' (ibid.: 104). According to Hindu tradition in India, a menstruating widow must wait until the cleansing bath of fourth day to immolate herself. A menstruating, unclean widow is not supposed to take her life on her dead husband's pyre. Here, Spivak points out that Bhuvaneswari's gesture of waiting for her menstruation suggests 'the reversal of the interdict against a menstruating widow's right to immolate herself' (ibid.). In other words, Spivak implies that the woman 'had deeply questioned the idea of a woman belonging to one man and that women in the family had forgotten that she had tried to make this clear in the way in which she died.'<sup>189</sup>

Spivak views the suicide of Bhuvaneswari as 'an unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting of the social text of *sati*-suicide as much as the hegemonic account of the blazing,

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<sup>189</sup> From her interview by the Hindu (February 6, 2011).

fighting, familial Durga' (ibid.) suggesting that Bhuvaneswari made her best attempt to be heard, but she was not heard. Therefore, the answer for the question she asked at the outset of the essay: Can the subaltern speak? The answer to her investigation was: The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read.

Although known as 'famously hard-to-understand' as once dubbed by the *New York Times*, Spivak's views about subalternity can be summarized as in the following: First, she is sympathetic to the term 'elite' applied to dominant foreign groups, and dominant indigenous groups on a national level in India's case, and probably elsewhere as well. Second, dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels differ depending on their location and social class. Hence, they can be 'elite' or 'subaltern' depending on their dominant or dominated position. Third, she rejects the definition of 'subaltern' applied to the rest of the people. Further, her citation of woman subaltern explains the difference between the sexual positions of subalterns. In short, Spivak disagrees with the use of the term for anyone 'oppressed' indiscriminately, but her assertions suggests the importance of owning the circumscribed task the intellectuals have in knowing and disseminating the dominated subalterns. In so doing, Spivak advocates that Gramsci's discourse of cultural hegemony serves the purpose of identifying the subalterns rather than everyone dominated and oppressed claiming to be a subaltern.

She advises that 'just because someone is discriminated, it is not necessary to use the word subaltern but they should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are' (de kock:1992). Spivak is of the view that hegemonic discourse is enough to describe the discrimination or manipulation: 'They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, not being allowed, so let them speak, [and] use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern' (ibid.).

As an Albert Einstein quote goes saying "the more I learn the more I realize I don't know. The more I realize I don't know the more I want to learn," there is a vast literature on Gramsci's work refigured by many scholars. However, the scope of this study limits my capacity to go further looking for other important works. There is another important theory I intend to explore: Bourdieu's concepts of linguistic habitat and symbolic power. Before I examine them, I consider it is helpful to outline the conceptual framework I am designing for this study: Linguistic Hegemony.

## 5.5. Linguistic Hegemony

Linguistic hegemony is the power of dominance of a particular language group established with the consent of the subjugated speakers of other languages. It is exercised by means of a language often that of people in power imposed over and maintained with the consent of the subjugated groups. The language imposed as a lingua franca, or the official language, becomes the sole source of information for the society of subjugated speakers of other languages. In disseminating particular information to the subjugated populace, the language of the hegemon limits what is shared or communicated. Thus the source practices hegemonic influence upon those receiving information. In some societies, the example of hegemonic organizations are considered to be churches and the mass media that shares data and information with the public<sup>190</sup>, while in multilingual societies the State, its agencies (of information, education, public services and the mass media), and the court exercise the hegemonic influence. Thus, a dominant language plays an essential role in establishing, and imposing hegemony that dominates, manipulates and exploits languages of subjugated states and people in a linguistically diverse society. Analogous to cultural hegemony conceptualized by Gramsci, linguistic hegemony is also able to remain powerful provided that the people in power obtain the consent of the subjugated group. To obtain the consent of the subjugated groups, the people in power, the dominant group or the ruling elites follow a process that includes five steps<sup>191</sup> or stances:

### a) **Making dominance transparent and common-sensical:**

The dominant, the ruling elite, present the language policy through legislation and other overt methods to make sure their stance is open and transparent. It is assumed that the policy they present is naturally for the benefit of all the people of the country hence it is only common sense to follow it. Gramsci indicates examples of government policy that made the dialect of Florence a common national language of Italy's multilingual population, and a proposal for the Communist Party of Italy to adopt Esperanto as a single common language among party members (Forcags et al: 1991: 30). This is very similar to how Khas/Nepali language was made Nepal's single official language by standardizing it at the expense of all other languages in the country.

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<sup>190</sup> See Hegemony.

<sup>191</sup> Michael Dorsher's listing in his Hegemony Online inspired me to follow this process (Dorsher 2001).

**b) Maintaining status quo:**

This explains the nature of status quo, which the dominant group will make every possible attempt to keep intact, while anti status quo resist them, reflecting the relationship between the dominant and the subjugated parties. In Gramsci's term it is a relationship between the bourgeois and subaltern social groups in Italy. Analogous to this is the relationship between the ruling class of Caste Hill Hindu Elite Males (CHHE) and Adivasi Janajati (indigenous nationalities), Madhesis, Dalits, and Muslims in Nepal.

**c) Co-opting resistance:**

This is another stance the dominant class takes to keep the subjugated consenting to being dominated. In response to resistance of the subjugated, the dominant class invites some members of the subjugated party to join in the dominant group, wherein the dominant still has the upper hand. The stance of the dominant may end up mostly keeping the resistance under control, or in some cases the entrant can counter the hegemony.

**d) Negotiating with resisting elements:**

This is very important part of the five stances. The dominant takes on negotiations, creating a new layer of consent by the subjugated which is often easily overlooked. Showing a flexible stance to negotiate with the subjugated and giving part of what they want decreases determination to overthrow the dominant class and ultimately strengthens the hegemony. 'Without negotiation, the hegemony stagnates, progressively suffers entropy, and unwittingly strengthens counter-hegemonies, until one of them overthrows it' (Dorsher 2001).

**e) Marginalizing any remaining resistance:**

Depending on the capacity of resistance, the dominant group will marginalize the subjugated. This is another important concept in which Gramsci is very much concerned: The fragmented nature of the language, common sense and subaltern social group. Most of the subaltern group, or the indigenous nationalities in Nepal's case, are prone to this phenomenon, which leads the dominant group to manipulate the subjugated.

Further, to gain additional guidance for circumstances that are not covered by Gramsci's theory, I shall hereafter explore practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu, who has also been influenced by Gramsci's theories. I will focus on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and market and the symbolic power that analyzes the language and its relationship with power and politics.

### **5.6. Bourdieu's View on Language Politics and Policy**

French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu<sup>192</sup> offers an original sociological perspective on language and its relationship with power and politics. For Bourdieu, 'language is not merely a method of communication but also a mechanism of power (Cohen 1994). Developing his theoretical framework to analyze the relations with language, power and politics, he builds his theory of practice on three key concepts of habitus, capital and market during his 'long and prolific career spanning more than thirty years and in twenty volumes of research and reflections' (Thompson 1991:2). Bourdieu rejects formal and structural linguistics, arguing that disciplinary frameworks take for granted but fail to grasp the specific social and political conditions of language formation and its usage. He also avoids abstract conceptions of social life and aims his approach to be both theoretically informed and sensitive to empirical detail. With vivid examples he encounters in his approach to analyze language, power and politics, he asserts that the cultural capital one inherits justifies the established order that benefits one and prevents the other.

Besides Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony I explored in the previous section of this chapter, Bourdieu's theoretical framework serves additionally as important guidance to this study of language politics and policy in Nepal. His argument that language should be viewed not only as a means of communication but also as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence, is particularly useful for my interest in exploring how power plays politics with single language policy in multilingual Nepal. In this section, I shall examine the most relevant aspects of Bourdieu's analysis on language use, and how politics empowers linguistic habitus to build linguistic capital to monopolize the linguistic market through symbolic power.

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<sup>192</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), a French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher was Professor of Sociology at the College de France.

### 5.6.1. Language Use: Favoritism and Subordination

Bourdieu objects to the take-for-granted attitudes of linguists, who favor a particular speech as a common language that is promoted to an official language and then to national language in diverse societies. He claims that there is no completely homogeneous language or speech community in reality. It is only ‘an idealization of a particular set of linguistic practices which have emerged historically and have certain social conditions of existence.’ This idealization or *fictio juris* is the source of what Bourdieu calls, somewhat provocatively, the ‘illusion of linguistic communism’ (Thompson 1991:5). According to Thompson, Bourdieu claims that it is this particular set of linguistic practices the linguists take for granted as a normative model of secret usage, which produces the illusion of a common language. The linguists ignored the socio-historical conditions of how a particular set of linguistic practices has established a dominant and legitimate language, which eliminated other languages/dialects or subordinated them. He attributes two specific socio-historical conditions to the emergence of such a dominant language. First, he points out the complex historical process involving extensive conflict may have produced a dominant language as the language of the victors, eliminating other languages of the losing communities. The second attribute Bourdieu refers to in the emergence of such a dominant language is the formation of nation-states centered on the dominant group or ruling elites of a particular region, state or area who dominated subordinate peoples and areas. The linguistic unifications further consolidate the power of the dominant group. Bourdieu cites several examples such as the development of English in Britain or the United States, of Spanish in Spain or Mexico, and so on. Referring to the linguistic situation in his own country, France, he observes the process of linguistic unification was a part of French monarchy until the French Revolution. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, *Ile de France*, the dialect of Paris, was promoted to the status of official language and its use in a written form gradually absorbed several languages and dialects of the feudal period such as Champagne, Normandy, Anjou and Berry, that were spoken in central provinces of France, into the official language. In the same period, regional languages and purely oral dialects were relegated to the status of *patois*, and defined negatively, as opposed to the official language. By the sixteenth century AD., the local language of the *langue d’oc* regions of southern France which existed in written as well as oral forms started facing similar problems. What

differed here was that local dialects were retained by the peasantry and lower classes while the official language was adopted by the aristocracy, bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie developing into bilingualism (ibid.: 6).

***How does favoritism of one language affect other languages?***

Bourdieu views that elevating one language to the official language, then to national status, favors one language and subordinates other languages. In Europe some nation-states accompanied linguistic unification, which in turn accompanied revolution. For example, the French Revolution was followed by English and Spanish unifications, while linguistic unification was attributed to political unification in the case of Italy. Attempts since 1861 to standardize the Tuscan dialect into a national language took centuries of debates and compromises, culminating in the 1960s.<sup>193</sup> In an earlier section of this chapter, we saw Gramsci's criticism against the effort of the State to impose the Tuscan dialect on a diverse linguistic population of Italy. Similarly, Bourdieu shows that linguistic unification that accompanied the French Revolution only endowed the upper class a *de facto* monopoly of political power. The policy of linguistic unification, promoting a language to the status of national language, favored only those who already possessed knowledge of the language, while putting those who knew only a local dialect in jeopardy of lacking competency. Bourdieu saw the subsequent normalization and inculcation of the national language was not just a political policy but a long term process that favored one linguistic group over others. He cites the development of the educational system and formation of a unified labor market as two factors through which normalization and inculcation have incalculable influence over a multilingual population. The educational system produced grammar books, dictionaries and corpus of texts to maintain a standard level in the language, and established a standard level in educational qualification while the administrative positions in the unified labor market depended on educational qualifications, making the school 'a principal means of access to labor market, especially in areas where industrialization was weak' (ibid.: 6). Thus, the single language policy of linguistic unification with its normalization and inculcation of the official language would become an uninvited force to induce people speaking local dialects, as Bourdieu puts it, 'to collaborate in the destruction

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<sup>193</sup> See Languages of Italy.

of their instruments of expression' (ibid.: 7).

Bourdieu elucidates the power of the single language policy, its politics of subordination, and repercussions on affected language communities through his key concepts of habitus, capital, market and symbolic power.

### **5.6.2. Linguistic Habitus**

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is referred to a systematic orientation, pervading all aspects of social and cultural life while the "linguistic habitus" is a variant of the more basic orientation (Calhoun 1993:135 in Awasthi 2004:110). In other words, the linguistic habitus is a sub-set of the dispositions which the habitus consists of. In Bourdieu's view, 'linguistic utterances or expressions are forms of practice and, as such, can be understood as the product of the relation between a linguistic habitus and a linguistic market' (Thompson 1991:17). According to Thompson, Bourdieu employs his theory of practice to analyze language related habitus, capital and market. To understand linguistic habitus, it will be useful to grasp a basic idea of habitus as it is one of the key concepts of the 'Theory of Practice' Bourdieu developed.

#### ***1) Concept of habitus***

Habitus may refer to habit of an individual as it is understood in Latin, or a mode of life and general appearance (Webster 1928), and in sociology it refers to the lifestyle, the values, the dispositions and expectations of a particular individual, group or even a nation, acquired through activities and experiences of everyday life. Others refer to a structure of mind characterized by a set of acquired schemata, sensibilities, dispositions and taste (Scott, 1998). Originating in the thought of Aristotle, an old philosophical notion of *hexis* ('state') was translated into habitus by the medieval scholastics (Wacquant 2005). Bourdieu first adapted the term in his 1967 postscript to Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (Holsinger 2005). Since then Bourdieu has elaborated to develop habitus as one of his key concepts in the theory of practice and expanded it to analyze linguistic habitus.

According to Bourdieu, the habitus is a set of *dispositions* one acquires in one's everyday life particularly in early childhood, and during a learning period of time one



spends in a particular socio-academic group. The habitus is inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable (Thompson 1991:12).

The habitus is inculcated as all the dispositions of many mundane processes of training and learning acquired during one's childhood, and a particular period of time from table manners to practices, perceptions and attitudes which literally mould the body of an agent<sup>194</sup> and become his/her second nature.

The habitus is structured in that it unavoidably reflects the social conditions within which it was acquired. Depending on the background of class difference (working class, middle class or other) where the habitus is acquired, an agent may differ from one social class to another class. But habitus of those agents from similar backgrounds may be relatively homogenous. Thus, similarities and differences of social backgrounds are reflected in the habitus.

The structured habitus is durable in that those acquired dispositions such as learned habits, bodily skills, styles, tastes and other discursive knowledge is affixed to the agent's body to the extent that they are 'pre-conscious and not easily amenable to conscious reflection and modification' (ibid.: 13).

Finally, the habitus thus inculcated, structured and durable with acquired dispositions over a substantial period of time (of childhood or even in a particular time) is generative and transposable in that it generates multiple practices, perceptions and attitudes, and in fields other than those in which they were originally acquired. The habitus inclines agents to act and react in a certain and regular way without being consciously guided by any rule but concurring 'with the conditions of existence of which the habitus is itself the product' (ibid.).

With these dispositions acquired over a considerable span of time in a given social background, the habitus also provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives in appropriate ways; what is practical sense and what is not, but without strictly determining them. This is because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions in which certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding seem altogether natural. Bourdieu calls this characteristic 'a bodily or corporeal "hexis" or "state" of body' and describes it as a 'political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into

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<sup>194</sup> An individual in Bourdieu's term.

permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu 1990: 69-70; in *ibid.*). The bodily hexis is reflected in the agents' particular ways of behavior, both men and women, in the more intimate aspects of life depending on the social context within which individuals act.

With the habitus and its related notions of practical sense and bodily hexis discussed above, Bourdieu grasps a generative principle or scheme which underlies individual practices and perceptions, works and appreciations. However, Bourdieu points out that when the individuals act in specific social contexts or settings, their actions or particular practices or perceptions should be seen, not as the product of the habitus as such, but as the product of the relationship between the habitus and the specific social contexts within which individuals act. It is this social context or setting Bourdieu calls the 'field' or 'game' and 'market' at times to explain the field as 'a structured space of positions in which the positions [of individuals] and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or "capital"' (*ibid.*: 14). In other words, it is this market, where a product gains a value, which in turn forms a resource or a capital.

Thus, habitus is a set of dispositions (learned habits, bodily skills, styles, knowledge etc.) accumulated over a considerable span of time, inculcated and structured to be durable, hence generative and transposable. Because of their tendency to generate practices and perceptions, works and appreciations in different fields than those in which they were originally acquired, the dispositions that constitute habitus form a product of the relationship between the habitus and the field, which thereby gains a value and may be converted into a capital (See 5.6.3.). This confirms the in-built affinity between habitus and field (Iannici and Kok 1999 in Awasthi 2004). Let us now examine how Bourdieu has expanded his concept of habitus and employed it to analyze the language situation in a given society particularly diverse in linguistic nature.

## ***2) Linguistic habitus as subset of dispositions***

The linguistic habitus is an inherent part of the habitus. In Bourdieu's term it is a subset of the dispositions that have accumulated forming the habitus. As in acquiring dispositions of other forms of learned habits, bodily skills, styles, tastes and other discursive knowledge that will affix to one's body, agents acquire this subset of dispositions in the course of

learning to speak in different contexts as a member of the family, the peer group, the school, etc. (ibid.:17). These dispositions underlie the linguistic practices of an agent and how his/her linguistic products will be valued in other fields or markets. Like how economic products are valued in market, the linguistic products are valued in the educational market such as secondary or tertiary institutions. It is linguistic utterances or expressions that form practice which is understood as the product of the relationship between a linguistic habitus and a linguistic market. 'The linguistic habitus is also inscribed in the body and forms a dimension of the bodily-hexis. A particular accent for instance, the product of certain way of moving the tongue, the lips, etc.: It is an aspect of what Bourdieu calls following Pierre Guiraud, "articulatory style"' (ibid.). Difference of accents of agents reflect in speeches of those coming from different social backgrounds that have different accents, intonations and ways of speaking accumulated at the level of languages of the socially structured character of habitus.

Thus, linguistic utterances or expressions that form a practice which is understood not only as a product of the relation between a linguistic habitus and a linguistic market, a particular accent of an agent's speech is also considered to be a product the agent has acquired depending on his/her social class background, and that characterizes a class distinction.

### **5.6.3. Linguistic Capital**

Bourdieu is well known among sociologists of education particularly as he was the first to point out that there are not only economic capitals but also other capitals such as cultural, symbolic and linguistic capitals. According to Skutnabb-Kangass, Bourdieu refers economic capital to 'material resources' in other words, wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc.; cultural capital to non-material resources such as knowledge, skills and educational qualifications, in others words: cultural acquisitions; and symbolic capital to accumulated prestige or honour (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:404; Awasthi 2004:107) while he refers linguistic capital to individual utterances or expressions (Bourdieu 1991). I shall explore it below in some detail.

### ***1) Linguistic utterances and expressions as capital***

In Bourdieu's view, the cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status (Barker 2004:37). Similarly, he 'conceives of linguistic practices as forms of capital, which provide speakers with access to desired positions in the labour market,'<sup>195</sup> which means the market (*field*) endows value to a capital so that it can be converted into another product that will gain a profit like a 'certain educational qualification can be cashed in for lucrative jobs' (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1977:61-9). Bourdieu asserts that schools are primary sites where members of the society (*agents*) earn linguistic capital while classrooms are sites of social production. He sees education as part of the process of symbolic domination of the working class (Awasthi 2004:109-110). Hence, the more capital the agents possess the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit. Similarly, individuals' utterances or expressions are considered linguistic capital as they are convertible into other products in a linguistic market which endows a value leading them to gain a profit. Besides, some products are valued higher than other products in the sense that part of practical competence of speakers is to know how to produce expressions which gain higher values on the linguistic market. Despite using the same language spoken by the speakers, their competence differs from one another. Depending on these quantities of linguistic capital one's products and values are marked. 'The more linguistic capital the speakers possess the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction' (Thompson 1991: 18). Bourdieu pointed out that the expressions that receive the highest value and gain the highest profit are those which are most unequally distributed. This is because the conditions to acquire the capacity to produce the highest product are limited and such expressions are relatively rare on the markets.

Bourdieu cites a rare example of this dynamic that occurred in September 1974 in his home town Pau in the Bearn Province of southwest France. The occasion was the official centenary celebration of Bearnais poet Simin Palay, attended by the mayor of Pau. A local French newspaper reported that the mayor addressed the gathering in the local Bearnais language; 'the audience was greatly moved by this thoughtful gesture' (Bourdieu

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<sup>195</sup> Leap and Mesthrie (2000) in Awasthi (2004:109).

2001: 68) and ‘applauded at length’ praising it as ‘good quality Bearnais.’ Referring to mayor’s speech in local dialect and the response from the audience whose mother tongue is Bearnais, Bourdieu argues that the audience’s response that is ‘greatly moved’ and the ‘applauded at length’ indicates that the local people tacitly recognize the unwritten law which imposes French as the only acceptable language on official occasions on the one hand and the mayor employing a ‘strategy of condescension’ on the other hand. By employing the strategy of condescension, the mayor negates ‘symbolically the objective relation of power between the two languages which coexist in this market, and draws symbolic profit from this relation’ (Thompson 1991: 19).

Thompson elaborates on Bourdieu’s views that the mayor is able to draw profit from the hierarchy between the languages for obvious reasons that everyone recognizes the unwritten law and their assumption of how competent a mayor of a large town in the dominant language could be. ‘By virtue of his position he is able to negate symbolically the hierarchy without disrupting it, to transgress the unwritten law and thereby exploit the hierarchy to his advantage in the very process of reaffirming it’ (ibid.). Comparing social class and linguistic competence between the mayor and a peasant whose competence in French is not standard, Bourdieu wonders how the peasant’s mere fragments of French would be accorded though he is guaranteed the biggest share of the vote. The above example illustrates not only the dynamics of producing the highest product of expressions as linguistic capital and its highest value in the market but also the discrepancy between efficacies of certain agents in applying to the linguistic products both offered by themselves or by others. In short, linguistic capital represents the utterances or expressions and the competency in the agent’s ability to convert them into profit of the values his/her product gained in the linguistic market.

#### **5.6.4. Linguistic Field (Market)**

Linguistic field or market is a specific social context or setting, within which individuals produce their linguistic utterances or expressions, and receive values for their products. In other words, linguistic field refers to formal or official situations such as a public ceremony, a classroom discussion or an interview in which the speakers’ capacity of utterances or expressions reflects their social class which is endowed with individual linguistic habitus, practical sense, bodily hexis, and symbolic power. Linguistic field is an expanded concept

of the field Bourdieu developed as part of his 'Theory of Practice.' An overview should help us understand how the field was expanded for analysis.

### ***1) Field as a concept of 'market' and 'game' and a site for struggle***

Bourdieu refers field to 'a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or capital' (ibid.: 14). While his preferred technical term is 'field,' Bourdieu also uses terms such as 'market' and 'game' alternatively to describe this important social space. He borrows terms from the language of economics to analyze field which is not strictly 'economic' in the narrow sense. But he finds that terms such as 'capital' and 'market' are applicable to explain forms of interactions that may 'concur with a logic that is economic in a broader sense insofar as they are oriented towards the augmentation of some kind of "capital" (e.g. cultural or symbolic capital) or the maximization of some kind of "profit" (e.g. honor or prestige)' (ibid.: 15). Hence, Bourdieu refers the field to a market because it is a specific social context of individual action that 'allow[s] one form of capital to be converted into another – in the way, for example, that certain educational qualifications can be cashed in for lucrative jobs' (Bourdieu 1990: 125; ibid.: 14). According to Thompson, Bourdieu views this characteristic as one of the 'most important properties' of fields. It is also a game because a field is an open site of struggle, and the individuals participating in it have different aims. In Bourdieu's words:

Every *field* is the site of a more or less less openly declared struggle for the definition of the legitimate principles of the division of the *field* (Bourdieu 1991:242) as cited also by Awasthi (2004:108).

The field in which some seek to preserve the status quo, others to change it taking differing chances of winning or losing, depending on where they are located in the structured space of positions. Whatever their aims may be, all participating in the struggle must 'believe in the game they are playing and in the value of what is at stake in the struggles they are waging' (Thompson 1991:14). In other words, those agents participating in the field must practically and unquestionably believe in the game and its stakes. They are supposed to accept whatever consequences their struggle will derive or the values given to their products in the field. Yet, their struggles play decisive roles in strengthening or losing the positions of the each agent. According to Awasthi, Bourdieu maintains that

individuals struggle in the *field* even without knowing about what role they are playing. A good example is how a child strive learning language not knowing that he or she is an actor in the field as ‘children’s primary learning of language operates at the sub-conscious level’ (Mahar et al. 1990 in Awasthi 2004:109).

## **2) Official situations as linguistic markets**

Bourdieu refers linguistic market to formal or official situations such as public ceremony, class discussions and interviews that endow values to linguistic products - expressions and utterances made by individual agents – which, depending on their quality, each receive a suitable value. As noted earlier, the market, or the field, is an open site of struggle, each participant bound to follow certain common and fundamental presuppositions, and comply with whatever consequences are derived from the struggle they are waging. The value for products they present will depend on their class background, which endows linguistic habitus. Bourdieu points out that those individuals from upper-class backgrounds respond with relative ease to the demands of most formal or official situations while individuals from lower-class backgrounds must make an extra effort for the same purpose. This is a reflection of discrepancy between two different linguistic habitus that underlies class distinction – individuals from the upper class possess linguistic capital of confidence in speaking at any given official or public occasion, where they are expected to show their capacity or gain their product higher market value. Hence, those individuals from the upper class not only distinguish themselves from the lower class who possess less linguistic capital but also, as Bourdieu puts it, ‘reap symbolic benefits by speaking in a way that comes naturally to them’ (ibid.: 21). The episode of the Pau mayor he cited above is a good example.

Conversely, what often happen to individuals from lower class backgrounds is that they often fail despite their extra efforts to adapt their linguistic expressions to the demands of formal markets. Their tendency to rectify their expressions often ends up concurring with the norms of the dominant group; they seek to produce linguistic expressions that belong to the higher class at the cost of their own, hypercorrection which reflects only the class divisions among themselves. As a result, the products of the lower class become less conducive to the requirements of formal markets and will be given a limited value by the

lower classes themselves. The lesser the capital the lower classes possess, the lesser the market prices their products are endowed with. Bourdieu points out that the children of the working class tend 'to eliminate themselves from educational system, or to resign themselves to vocational courses of training. Hence also the unease, the hesitation leading to silence, which, as we noted earlier, may overcome individuals from lower-class backgrounds on occasions defined as official' (ibid.: 22).

Thus, the linguistic field, an expanded version of Bourdieu's concept of field, reflects formal, official or public occasions including class discussions, interviews that endow market value to their linguistic products of individual utterances or expressions. Hence for Bourdieu it is a market though the field in question is not strictly 'economic' in a narrow sense but also concurs with logic that is economic in a broader sense. The field is also a 'game' for it is an open site of struggle, with participants expected to accept whatever consequences will gain market values for their linguistic products. But is the only market where individual linguistic capital is converted into another capital depending on its market value.

### **5.6.5. Symbolic Power**

Symbolic power refers to an aspect of most forms of power routinely deployed in social life, rather than a specific power. It is not a power exercised as overt physical force but in a symbolic form by a dominant on subjected individuals. Symbolic power is so exercised and maintained by the dominant with active complicity of the subjected. It is maintained through interpersonal relations in some societies while the emergence of objectified institutions in modern and industrialized societies has become a mechanism for creating and sustaining inequalities. Thus, the power of domination is exercised in symbolic form in such a way that recourse to overt force is unnecessary.

Bourdieu developed this concept of 'symbolic power' along with his key concepts of habitus, capital and field while examining a social phenomenon that reflected the lower class agents who take for granted certain aspects of established hierarchies while even rejecting dominant modes of speech, ignoring the fact that they share, to some extent, a system of evaluation which works against them (Thompson 1991:23). According to Thompson, Bourdieu was very much concerned about this phenomenon, and his entire



body of written work reflects on this phenomenon, which he called 'symbolic power' and in other cases 'symbolic violence.' He developed these two terms not as power or violence that are exercised overtly but as power or violence exercised and maintained in a symbolic form, which receive a kind of legitimacy particularly from the subjected individuals. Bourdieu indicates several factors why the very subjected acknowledge the symbolic power of the dominant.

First, symbolic power is invisible, which is why it is 'misrecognized' as such and instead 'recognized' as legitimate. These two terms play an important role to underscore a shared belief to the extent that even those who benefit least from the exercise of power participate in their own subjection. Secondly, the subjected individuals acknowledge the legitimacy of power because they 'fail to see that the hierarchy is, after all, an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others' (ibid.). The third is that the symbolical power itself presupposes a kind of active complicity on the part of the subjected to it, failure of which symbolical power may neither be exercised nor maintained. Elaborating the crucial part the subjected individuals play, Thompson observes that:

Dominated individuals are not passive bodies to which symbolic power is applied, as it were like a scalpel to a corpse. Rather, symbolic power requires, as a condition of its success, that those subjected to it believe in the legitimacy of power and the legitimacy of those who wield it (Thompson 1991:23).

It is clear that symbolic power is exercised and maintained by the dominant with active complicity of the subjected that stem from the nature of invisibility of the symbolical power whereby the subjected individuals misrecognize, or fail to recognize, it as legitimate.

Further, 'symbolic power' or 'symbolic violence' are both phenomenon where dominance of power is exercised as a kind of power that is routinely deployed in social life. Bourdieu originally coined the term 'symbolic violence' while analyzing a gift exchanging custom of Kabyle society in Algeria and later expanded 'symbolic power' in his analysis of institutional mechanisms through which relation of domination can be given a stable and objective form. Bourdieu distinguishes means of power exercising from personalized methods to objectified institutions, but asserts that both aim at the same domination of

others. He also views it as a mechanism of power exercising while simultaneously disguising itself. In societies like Kabyle, where relatively few institutions exist, Bourdieu witnessed individuals resorting to more personalized means of exercising power over others. He compares two such means: One is debt through which one can put another under his obligation deriving from usury; another is gift-giving, which is one of the softer and more subtle means of exercising power. The gifts Bourdieu refers to here are not simple, but valuable, 'especially a generous one that cannot be met by counter gift of comparable quality, through which the giver creates a lasting obligation and binds the recipient in relation of personal indebtedness. Giving is also a way of possessing: it is a way of binding another while shrouding the bond in a gesture of generosity' (Thompson, 1991). Thompson reiterates what Bourdieu meant by 'symbolical violence'; it is 'gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety, in a word, of all the virtues honoured by the ethic of honour' (ibid: 24). In contrast to the overt violence of the usurer or the ruthless master, gift giving reflects the symbolic violence that is still a bond by a giver yet softer than the obligation derived from usury.

Another distinct means of exercising power is through institutions. In most modern societies of both developed and developing countries, the importance of symbolic mechanism for exercising domination through interpersonal relations has declined as these societies saw the emergence of institutions that possess different kinds of capital and use them differently while affording individuals' needs to pursue strategies targeted at the domination of others: Violence in Bourdieu's view is built into the institute itself (ibid.). A closer look at different markets or fields will show how symbolic power is exercised and reproduced and how institutionalized mechanism are seen fixing the value accorded different products, to allocate them differently and inculcate a belief in them. In many of his writings, Bourdieu cites educational systems as a clear example that involves developing a certain kind of objectification in which credentials or qualifications are defined and turned out to be a mechanism for creating and sustaining inequalities, so recourse to overt force is unnecessary. The institutional mechanism plays a crucial role here: It conceals the domination constructed with qualifications obtained and the cultural capital inherited by individuals by virtue of their social background, and provides a

practical justification of the established order. The institutional mechanism exercises its symbolical power in its formal and final strategy that stimulates those who benefit most from the system while preventing those who benefit least from grasping the basis of their own deprivation: The system of evaluation which works against them.

With additional guidance from the concepts of Bourdieu that explain individual or agent's linguistic habitus, the capital it helps develop and the market or the field which endows a value for the linguistic capital, we witness above how symbolic power and symbolic violence elsewhere are exercised by those who possess more valuable linguistic capitals over those possessing less linguistic capitals. The process of exercising symbolic power is very similar to the hegemonic influence exercised on a subjugated individual at his consent because the symbolic power Bourdieu describes is also imposed by the dominant over the subjected with his/her active complicity.

Besides, concepts of cultural hegemony, subaltern and, linguistic habitus and symbolic power, an understanding of law, policy and legal consciousness are imperatively useful to guide this study which examines the law and state policy of Nepal and legal consciousness of the state policy makers and the ordinary citizens. I shall make a brief outlining of the definitions of the law and policy together with legal consciousness below.

### **5.7. Policy and Law: Definitions and Differences**

Policy and law both refer to rules and guidelines that are set up for individuals and organizations to follow. However, policy differs from law as the latter can compel people to follow rules and guidelines while the former can not. A policy is generally a set of rules adopted by individuals, companies and organizations for the purpose of achieving an intended goal. A policy is supposed to comply with law. In other words, policy serves as a course or principle of action to guide decision making rather than enforcing a law. Policies are developed to guide the best practice, clarify principles, resolve conflicts and further the intended goal. Policy and law play interdependent roles. In short, the policy guides the enactment of the law; the latter enacts policy into law. Thus, the law plays a decisive role giving policy legal strength. Dean G. Kilpatrick has emphasized the role of law on public policy. Among a variety of policies, Kilpatrick defines public policy as 'a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic

promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives' (Kilpatrick 2000: 6). She places the law as a major aspect of public policy because legislation more broadly defines provisions of the law whether it is constitutional or international. She points out that the law can influence the implementation of the proposed policy to serve its intended purpose, and legislation determines the needed funding for the implementation of policy directives.

Further, the law made up of rules, regulations or guidelines is enforceable by a court of law as its main objective is to provide justice to individuals, organizations and the society. According to Dennis Lloyd, the noted Baron Lloyd of Hampstead, 'the term law has no one particular universally accepted definition' (Lloyd 1975:39). But the law is generally defined as 'the system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties' (Pearsall 1998:1043). The law is a rule that is capable of enforcement. Geoffrey Robertson defines law 'as a rule which (unlike a rule of ethics) is actually capable of enforcement through institutions created for that purpose' (Robertson 2006: 90). He asserts that the law is enforceable and everyone in the society is required to obey it as it is framed by the authority of government through legislature and executive decree, and members of society face punishment if the law is broken (ibid). The law also shapes individuals, organizations, society, politics and economics in a country as the law is understood as something having binding force or effect or having command; a rule defining correct procedure or behavior of citizens.

While there are varieties of law, two generally known laws are the statute law and the common law. The statute law is a set of rules and guidelines for running government administration while the common law is for the control or governance of the common citizenry. The statute law constitutes rules and provisions in the constitution or in the acts of law passed by the legislature or any other authority to run the government, its agencies and the country as a whole. Breach of the law, even by government authorities (except in some countries where the authorities are granted immunity from prosecution), is punishable. A notable difference between the policy and the law is that the failure of adoption of policies incurs no penalties on individuals involved, whereas failure of obeying the law incurs penalties. This should explain why policies are not translated into practical laws (particularly the status law) so easily in developing countries in general and in countries of diverse nationalities like Nepal in particular. Another difference between the

two is that policy guides the framing of law while the latter enacts the policy into law with capacity for enforcement. As policies are given legal enforcement by law passed by the authority, individual understanding about law is considered important. Legal consciousness denotes such an understanding. I shall outline it in brief.

### **5.8. Legal Consciousness: Some Theoretical Aspects**

In examining how ordinary people view and show their attitude toward law and policy, we will appraise briefly some theoretical aspects of legal consciousness, and elucidate rationale for investigating the Newar people's views and attitudes about law and policies in Nepal. First, let us explore what legal consciousness may mean to ordinary people, and then to authorities in state agencies.

Legal consciousness refers to individual understanding of law and how legal regulations may affect ordinary people in their day-to-day lives. It also refers to how individuals use or experience law, and the attitude they have toward law. In short, 'legal consciousness is what people do and say about law' (Ewick and Silbey 1998: 46). Ewick and Silbey point out that people use law and experience it in at least three orientations. First, the law is 'magisterial for some while remote for others.' Second, the law is used as a 'game with rules' that is manipulated to one's advantage. Third, the law is 'arbitrary and is actively resisted'. Thus, legal consciousness is 'experienced and interpreted by specific individuals as they engage, avoid, or resist the law and legal meanings' (Silbey 2008). The concept of legal consciousness is somewhat analogous to Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony which explains how culture is manipulated and hegemonic power is maintained by the ruling class at the consent of the subjugated class. Hegemony is also contested for liberation from the subjugation of the dominant class. Likewise, the study of legal consciousness explains how the law sustains its institutional power over areas of its jurisdiction. Scholars of legal consciousness have theorized that the law is durable and powerful to the extent that a good portion of legality invisibly suffuses the everyday lives of ordinary people. Hence, as long as there is a rule of law, legal authority is not normally contested except within the parameters of channels for dispute (Silbey 2008). The hegemony of law is maintained at the consent of those actors who participate in the production of legal meanings. According to Ewick and Silbey, legal meanings refer to meanings given to law circulating in social relations. These legal meanings are produced

through the long habitation and routine forms of legal authority that have fused into people and their social organizations. For example, people will follow the law and regulations as a part of their daily routine without having to resort ultimately to physical force. However, Ewick and Silbey also point out that people do not always obey the law and regulations to authoritative expectations and the reach of law is always disputed. Legal consciousness allows people to become 'both authors and victims of their history' (ibid.).

Another important aspect of legal consciousness is the role it plays in framing the law for the benefit of society. Kaugia points out that a collection of ideas, views, feelings and traditions reflects individual attitudes towards legal issues in society (Kaugia 1996:16-20). She asserts that legal consciousness plays an important role particularly in drafting and implementing laws in a society because such drafting and implementing of laws must be done in conformity with principles of justification and effectiveness. She also points out that legal consciousness provides an evaluation of existing law and imagination of a desired if not an ideal law in drafting. Similarly, legal conscious helps develop an imperative behavior model which is carried out by extensive study of people's views on a series of relations with economics, politics, ethics, religion and other important fields of individuals, social groups and society as a whole (ibid.). Thus, legal consciousness refers to understanding of law, how it affects an individual's day-to-day life, and plays an important role in both drafting and implementing an enforceable law. In short, legal consciousness can be summarized as a way of doing things such as talking, acting and reacting naturally from understanding and experience evolved over time into common sense about the world. Common sense thus evolved by legal consciousness, letting people become 'both authors and victims of their history' (Silbey 2008).

In Gramsci's term, 'common sense' explains a cumulative knowledge of ideas and customs taken for granted as good sense which enables us to make sound judgments in daily practical matters in a given social stratum. Gramsci, however, warns that fragmented common sense hinders both effective political organization and counter exploitation. Moreover, it is this take-for-granted attitude that is reflected in the lower class of agents whose active complicity sustains the system that work against the subjugated. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power explains how the take-for-granted attitude of the subjugated maintains the dominant power at the former's own expense.

## **5.9. Summing Up**

As examined above, the language reflects ethnic and national identity, and the power to manipulate on the one hand and negotiate on the other hand. Linguistic identity is at the nexus of power and culture. In other words, as Gramsci explains that cultural hegemony is maintained not only because the dominant group is powerful enough to do so but also because the subjugated consent to the dominant group even though the policy is working against their wishes. Hence the subjugated are equally responsible for the maintenance of hegemonic power remaining intact – in this particular case, the theoretical guidance explored above should be very helpful to analyse the linguistic hegemony in Nepal. In particular, the process of stances introduced in the linguistic hegemony serve the purpose.

Further, subaltern studies that expanded Gramsci's concept of subalternity in India and elsewhere clarifies the scope of using the term subaltern. Additionally, Bourdieu's concepts of linguistic habitus, its capital and the market explored above, together with symbolic power or symbolic violence, provide further sustain my efforts to analyze circumstances not covered by Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to describe linguistic hegemony in multilingual Nepal through this work. The concepts of theories and definitions of policy and law examined above will reflect in the next chapter onwards.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SINGLE LANGUAGE POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL UNITY OR HEGEMONY

*The State shall pursue a policy of strengthening the national unity by maintaining the cultural diversity of the country by developing healthy and cordial social relations amongst the various religions, cultures, castes, communities, denominations, origins and linguistic groups, based on equality and co-existence, and through the equal development of their languages, literatures, scripts, arts and cultures.*<sup>196</sup>

This chapter examines the single language policy of Nepal, virtually known as ‘Khas/Nepali<sup>197</sup> only’ policy. It is a legacy of ‘*Ekdeshe eknaresh, ekbhesh ekbhasa*’<sup>198</sup> or the Nepali version of ‘one nation and one language’ policy imposed in 1962 has remained intact for the past six decades. Advocates for the single language policy imply ‘national unity’ while the supporters of linguistic diversity implicate Khas/Nepali hegemony in multilingual Nepal as one of the main causes hindering equality and social justice to a large section of the population. I shall discuss below how the state language policy has been formulated in Nepal. I shall first appraise the objective of the single language policy through constitutional provisions, legislations, commission recommendations and their reports culminating in the government favoring the ‘Khas/Nepali only’ policy in multi-lingual Nepal. Second, in exploring the services for language in public institutions, I shall examine subsequent improvements that have been made in response to the concerned public’s demands represented by the advocates of linguistic diversity. Finally, I shall assess the effects of the changes in the language policy.

#### 6.1. State Language Policy in Nepal

The short excerpt above is a policy statement of the Government of Nepal which guarantees the maintenance of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity and commitment to develop a cordial state-society relationship. It also assures equality and justice to the

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<sup>196</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), Article 35.3 is a carry over of Article 26.2 of Part 4 from the Constitution of Nepal, 1990.

<sup>197</sup> Khas/Nepali is a term constructed from Khas Bhasa (the language of Khas nationality) which was changed into Gorkhali and later into Nepali by Gorkhali rulers. The term Nepali was usurped from Nepal Bhasa (the former state language of Nepal).

<sup>198</sup> Literary translation: One state, one king, one religion one language.



citizens of Nepal. The statement echoes the fundamental rights enshrined in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007. The Interim Constitution defines Nepal as a multilingual nation inter alia and recognized all the languages spoken as MT in the country as ‘national’ and ‘Nepali’ language as the ‘official’ language.

As already noted, Nepali is new term labeled on Khas Bhasa, which is the MT of Khas community and Hinduism is their religious faith while Nepal is the native land of many indigenous peoples like Newar, Magar, Tamang, Tharu and many more while the Hindu caste groups such as Brahman, Chhetri, and Kami have also made Nepal their home. This home of multi-nationalities state has over three millennia of history, but the concept of nation-state is very new. A nation-state centered on the ‘Khas/Nepali’ language and Hinduism was constructed by partyless Panchayat government led by King Mahendra in 1962. The concept was promoted with a slogan of ‘*Ekdesh, eknaresh, ekbhesh and ekbhas*’ a Mahendra version of ‘one nation and one language’ policy. Instead of accommodating the diverse linguistic reality in the country, the partyless Panchayat Government banned all other Nepali languages other than Khas/Nepali. A closer look at the legislations, government directives and commission reports related to language rights and their use from 1948 will provide us the objective of a single language policy and why mono-lingualism was adopted by the policy makers in Nepal in the past.

### **6.1.1. Constitutional Provisions for Language Rights and their Use**

The constitution is considered to be the fundamental law in Nepal. Altogether six constitutions have been promulgated in Nepal from 1948 until 2007 in different perspectives from feudal to democratic, constitutional monarchy to guided democracy and towards an inclusive federal republic today.

#### ***a) Constitution of 1948: Feudal Perspective***

The only constitution<sup>199</sup> drafted by the Rana Oligarchy (1846-1950) at the latter part of their 104-year long feudal rule, the document is almost silent about the existence of any language in multilingual Nepal but an important phrase that guaranteed ‘free compulsory elementary education’ inter alia as basic rights (Part 2, Article 4)<sup>200</sup>. But during the Rana

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<sup>199</sup> See Government of Nepal Act [1948] in Pant (2007).

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*

rule (1847-1951) known for their hereditary autocratic regime, only an English medium school<sup>201</sup> has been opened to teach their children including Gorkha Bhasa (i.e. Khas/Nepali), and later a college<sup>202</sup> leading to tertiary level of education in Kathmandu.

### ***b) Interim Constitution of 1951: Towards Democracy***

An Interim Constitution<sup>203</sup> was promulgated by the multi-party democratic government (1951-1960) formed after the revolution that ousted the Rana oligarchy of 104 years. Though this Constitution has been amended six times, it mentions nothing about any basic rights or a word related to language, except that the government will ‘make effective provision for securing the right to education’ inter alia in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. The provision is very vague about its guarantees to the right to education or to the use of any language:

Government shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement in other cases of undeserved want.<sup>204</sup>

### ***c) Constitution of 1959: Towards Guided Democracy***

Proclaimed as the first Constitution<sup>205</sup> for the Kingdom of Nepal dated February 12, 1959, Part 3 of this Constitution enlists a long list of basic rights, but mentions no word of education or language. However, in the last chapter (Chapter 2) under ‘Miscellaneous Provisions’ Article 70 has the provision for the national language: ‘The National Language of Nepal shall be Nepali in the *Devanagari* script.’<sup>206</sup> This should be the first time that the term ‘Nepali’ was ever used. There is also a doubt that this term was retrospectively used at a later time.

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<sup>201</sup> Originally started to educate the children of the ruling class in 1854, opened for children of private citizens since 1902, the school was officially named Durbar High School after Durbar [palace] as it was first started at a section of the Rana palace in Thapathali, Kathmandu, later moved to present prime location in front of the Ranipokhari (Nhoopukhoo). The school is known to be the first modern school in Nepal taught in English, and in Khas/Nepali language later.

<sup>202</sup> Trichandra College named after then king Tribhuwan and premier Chandra Shumsher Rana of the time.

<sup>203</sup> Effective from April 11, 1951

<sup>204</sup> The Interim Government of Nepal Act [1951], Article 7 (Pant 2007:303).

<sup>205</sup> Effective from February 12, 1959 (Pant 2007).

<sup>206</sup> Pant (2007:296).

As the provision does not appear in the prominent part of this Constitution, many commentators of the constitutions attribute the first imposition of Khas/Nepali as national language to the Panchayat Constitution of 1962. The Constitution of 1959 appeared to have been a temporary measure that was soon replaced by the partyless Panchayat Constitution. The replacement was the beginning of reversal of people mandated governments in Nepal.

***d) Constitution of 1962: Consolidation of Khas/Nepali as ‘National Language’***

Article 4 of this constitution consolidates the provision of “National Language of Nepal as the Nepali language in *Devanagari* script,”<sup>207</sup> indicated in the short lived Constitution of Nepal, 1959. But coercive imposition of Khas/Nepali language is attributed to the Panchayat Constitution of 1962 that banned all other mother tongues other than Khas/Nepali in schools, public services, and mass media.

The constitution of the ‘partyless Panchayat democracy’ as it was known and guided by King Mahendra not only put the first full stop against the growth of all other languages of the country but its “Khas/Nepali only” policy also condemned all literary and religious practices and publications in other Nepali languages than Khas/Nepali. As the country was also declared a Hindu State (Part 1, Article 3) through this constitution, Hindu or those practices considered part of Hinduism was allowed without hindrance while those practices of literal or religious kind such as Buddhism were placed under strict government control.

With regard to language, another provision in the constitution required foreigners to have skills “to read and write the national language” to obtain citizenship of this country (Article 8.2a). Further, a company act was passed in 1964 directing all companies to keep their records either in Khas/Nepali or English only (Kansakar: 2007) recognizing no other languages of the land.

***e) Constitution of 1990: Constitutional Monarchy***

This constitution was promulgated after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990 by an uprising, a People’s Movement-1 (*Jana Andolan-1*), in which Nepal was declared a

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<sup>207</sup> Pant (2007:196).

‘multilingual nation’ inter alia (Article 4.1) for the first time and made some progressive changes but not in the case of the single language policy provision which remained intact as below:

The Nepali language in the *Devanagari*<sup>208</sup> script is the language of the nation of Nepal: The Nepali language shall be the official language. (Part 1, Article 6.1).

The democratic Constitution of 1990 further consolidated the provision in the Panchayat Constitution ‘Nepali as national language’ in the past to official language. However, for the first time after a three decade ban, the new Constitution of 1990 recognized:

All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal. (Part 1, Article 6.2).

After several years, the provision proved only to be additionally ‘stipulating for Nepali language while providing a lip service<sup>209</sup> to other languages’ (Rai 2011:2). Anthropologist Rai’s comment reflects the indifferent attitudes of some important government agencies, responsible for public services, towards the reality of linguistic diversity in Nepal.

The Constitution of 1990 also made provisions for:

Right to use of mother tongues in primary education (Part 1, Article 18.2) while guaranteeing the fundamental right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture (Part 4, Article 26.2).

Many commentators, on this provision, find it difficult to trust in the outcome of the expected benefit apparently because ‘there is no mention of state’s responsibility to do so. It only raises questions whether every ethnic group has the capacity to do so. The responsibility is left to the community itself permitting only the primary level education while promoting Nepali language alone up to highest level’ (Rai 2011:4).

The Constitution of 1990, considered to be democratic while upholding constitutional monarchy soon proved to be far from suitable to this country as the

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<sup>208</sup> While the terms ‘Nepali’ was one usurped from Nepal Bhasa, ‘Devanagari’ is an Indian term that refers to the script originated in Devanagara (presently Patna city in North India).

<sup>209</sup> Most politicians turned state leaders are polite enough to recognize the demands of the concerned public. But their directives are hardly implemented by government agencies.

constitutional monarch and his family were massacred in an unfortunate incident June 1, 2001, and the succeeding constitutional monarch<sup>210</sup> seized control of the country by dissolving the government and democratically elected parliament, putting all government and opposition leaders under house arrest. This triggered the 2006 Democracy Movement (*Lokatantrik Andolan*) in April 2006 that succeeded in foiling the repeat of another royal coup, as in 1960<sup>211</sup>. Consequently, an interim parliament and government were installed, which later elected a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. Until the new constitution was drafted, an interim constitution was enacted in 2007.

### **6.1.2 Interim Constitution of 2007: Towards a New Nepal**

The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 is the fundamental law of the land presently being sought for guidance in running the government and implementing its provisions for the benefit of the Nepali people. Hence, I shall examine it in some detail. This Constitution has several provisions and directives regarding language rights and use. It carried over several provisions from past constitutions while adding several new ones.

- a) It confirms Nepal as a ‘multilingual nation’ *inter alia* and ‘all the languages spoken as mother tongues in Nepal [as...] the languages of nation’ while the provision of ‘the Nepali language in *Devanagari* script as the official language’ (Article 5) from the pre-Panchayat and the Panchayat Constitution of 1962, its legacy of ‘Nepali only’ left intact.
- b) An additional provision under the same Article guarantees the use of MT in local body and office: ‘Notwithstanding anything contained in Clause 2, nothing shall be deemed to prevent the using of any language spoken as the mother tongue in a local body and office. The state shall maintain records by translating the languages so used in the official language’<sup>212</sup> (Article 5.3).

The provision has yet to be translated into practice of law as the applications so submitted by local people in mother tongue to the local bodies and offices for public

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<sup>210</sup> The assassinated King Birendra’s brother Gyanendra.

<sup>211</sup> Gyanendra’s father Mahendra dissolved the first democratically elected parliament and imprisoned the then prime minister B. P. Koirala and his cabinet members on December 15, 1960.

<sup>212</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 effective from January 15, 2007.

**Table-5: Comparison of the past constitutions with the present Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007**

<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Name of state and nation</b>	<b>Language rights</b>	<b>Other rights</b>	<b>Obligation / Requirement</b>
<b>Constitution 1948</b> (Government of Nepal Act, 1948). (Effective from April 13, 1948)	Nepal		Free compulsory elementary education	
<b>Interim Government of Nepal Act, 1951</b> (Effective from April 11, 1951)	Nepal		Education for the disabled	
<b>Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1959</b> (Effective from February 12, 1959)	Kingdom of Nepal			National language of Nepal is the Nepali language in <i>Devanagari</i> script.
<b>Constitution of Nepal, 1962</b> (Effective from December 16, 1962)	Nepal, an independent, indivisible and sovereign monarchical Hindu State	No languages other than Khas/Nepali are recognized		1) National language of Nepal is the Nepali language in <i>Devanagari</i> script. 2) Ability to read and write 'Nepali' as qualification for foreigner to become citizen of Nepal
<b>Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990</b> (Effective from November 9, 1990)	Nepal, a multiethnic, multilingual, democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign Hindu and constitutional monarchical kingdom	All the languages spoken as mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal	Every community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue in accordance with the provision made by the law	1) Nepali language in <i>Devanagari</i> script is the language of the nation, official language 2) Ability to read and write 'Nepali' as qualification for foreigner to become citizen of Nepal
<b>Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007</b> (Effective from January 15, 2007)	1) Multiethnic, multilingual, multi-religious, and multicultural nation 2) Nepal, an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive and federal democratic republican state	Use of any languages spoken as mother tongues in a local body and office. The State shall maintain records by translating the languages so used into the official language.	Every community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue in accordance with the provision made by the law	1) All the languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue (MT) are national languages of Nepal 2) Nepali language in <i>Devanagari</i> script is the official language for government business
Sources: 1) The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 (The Khas/Nepali original and English translation), Kathmandu: Makalu Publication. 2) Pant (2007)				

service are rejected unless a 'Khas/Nepali' translation of the application is attached by the applicant him/herself. Affected people complain of the indifference to fundamental law and its implementation, 'a paradigm of Nepal's chronic problem' in Kansakar's term.

Further, the Interim Constitution of 2007 also confirms the right to equality, with educational and cultural rights to all citizens. Article 13 confirms that:

- a) All citizens shall be equal before the law that no person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws.
- b) No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, color, sex, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these.

Article 17 guarantees that:

- a) Every community shall have the right to get basic education in its own mother tongue, as provided in law.
- b) Every citizen shall have the right to get free education up to the secondary level from the State, as provided in law.
- c) Every community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civilization and heritage.

These are without doubt progressive and well intended provisions. However, several similar provisions that are yet to be translated into any law, and even those that have been revised or planned are yet to be implemented, cast serious doubt whether they will ever be translated into implementation. In comparison to past constitutions, a closer look at provisions that articulates 'Obligations, Directive Principles and Policies of the State' in Part 4 in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 provides ample examples of loopholes to prevent implementation from functioning law. I shall examine several such provisions in the present interim constitution.

### ***Progressive verses Ambiguous Provisions***

In comparison to the past constitutions that were replaced by new ones for the benefit of the people who sought changes in the fundamental law of the country and its policies, the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 has two provisions which I would call 'ambiguous' that will put the following progressive provisions inter alia in jeopardy. Under the provisions of Obligations of the State (Part 4: Obligations, Directive Principles and Policies of the State) in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, the State guarantees its

obligations, that it shall:

- a) Do away with discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region inter alia (Part 4, Article 33.d)
- b) pursue a policy of establishing the right of all citizens to education, health, housing, employment and food sovereignty (Article 33.h) and,
- c) abolish all discriminatory laws (Article 33.n).

Under the provisions of the state policies in the same Part 4 of the Interim Constitution, the State asserts that it shall pursue:

- a) a policy of raising the standards of living of the general public through the development of infrastructures such as education, health, housing and employment of the people of all regions, by equitably distributing investment of economic investment for the balanced development of the country (Article 35.1)
- b) a policy of strengthening national unity by maintaining the cultural diversity of the country by developing healthy and cordial social relations amongst the various religions, cultures, castes, communities, denominations, origins and linguistic groups, based on equality and co-existence, and through the equal development of their languages, literatures, scripts, arts and cultures (Article 35.3)
- c) for the progress of the country, a policy of giving priority to the development of science and technology and also pursuing a policy of developing local technology (Article 35.11) and
- d) a policy of identifying, protecting and modernizing the traditional knowledge, skills and practices existing in the country (Article 35.18).

These are some of the provisions selected as they are related to my study. The implementation of these provisions inter alia other provisions in Part 4 entirely depends on the following two provisions in Article 36 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal.

### ***1) Two Ambiguous Provisions: Article 36***

Having listed a number of progressive policies (Articles 33-35 in Part 4) under the ‘Obligations, Directive Principles and Policies of the State’ in the Interim Constitution, the very next Article 36 bars raising questions in any court regarding the implementation or failure of the subjects stated in the Articles from 33 through Article 35. The two provisions under Article 36 titled questions not to be raised in courts are so ‘ambiguous’ that its Clause 1 bars questioning state policies in any court while Clause 2 of the same Article makes a bleak promise in the following:



- a) No question shall be raised in any court as to whether the matter contained in this Part [4] have been implemented or not; and
- b) the State shall mobilize, or cause to be mobilized, the means and resources, as required, to implement the principles and policies contained in this Part [4].

The two provisions on the one hand put the government in charge to fully test its honesty and commitment to its responsibility towards the citizens of Nepal, but legalize loopholes in the Constitution on the other hand. In short, despite the Constitution articulating several progressive policies, Article 36 bars anyone questioning the government or questioning in the court of law whether such obligations, directives and policies are implemented or not. These ambiguous provisions put not only the progressive policies into jeopardy but also induce the Nepali citizens to lose their trust in the Constitution and its meaningfulness. Two paradigms should suffice to demonstrate that neither the Constitution nor its drafters, the law makers, are serious about the imperative need to have a constitution that will guarantee the rights of the citizenry. I shall examine those loopholes in the present Interim Constitution, which is the fundamental law of the country until a new constitution is promulgated.

## ***2) Discrepancy in Oath Taking: Language for President, Veep and CA Members***

Oath taking is considered to be an important act that demonstrates one's loyalty to the State one serves. Such obligations are articulated as provisions in the Constitution which requires that concerned individuals abide by the law. However, the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 has two different oath taking provisions for the head of the State, his deputy and members of the CA. As the newly elected CA abolished the monarchy, two new posts, Head of State and his/her deputy, were created in the Interim Constitution. They are the President and Vice President who are obliged to take an oath of office and required to choose a language in doing so as in the following:

The Head of State elect and his/her Deputy must:

- a) take oath of office and secrecy before the Chief Justice in a form referred to in Schedule-1A in the official Nepali language.<sup>213</sup>

If the Head of State and his/her deputy wish to take oath in their mother tongues, they are supposed to:

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<sup>213</sup> Article 36F.1 in Interim Constitution, 2007.

- a) submit a copy [each] in the format of oath to the office of President by translating it into his/her mother tongue 24 hours before the prescribed time for swearing in.<sup>214</sup>
- b) The Office of the President shall maintain the record of such oaths taken pursuant to this Article.<sup>215</sup>

The provision of language requirement for the Vice President to take an oath of office is similar to the requirement for the President and is articulated in the Article 36I. The Articles of 36F and 36I were inserted by the Seventh Amendment in the Constitution, apparently in response to the oath taken by the Vice President in Hindi at the swearing-in ceremony in May 2008. Incidentally, the mother tongue of both the President and the Vice President elected by the Interim Parliament is Maithil. In response to a case filed by a vested interest group against the oath taken in Hindi by the Vice President elect, the Supreme Court returned a verdict to the Vice President cancelling his oath taking because Hindi is not considered a mother tongue spoken in Nepal, but a foreign language. The verdict ordered the Vice President to retake the oath of office in the official Khas/Nepali language or his mother tongue Maithil if he so desired. The Vice President was stripped of his official status until he retook the oath of office in official Khas/Nepali language and Maithil at a later date. However, the oath taking requirement is different for members of CA, the legislature parliament where policies are drawn, made into law and practiced.

### ***3) Oath Taking Language for CA Members***

The provision of oath taking for CA members including the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker articulates no specific language requirements except the following provision:

Every member of the Constituent Assembly shall, before taking part for the first time in the meeting of the Constituent Assembly or any of its committees, take an oath as provided in law. (Part 7, Article 68)

Following the above provision, the members of CA took oath of office in Khas/Nepali or other national languages such as Nepal Bhasa, Maithil etc on May 28, 2008 when the CA convened its first meeting. Among them were some CA members, who took oath of office in Hindi. Both these members and the aforementioned Vice President elect were from the same southern electorates, and their mother tongue is Maithil. Though no

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<sup>214</sup> Article 36F.2: *ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Article 36F.4: *ibid.*

action was taken against the CA members for oath taking in Hindi, as noted earlier, the Vice President's oath taking in Hindi was nullified by the Supreme Court. In addition to oath-taking in Hindi, the CA members freely made their deliberations in the same language without any restrictions and continued throughout their tenure as CA members for four years (2008-2012).

A Newar CA member<sup>216</sup> whose mother tongue is Nepal Bhasa told me that the discrepancy in the same law over the two events revealed nothing but 'the hegemony of Khas/Nepali speaking CHHE.' There was no provision of law that could have penalized the Vice President for his oath taking in Hindi, which was declared as a foreign language only after his case was taken up at the Supreme Court. Though the provisions of oath taking by President and Vice President were revised afterwards, the provision of oath taking for CA members remained unchanged until the first CA was dissolved on May 28, 2012. The CA member, I interviewed, also revealed that although the deliberations made in other national languages are also allowed in the CA, ironically the CA officials keep no records of such deliberations except those delivered in Khas/Nepali. 'There are no records of evidence of any deliberations made by CA members in their mother tongues (though recognized as national languages) other than those deliberations made in the Khas/Nepali language. It is the power of Khas/Nepali speaking [CHHE]' said the same CA member. He was once banned together with three other CA members from CA for four days for allegedly protesting legislation. 'The Speaker could not penalize other CA members from the big parties for the similar offence, if mine was one' protested the Newar CA member. Thus, there are notable discrepancies in the provisions of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007. In addition, the Constitution also constitutes provisions that guarantee equal treatment with regard to membership in political parties. The election commissioner can reject the registration of political parties, if any of them refuses membership on language bias inter alia.

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<sup>216</sup> From interview with the Hon. Buddha Ratna Manandhar (known also as poet Buddha Sayami), the only member elected to CA from Nepa Rastriya Party (NRP) founded by the Newar leaders before the first CA elections held in April 2008. He was elected on proportional vote for the party as no candidates contested in the first past-the-post system garnered enough votes to win the contested electorates.

#### **4) Language for Political Parties**

A specific provision in the Interim Constitution of 2007 regulates the political parties in case they discriminate against any citizen of Nepal in becoming a member of a party on the basis of religion, caste, tribe, language or sex *inter alia*. The Election Commission will bar such political parties from contesting the elections:

The Election Commission shall not register any political party or organization which discriminates against any citizen of Nepal in becoming its member on the basis merely of religion, caste, tribe, language ... [*inter alia*] (Part 18, Article 142.4).

This is another new and important provision that guarantees cultural and linguistic diversity if the provision is enacted as a functioning law. The major political parties in Nepal are run by the dominant CHHE and subordination to them is common sense among the subaltern members. Advocates of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity wonder if such a provision may really be applicable. According to Gramsci, uncritical common sense contributes to subordination and inhibits subaltern groups from developing long-term political strategies.<sup>217</sup> However, recent events of mass desertion (at the end of 2012) of membership from two major political parties<sup>218</sup> run by dominant CHHE and the formation of two new parties<sup>219</sup> by the indigenous nationalities show some signs that the subaltern social groups no longer take common sense without criticism. As the provision in question is still new, it may take some time to prove the provision is really useful. Of all these, what is more important for Nepali citizenry in general and the native/indigenous nationalities in particular is the structuring of centrally governed Nepal into a new, inclusive and democratic federal State.

#### **5) State Structuring and Self-governance**

In response to the aspirations and demands of people who sacrificed for freedom and basic human rights in past uprisings such as the Revolution in 1950 (*Satsal Kranti*), Peoples' Movement (*Jana Andolan*) in 1990 and Democracy Movement (*Lokatantrik Andolan*) in

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<sup>217</sup> Gramsci 1996, Notebook 3, §48.

<sup>218</sup> Nepali Congress Party (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML).

<sup>219</sup> Federal Socialist Party led by Ashok Rai, and Social Democratic Party (SDP) led by Chaitanya Subba.

2006, the Constitution's framers have revised the constitutions in the past. The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 aims for the first time to restructure the state from a centralized and unitary structure to a progressive State with an inclusive, democratic federal system of governance to end past discriminations based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region. The provision in the Constitution is articulated following:

There shall be made progressive restructuring of the State with inclusive, democratic federal system of governance,<sup>220</sup> by doing away with the centralized and unitary structure of the State so as to end discriminations based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region (Part 17, Article 138.1)

Despite all these progressive provisions enshrined in the constitution, the mechanism for restructuring of the State has stalled after four years as the first CA ended without completing the drafting of the new Constitution. As a result, the aspirations of the people for restructuring the State with inclusive, democratic federal system of governance, has been halted since May 28, 2012. Disagreements between the three major political parties left the drafting of the new Constitution incomplete. This has left all unsolved problems unattended. Rights activists including the advocates of cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity see no other alternative than a restructuring of the present government. A human rights activist asserts that 'as long as the unitary state structure continues to exist, its legacy of discriminations based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region will continue to remain affecting a larger section of population in this country.'<sup>221</sup>

Thus, in my exploration of provisions in the constitutions of Nepal about language rights and their use, the law framers have responded positively to the aspirations of the people for equality in language rights. Yet, such progressive provisions have been weakened by two particular 'ambiguous provisions' that hinder questioning the provisions, whether or not they are implemented.

I shall now look at the background of what culminated into favoring the 'Khas/Nepali only' policy in public institutions such as education, public service (including court, national and local offices) and mass media.

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<sup>220</sup> Amended by the First Amendment (March 14, 2012).

<sup>221</sup> From interview with Malla K. Sundar, a prominent human right activist, Newar leader who served as a member of the State Structuring Commission appointed by the Government of Nepal, 2012.

### **6.1.3. Language in Education: Policy Recommendations, Legislations and Implementation**

As examined all the past constitutions of Nepal above, the short lived Constitution of 1959 made the first provision for Khas/Nepali in *Devanagari* script the national language. Then the Panchayat Constitution of 1962 consolidated Khas/Nepali as national language imposing it on education, public services and mass media to the extent that critics blamed it: The ‘Panchayat Constitution put first full stop over all the languages other than Nepali’ (Rai 2011:1). The framers of this ‘Khas/Nepali only’ Constitution argue that it was a step forward towards national unity, others defend themselves that it was not their intention but influenced by foreign expertise in response to the opposition to single language hegemony in multilingual Nepal.

A closer look at several decisions, recommendations and reports of commissions that advised the governments since the overthrow of Rana oligarchy after 1950 will reveal how the concept of ‘Khas/Nepali only’ rose up and voted down the concepts of linguistic diversity that sought for equality and social justice. The democratic government that came into power after the fall of the Rana Regime in 1951 took initiative to develop an education policy for the first time. Since then, several commissions appointed by the government have worked to develop education policies and made recommendations. However, until the uprising of Peoples’ Movement restored multiparty democracy in 1990, most of the past governments endorsed a ‘dominant language policy of linguistic exclusion’ (Kansakar 2007:4). I shall now explore what those reports and recommendations have endorsed.

#### ***1) Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC): Khas/Nepali Motivated***

This was the first ever commission formed to plan education for Nepal in 1953. It was led by Rudra Raj Pande, an educationist, and guided by Prof. Dr. Hugu B. Wood from Oregon University, USA, hence it also being known as the Wood Commission. The Commission report published in 1956 recommended the use of ‘Khas/Nepali only’ (or as the sole medium) in education because ‘if children are taught Nepali, other languages will cease to exist. As a result, national strength and unity will be enforced’ (NNEPC 1956 cited in Rai 2011:2). Despite calls for education in the multiple languages of Nepal including Khas/Nepali, the Wood Commission Report sidelined all other languages of Nepal in favor

of Khas/Nepali and reasoned out why: Because 1) the provision of education in languages other than Khas/Nepali would hamper the development of the Khas/Nepali language; 2) with the use of language at home other than Khas/Nepali, Khas/Nepali would be left out as a lonely language. Critics allege that the ‘commission ignored the importance of other languages and proved that its intended motive was to give slow poison to other languages but promote Nepali, by misleading the people that learning Nepali would strengthen Nepali nationalism while forcing the MT out of the usage by depriving citizens from the right to receive education in one’s mother tongue should be considered a crime in today’s democratic society’ (Rai 2011: 2).

The first and foremost framers of Nepal’s national education planning were confident enough to recommend ‘Khas/Nepali only’ as the medium of instruction and the monolingual approach to teaching for several other reasons. The Wood Commission Report (1956: 95) recommends that:

- a) The medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle, and higher educational institutions, because any language which cannot be made lingua franca and which does not serve legal proceedings in court should not find a place... The use of national language can bring about equality among all classes of people, can be an anchor-sheet for Nepalese nationality, and can be the main instrument for promoting literature (NNEPC 1956).

The recommendations of the Wood Commission Report were faulty in a number of aspects. First, they overlooked the history of thousands of years of Nepal Bhasa, the language of the land, by stating that language ‘can not be made lingua franca and which does not serve legal proceedings in court should not find a place’ in educational institutions. Second, Khas/Nepali was made national language only in the Constitution of 1959 (not before) from when the linguistic exclusion was officially launched. Critiques attribute the dominant language policy of linguistic exclusion in Nepal to the Wood Commission while advocates of the Khas/Nepali only policy credit Rudraraj Pande, the convener of the Wood Commission, or NNEPC (Pande 2013). The report ‘failed to capture the spirit of political change in the country and recognize the need for multilingual education’ (See also my review of Awasthi in Chapter Four.). Instead, Dr. Wood played a major role in shaping the reduction of multilingualism in this country, and all Nepali members in the Wood Commission supported Wood’s recommendation, Awasthi, an advocate of multilingualism

and education planner points out. Dr. Wood and his team members led by Rudraraj Pande were resolute in recommending the single language policy in Nepal:

- (b) No other language should be taught, even optionally in primary school because few children will need them, they would hinder the use of Nepali, parents would insist on their children taking them whether capable or not, time is needed for other more important and fundamental learning - there are not enough well-qualified teachers, and those who wish and need additional languages can begin them in the 6th grade (NNEPC 1956).

Further, linguists agree with the advocates of linguistic diversity in multilingual Nepal that Wood Commission's motive of prescribing the use of 'Khas/Nepali only' was crystal clear as indicated in the following extract.

- (c) If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language then other languages will gradually disappear, the greater the national strength and unity will result... Local dialects and tongues other than Nepali should be banished from the playground as early as possible in the life of the child. (NNEPC 1956, Gurung 2002; Maddox 2003 as cited in Kansakar 2007: 10).

With the publication of the Wood Commission Report in 1956, within a year the 'Khas/Nepali only' recommendation therein was 'further reinforced by the K. I. Singh government in 1957 by prescribing Nepali as the medium of instruction at all levels of education' (ibid.).

## ***2) Overall National Education Committee (ONEC): Khas/Nepali the Sole Medium***

Not long before the NNEPC or Wood Commission Report recommendation for 'Khas/Nepali only' was enforced on all levels of education in Nepal, the then-king Mahendra overthrew the democratically elected government and dissolved the parliament by a royal coup d'état on December 15, 1960. Consequently, new government policies were introduced. The report issued by the Overall National Education Committee (ONEC) in 1961 was an effort in changing the previous education system. The ONEC, though appointed for the overall national education system, went a further step ahead recommending the consolidation of 'Khas/Nepali only' language policy by prescribing the use of 'Khas/Nepali only' in administration and media in addition to all levels of education 'in compliance with the Panchayat slogan of "one country, one king - one dress one language"' (Kansakar 2007:5). In addition, the ONEC report also recommended Sanskrit



education saying that Sanskrit has a historical relationship with Nepal. Hence ‘students learning Sanskrit must not be charged, instead they must be supported with scholarships; Sanskrit schools must be opened wherever people show their interests in doing so’ (Rai 2011:3). On these recommendations, the Panchayat Government (1961-1990) introduced the National Education Planning System (NEPS) in 1961 through which it strengthened the role of Khas/Nepali language, further promoting its wider usage. Under this Khas/Nepali version of the ‘one nation, one language’ policy, the national education policy was framed:

- a) To protect national unity, sovereignty, crown and freedom by being faithful to the nation and nationality and prepare the citizens who are conscious and active towards their rights and duties as per Panchayat System.
- b) To develop, promote and expand [Khas/Nepali as] the state language, culture, literature and arts. (NEPS 1961)

### ***New Education (1971-75)***

Under the ‘Khas/Nepali only’ policy of the Panchayat Government, a new education policy was further developed through a five year National Education Planning System (NEPS) in 1971-75. The government pursued a so-called standard curriculum under the new education by enforcing the following:

- a) Different level curriculum shall be centrally guided and made equal.
- b) Text and supporting text development shall support not only the improvement of the education but also the same kind of knowledge and experience.
- c) The state language shall be promoted to a better medium of instruction by combining various words from different languages in the country (NEPS 1971-1975).

A closer look at the Khas/Nepali lexicon will find more Hindi and Sanskrit words than any words belonging to other Nepali languages against what was promised by the State. During this time, ‘Nepali language was promoted in schools to the extent that 40 percent of total 300 marks were given to learning Nepali language alone, and children caught speaking MT other than Nepali were either stigmatized or even punished overtly’ (Rai 2011:4). No report was found that the new education system ever implemented what the government proposed in item ‘c’ above.

### **3) National Education Commission Report (NEC): MT verses Khas/Nepali**

The partyless Panchayat government that ruled Nepal with strict control for three decades ended in 1990. With the consequent beginning of constitutional monarchy, many expected linguistic diversity and equal opportunity for education in mother tongues (MT). However, the National Education Commission (NEC) appointed in 1992, in response to the call for changes in language policy, recommended that national policy fall in favor of education in Khas/Nepali rather than mother tongue education for all concerned nationalities of Nepal. The NEC report demonstrated that even the democratic government was not ready to practice democracy for language rights yet. The following recommendation of the report reveals its aims that the government need only:

- a) To encourage [those concerned] to manage primary education in mother tongue, paying attention to the ambitions of language communities.
- b) To provide education of the highest level in Nepali paying attention to Nepali as the state language and its official use (NEC 1992).

Provisions in the NEC recommendations allowed education in national languages (mother tongues) from grade one to three but left responsibility of opening, running of primary schools and financing for teaching MT in the hands of concerned communities, rather than the government undertaking the responsibility for education in MT which have officially been recognized as national languages by the Constitution of Nepal, 1990. 'The NEC recommendation keeps the status of Nepali intact and continues to provide all facilities on top of its official status' (Rai 2011:4).

**4) National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (NLPRC): Linguistic Diversity.** The NLPRC was formed in response to public demand for a fair language policy in Nepal. The Nepali Congress Party Government that returned to power after new elections following the uprising of Peoples' Movement (1990) formed an eleven member National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission with Til Bikram Nembang (Bairagi Kainla) as its convener in 1993. The commission aimed to promote national languages and their use in local administration, primary education and the media. It held meetings, seminars, launched a public survey with questionnaires in and outside Kathmandu Valley, compiled vital information and data on the language situation in Nepal and made a number of significant recommendations for the preservation and development

of the country's national languages, minority languages in particular. The commission made 58 recommendations under several headings. In a study conducted on these recommendations, Tejratna Kansakar has found the following points of recommendation vital to education in the reality of Nepal's multilingual setting:

- a) To promote the languages of the country through codification and linguistic descriptions and to develop the uses of these languages in education, administration and as vehicles of mass communication.
- b) To identify and classify languages into three groups: First, those with established written traditions such as Nepali [Khas], Maithil, Newar [Nepal Bhasa], Limbu, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Tibetan; the second with an emerging tradition of writing such as Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung and the Rai group of languages; and the third without any script or written literature for the purpose of imparting primary education in the mother tongue. This category would include a large number of minority languages including Sattar/Santhal, Danuwar, Chepang, Thami, Majhi, Kurukh/Urao, Dhimal, Darai, Kham, Kagate, Kaike, Kumal, Bote, Byanshi and several languages of the Rai group.
- c) To promote monolingual or bilingual education in the mother tongue and/or Nepali on the basis of the ethnic composition of students in particular areas.
- d) All children to have the right to receive education either in the mother tongue, mother tongue with Khas/Nepali or Khas/Nepali alone.
- e) The government to approve and support those primary schools in the mother tongue which has been established by the local people.
- f) To establish a separate administrative unit under the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Ministry of Education to develop curriculum, and implement mother-tongue education on a regional basis (NLRPC 1993 cited in Kansakar 2007:6).

The NLRPC was the first of its kind in the history of Nepal, specifically appointed for the purpose of recommendation of language policy meant for use in education, local administration and mass media. However, the recommendations have yet to be fully implemented by the government. I shall examine below the government initiatives taken in response to these recommendations in some detail.

### **5) Government Initiatives in Response to Language Recommendations**

Despite the 58 recommendations made by the NLRPC in 1993 on the need for, and how to promote national languages together with Khas/Nepali, the government's legal position remained unclear for sometime. The recommendations were based on real need for a comprehensive official language policy pointed out by many scholars, activists and the concerned time and again to preserve and promote national languages of Nepal (local and regional) through their uses in education, administration and media. Though the government took several initiatives a long lapse of time after the recommendations were publicized, it is still commendable that the initiatives were taken later rather than never. I shall examine several such initiatives below:

#### **a) Opening of Central Department of Linguistics:**

The earliest initiative of the government was the establishment of the Central Department of Linguistics (CDL) in the national university of the country, at Kirtipur Campus of Tribhuvan University in May 1996. 'Though the department was opened' Rai was quick to point out that 'the rest of the recommendations have yet to receive attention of the Government of Nepal' (Rai 2011:5). The recommendation body had given more important recommendations with regard to 'development of and preservation of national languages,'<sup>222</sup> 'establishment of council of national languages,'<sup>223</sup> and 'use of national languages in education'<sup>224</sup> separate or as part of bilingual education. But the government of 1996 gave greater priority only to the establishment of CDL than other important recommendations. In fact the need for a CDL was the 53<sup>rd</sup> item included in the Miscellany Part of the NLRPC recommendations.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the programs of the CDL, my brief inquiry found that the constitution of the academic and office staff of the CDL does not seem to represent the linguistic diversity of Nepal.<sup>225</sup> Except one teaching

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<sup>222</sup> Part A with 18 recommendations (NLRPC Report 1994:34-36).

<sup>223</sup> Part B recommending the need to open as a regulator body responsible for formulations and implementation of the language policy (NLRPC Report 1994:36).

<sup>224</sup> Part C with 32 important recommendations about the importance of the national languages of Nepal and education in those language mediums and as a subject (NLRPC Report 1994:37-42).

<sup>225</sup> CDL of Tribhuvan University as of February 4, 2014.

assistant and office assistant representing the Newar nationality all other higher positions such as head of the department and professors represented the dominant Khas nationality differing from the purpose of the CDL. The CDL was urgently recommended for the purpose of ‘training the manpower related to the teaching of languages and preparation of teaching and learning materials.’<sup>226</sup> As there existed a separate Central Department of Nepali (CDN) for Khas/Nepali, the establishment of CDL should be understood as meant for the development and research of the national languages of Nepal. This revealed that the purpose of the CDL has yet to serve fully as indicated in the NLRPC recommendation.

### **b) Bilingual Policy and Supreme Court Verdict against It:**

Next, with the pressures from the advocates of linguistic diversity that included scholars and activists, the second initiative the government took was the enactment of a Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 (hereinafter: the Act of 1999), six years later than recommended by the NLRPC. The Act of 1999 was enacted in response to a bilingual policy suggested for promoting a lingua franca and a regional language such as Khas/Nepali and Hindi as lingua franca and a regional language at the local level. The Act of 1999 granted the right to promote a local language along with the lingua franca. In accordance with the new law, several local offices in the country decided to provide services in a lingua franca and a regional language. But a Supreme Court verdict (1999) against the use of local language soon jeopardized the government intention to recognize the national languages at a local level. Many advocates of linguistic diversity condemned this verdict and raised serious doubt about the government’s sincerity in promoting national languages other than Khas/Nepali (Kansakar 2007: 7-8). The verdict also triggered outcry of opposition leading to closing down of Kathmandu Valley, and Tarai region by the affected nationalities, especially the Newar and the Maithil. I shall return to this later in the same chapter. In response to the outcry of the opposition, the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 added a clause to recognize the official use of national languages in local offices.<sup>227</sup> But it is yet to be fully implemented (See also page 186.).

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<sup>226</sup> NLRPC (1994:42).

<sup>227</sup> Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007: Article 5.3.

**c) Mother Tongue (MT) Education, Dakar Forum, and Education Act of 2006:**

Education in mother tongue (MT) is a long cherished aspiration of the people of Nepal. As noted in an earlier chapter (Three), many were polled on MT education through a survey questionnaire distributed by the NNEPC, or Wood Commission, in 1954 which recommended a 'Khas/Nepali only' policy for education in Nepal. However, the cherished aspiration for MT education has remained a public demand for the past six decades. Through the first half of this period, Khas/Nepali retained its sole position as the official language in education, public service and mass media; however, state policy after the 1990's political change has shown flexibility towards other Nepali languages, too. As we saw constitutional provisions, all languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue have been recognized as national languages, and primary level education in mother tongue has been permitted, which are encouraging signs for the future of linguistic diversity in Nepal. The NLRPC recommendation for promotion of the national language created further hope for the nationalities concerned. But the indifferent attitude toward the implementation of laws remained unchanged until the government committed at the Forum in 2000 to launch Education For All (EFA) Nepal.

In response to the commitment in the Dakar Forum four years later, the government initiated the EFA/Nepal. Under EFA Nepal, the government endorsed a transitional multilingual education policy that provides basic primary education accessible to all children including those from the native/indigenous and the minority groups. Although EFA/Nepal was not a part of the recommendations made by the NLRPC, the program provided benefits for MT education for all nationalities. The Government's commitment to the Dakar also led its agency initiate a multilingual education policy. The Department of Education launched the EFA/Nepal for a specific period from 2004-2009 as the transitional policy. It aimed to inculcate a child 'with basic educational skills through the medium of his/her mother tongue and gradually shift to a lingua franca such as Khas/Nepali or a dominant regional language and later learn a foreign language such as English for broader communication needs such as access to science and technology' (EFA/Nepal 2004 cited in Kansakar 2007:7). Following the EFA/Nepal transitional policy, the Government of Nepal has endorsed Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines, 2010 (hereinafter MEDIG) 'to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls and

children from the minorities to have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality' (Regmi 2011:136). Although it is yet to be seen whether the Government of Nepal can fulfill its commitment made at the Dakar Forum as the program is in process, there were still two more noteworthy initiatives taken by the government. I shall discuss them next.

**d) Amendment of Education Act and Publication of Textbooks in National Languages:** The Government recognized all languages spoken as MT in Nepal as 'national' in 1990, and NLRPC recommended their promotion and preservation in 1993. However, the government took 13 long years to take initiative to incorporate the constitutional provision that guaranteed the right to education in mother tongue. Finally, the Education Act<sup>228</sup> that had advocated education in 'Khas/Nepali only' was amended in 2006 to include the mother tongue provision for the purpose below:

- a) The medium of education in the schools shall be in the Nepali language, English language, or both languages.
- b) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (a), while teaching the subject of language the medium of education must obey the following conditions:
  - i) Education up to the Primary level can be given in the mother-tongue.
  - ii) The non-Nepali citizens who study in the schools of Nepal may study any other language in lieu of Nepali.
  - iii) While teaching the subject of language the medium of education may be in the same language.
  - iv) While teaching Compulsory English the medium of instruction must be in the English language.<sup>229</sup>

Following the amendment of the Education Act, the Department of Education initiated a pilot project to develop a curriculum for multilingual education and has run a program for 8 languages in 7 schools in 6 districts.<sup>230</sup> But its completion report revealed

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<sup>228</sup> Replaced by the Amendment Act No. 31, Section 7, V.S. 2063 (2006 A.D.).

<sup>229</sup> Aims of the amended Education Act No. 31, Section 7 cited in Kansakar (2007:5-6).

<sup>230</sup> Implementation of Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction: Read the following data from District, Language/s, School/s and Grades respectively:

1. Sunsari, Uraw and Tharu (eastern), Sharada Primary School (Simariya), 1-3.

that ‘due to the absence of the operational link with the system’s mechanism there is no guarantee of continuity of the initiatives’ (LinSuN 2010 in Regmi 2011:140). Meanwhile, the Curriculum Development Center has taken a new initiative in publishing translated textbooks in several national languages.

The NLRPC in 1993 in its 2 recommendations had sought a separate section under the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) to develop textbooks in national languages and to incorporate and reflect the existing socio-cultural diversity of each nationality from the school level.<sup>231</sup> But the CDC was able to launch its initiative for the sake of national languages only after the amendment of the Education Act in 2006, 16 years after the constitutional recognition of national languages and 13 years later than the NLRPC recommendation for the development of national languages. The CDC has so far published textbooks in several national languages. According to Indresh Thakur (2010), the CDC has developed, published and distributed 123 books related to MT education under the Government of Budget known as Interim Three Year Plan of 2008. The books developed were categorized into school textbooks from grade 1-5, grades 9-10 and reference books for younger grades. Although it is not clear the priority method adopted in selecting language for developing books for children, the initiative was commended by the concerned speech communities to a greater extent. ‘The government is now so flexible that the CDC is publishing textbooks for primary education in mother tongue and distributing the books free of charge’ a Nepal Bhasa education activist shared. He was quite happy with the initiative of the CDC but complained of the speech community’s indifferent and lethargic attitudes saying ‘people complain about the government’s policy against single language priority. But many are not aware of the CDC’s initiatives that it provides texts books in different national languages or they do not go to collect the books from the CDC stores house.’<sup>232</sup> His complaint reminds me of an answer given by a Nepali Minister of

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2. Jhapa, Santhali and Rajbansi, Rastriyas Primary School (Kajali), 1-2.

3. Dhanakuta, Athapahariya Rai, Derali L. Secondary School (Sanhtang), 1-3.

4. Palpa, Palpa Magar, Nawa Jagrit Primary School (Dhairesni), 1-3.

5. Rasuwa, Rasuwa Tamang, i) Saraswati Primary School (Thade) and ii) Bhimsen Primary School (Thulokharka), 1-3.

6. Kanchanpur, Rana (Tharu), Rastriya Primary School (Dhektabhuli), 1-3

Source: Program Completion Report (2009) in Regmi (2011).

<sup>231</sup> NLRPC(1994:42-43).

<sup>232</sup> From the interview and further communication with a language activist, who campaigns for ‘Newar Schools in Newar habitation.’



Education in an informal interaction held in Tokyo during his official visit to Japan. In the interaction, the minister said ‘the Government of Nepal has recognized the right of diverse nationalities to promote and preserve their mother tongues and anyone can open schools in different mother tongues. But many have not yet used the opportunity provided by the government’ to my inquiry as to what was the government policy on education in MT other than Khas/Nepali. The minister’s response reflected the attitude of the speech communities that are still reluctant in responding to the changes of the law. However, there are two drawbacks in the CDC initiatives, too. Linguists such as Tejratna Kansakar and Yogendra P. Yadava have pointed them out as: First, these textbooks are direct translations from Khas/Nepali textbooks into other national languages hence ‘not suited to the cultural requirements of the minority communities. Secondly, a translated textbook with non-native content may not be easily accessible and motivating for the target learners’ (Kansakar 2007:8). Additionally, although the CDC provides textbooks, the government has yet to provide any funding support for the schools that have started MT education, while all schools regardless of community or government that teach in Khas/Nepali medium receive full or partial support either in funding or infrastructure or both.<sup>233</sup> Thus, despite the government taking several noteworthy initiatives with regard to language rights and MT education, several loopholes found in our study of the initiatives have hindered the government from fulfilling their commitments fully. I shall next turn to the language use in public service.

#### **6.1.4. Language Use in Public Service**

The next important area after education for the use of national languages is public services, which includes the administration, court and local offices. The diverse nationalities of Nepal have long been demanding the right to receive public services in their languages equal to services provided in Khas/Nepali by the administration, court and local offices. I shall explore in this section how several important public offices of the Government of Nepal have considered the importance of promoting linguistic diversity under their jurisdictions.

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<sup>233</sup> From interview with the principal of Jagat Sundar Bonekuthi primary school that teaches in Nepal Bhasa.

***a) National Planning Commission: Language in Planning***

National Planning Commission (NPC) is the highest government advisory body that formulates development plans and policies for the country under the directives of the National Development Council (NDC), the highest policy-level body in Nepal. Both the commission and the council are chaired by the prime minister. NDC membership comprises all cabinet ministers, all members of NPC, chairpersons of various parliamentary committees, district development committees, leader of the main opposition party, chairpersons of all national level political parties, president of Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and several nominated members from among intellectuals and representatives of the citizenry. As an autonomous government body, NPC serves as the secretariat of NDC and is also responsible for analyzing and finding solutions to the problems of civil societies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

NPC was established by the first democratic government under the chairmanship of the then prime minister in 1956. During the partyless Panchayat rule headed by King Mahendra from 1960, NPC's decision was considered equal to that of a cabinet decision. For the past 6 decades, NPC has formulated 10 5-year development plans and completed one 3-year plan in 2010. Since the political changes in 1990, NPC has given considerations to groups I would call 'politically marginalized and economically disadvantaged,' (PMED) groups that include persons with disabilities, women, *Dalit*,<sup>234</sup> *Adivasi Janajati*, *Madheshi*, Muslim community and disadvantaged regions in the country. Although a sound language policy is yet to be forthcoming, for the first time, NPC has incorporated several programs relating to PMED groups in its Tenth 5-year plan (1992-96). They included development of institutions, languages and cultures and human resources. Among them, 'indigenous students of backward and endangered minorities were to receive special incentives and stipends, and the people were to be trained in occupational and employment-oriented skills' (TYIP 2007-10).<sup>235</sup> However, NCP's TYIP review acknowledges that in its past development plan, the progress of those programs was worth very little for several reasons including the following:

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<sup>234</sup> *Dalit* (People considered as the lowest caste by *Brahman-Chhetri*), *Adivasi Janajati* (People of indigenous nationalities), *Madheshi* (People of Indian origin).

<sup>235</sup> Three Year Interim Plan (2007-2010).

- Appropriate programs and budget resources to deal with the education, health reform and preservation of languages and cultural heritage of endangered, marginalized and the highly marginalized and disadvantaged groups were lacking.
- There was no clear-cut policy directed to progressively identifying the valued traditional skills, technical knowledge, languages and inherent capabilities of *Adivasi Janajatis* (TYIP 2007-10: 120).

NCP carried forward the policies and programs that have been left incomplete in the preceding 10<sup>th</sup> 5-year plan (1992-96). In consideration of the interim condition of the government, NCP planned a Three Year Interim Plan in 2007. Among its 44 major policies listed for a 3 year period (TYIP (2007-10), NCP has committed that it ‘will abolish all the discriminations related to religion, language, and culture and special arrangements will be made for the protection, promotion and development of the languages and cultures of all the castes and *janajatis*’ (TYIP 2007:32). In its first 3 year interim plan, NPC endorsed provisions among its major programs below in order to preserve and promote the languages and cultures of the indigenous nationalities:

- Study and research of the native languages and cultures of endangered groups will be undertaken with a view to preserve and promote.
- Reference materials related to native languages, cultures and heritages will be prepared.
- Moribund or endangered languages will be recorded for their revival in the form of basic grammar and dictionary, audio/video.
- Institutional measures will be set up for the study and research of indigenous languages, philosophy and cultures.
- Under the Art and Culture Village, and cultural museums, objects of indigenous arts, cultures and heritages will be preserved and promoted (Clause 9E in TYIP: 2007).

The second 3 Year Interim Plan (2010-13) has already been launched from July 2011, whether the NPC’s commitment for its previous plan has accomplished is yet to be seen.

***b) Central Bureau of Statistics: Nepal Bhasa in Government Statistics***

The NPC also is responsible for compiling government statistics such as the national census of population and housing. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) under the jurisdiction of NPC conducts the survey every tenth year and publish the results. Although census taking has started in Nepal since 1911, the census taken in 1952/54 is considered to be the first modern census of Nepal. As a responsible organization which provides important statistics including the data of population, the users of census and other data results published by CBS are taken for granted as trustworthy. But a closure examination of its information in the past census of population, the CBS's information has been based first on the Government bias against the Nepal Bhasa, the mother tongue of the Newar indigenous people and the original language of Nepal. CBS has failed to use the correct name of Nepal Bhasa in their census particularly since its 1952/54 census, which the CBS claims as the first modern census in Nepal. The CBS has incorrectly published the name of Nepal Bhasa as 'Newari' in that census and continued to do so in its census 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1991. Second, the census of 2001 and onwards show that CBS is biased against Nepal Bhasa. The CBS published the name of Nepal Bhasa in its census of 2001 as 'Newar' and continues to do so until the last census of 2011. As far as I am aware there was no demand to change Nepal Bhasa into 'Newar.' The only known demand in the country is to rectify the past mistake of its name and call it Nepal Bhasa.

It is difficult to imagine whether CBS can be biased against a particular name like Nepal Bhasa. As noted in an earlier section of this study, the Government of Nepal has rectified 'Newari' into Nepal Bhasa in a Government directive issued in September 1995 and a reminder in November 1998. But CBS's continuation of publishing wrong nomenclature suggests one of the two possible factors. 1) Its publication of wrong name of the Nepal Bhasa was only a blissful ignorance. 2) It was a willful refusal to ignore even the Government directive, the rule of law. The CBS is following only Radio Nepal. But looking at the census of 2001 and 2011, the CBS seemed to be uncommitted to its responsibility to disseminate true information to the general public.

Next, I shall examine the Public Service Commission which is solely responsible for recruiting the nation's civil servants, and its language considerations.

***c) Public Service Commission: Khas/Nepali Compulsory***

Public Service Commission (PSC) is another important government agency which oversees recruiting civil servants for the entire country. Its duties involve advertising, planning and holding written and oral examinations to select meritorious candidates required by the Government of Nepal for various vacant posts in civil service. For the past six decades since its establishment on June 15, 1951, PSC has continued its recruitment of civil servants strictly from the dominant CHHE whose mother tongue is Khas/Nepali, or a few who have acquired standard knowledge of Khas/Nepali. It has the largest pool of such qualified applicants ready to fill state vacancies.

In response to the aspirations of people expressed in people's movement I and further consolidated in the second uprising in 2006, the Interim Constitution of 2007 replaced the previous one with revised provisions to suit the multicultural and multi-linguistic nature of the country. State organizations such as the National Planning Commission (NPC) revised provisions with suitable changes in their policies in consideration of those national language speakers who use something other than Khas/Nepali. Despite the Interim Constitution of 2007 designating the PSC as an independent constitutional body, it has yet to take any formidable steps to follow suit. True to its claim that its continuity since its establishment has never been hindered, PSC's policy on single language or 'Khas/Nepali only' has remained intact. None of its policies, directives and functions has any provisions for national languages other than Khas/Nepali. One sole change after 2007 is the content in the application form for examinations. The application form provides columns where one can enter one's religious belief, ethnicity/caste and mother tongue. The form also contains an unusual term of 'Vaisya' (i.e. middleman/trader one of the four main castes of Hinduism) in the column to be checked if one belongs to 'Vaisya,' which is hardly in use in any other forms elsewhere in the country. There is a grave possibility of misuse of this term by both the applicants and the recruiters, if not by the PSC itself. In examinations held by the PSC, the language being used is strictly Khas/Nepali and that custom has remained intact for the past 62 years, meaning that PSC held examinations and recruitments are all out-of-bounds for a large section of Nepali populace whose mother tongue is other than Khas/Nepali.

Thus, it remains to see whether the PSC will revise its single language policy in its recruitments in the future in consideration of those applications whose mother tongue is another national language than Khas/Nepali. For now, PSC continues to play a grave role in the maintenance of Panchayat constructed policy of ‘one state, one king, one religion, and one language’ policy, benefitting only the Khas/Nepali speaking Hindus at the expense of a large section of Nepali people belonging to diverse nationalities, religions and languages in multilingual Nepal.

***d) Judiciary on Language Issues: Stay the Order for Khas/Nepali***

The judiciary is an important and independent institution from which people in Nepal seek full justice and appropriate remedies for their predicaments. This section explores how the judiciary of Nepal or its important components, the courts of law, especially the Supreme Court, imparts justice, provides appropriate remedies and issues appropriate orders including the interpretation of the Constitution of the country. As the main purpose of this study is to understand language policy, I shall concentrate on how the Supreme Court gives consideration to language or policy issues. On the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, Article 107.2 in the Interim Constitution of 2007 articulates that:

The Supreme Court shall, for the enforcement of the fundamental rights conferred by this Constitution or for the enforcement of any other legal right for which no other remedy has been provided or for which the remedy even though provided appears to be inadequate or ineffective or for the settlement of any constitutional or legal question involved in any dispute of public interest or concern, have the extraordinary power to issue necessary and appropriate orders to enforce such right or settle such dispute. For these purposes, the Supreme Court may, with a view to imparting full justice and providing the appropriate remedy, issue appropriate orders and writs including the writs of *habeas corpus, mandamus, certiorari, prohibition and quo warrantor*.

Further Clause 3 of the same Article states that

The Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction as prescribed by law to try original cases, to hear appeal references, to revise cases or hear petitions.

Both of these clauses mean that the Supreme Court will exercise the power the Constitution has given to it and, with a view to imparting full justice and providing the appropriate remedy, issue appropriate orders and writs etc. The Supreme Court will also try original cases, hear appeal references, revise cases and hear petitions. Article 107.2

carries the same provision over from the last Constitution of Nepal, 1990. Notwithstanding these constitutional provisions for justice, there are occasions where the Supreme Court's verdicts fail to provide justice. For example, two verdicts the SC has given in the recent past, particularly with regard to the official use of languages, should provide us a better understanding of language policy in judiciary.

One was a writ petition submitted to the Supreme Court for a stay order against the requirement of Khas/Nepali language as a compulsory subject to answer the examination conducted by the Public Services Commission (PSC). In response, the Supreme Court not only turned down the petition but also upheld the PSC's compelling requirement of Khas/Nepali language as a compulsory subject in the examinations the commission holds as 'constitutional.'

In contrast, in another verdict, the Supreme Court upheld the petition for a stay order against the use of two national languages other than Khas/Nepali, in two municipal councils and a local office. The Supreme Court not only granted the stay order in favor of the petition but also ordered the two involved municipalities and the local office to immediately stop using national languages other than Khas/Nepali, returning its final verdict that the use of languages of Nepal other than Khas/Nepali are 'unconstitutional.'

The verdicts of the country's Supreme Court triggered outcry of opposition from the affected local communities, closing down the Kathmandu Valley the day after the verdict – June 1. The verdict day is commemorated today as the Black Day every year. Both these cases were taken up the moment multiparty democracy was reinstalled in 1990 during which fundamental rights, including the right to use mother tongues spoken in Nepal, were guaranteed in the Constitution of 1990. Two municipalities and a local office introduced the local language of each area in their offices as an additional language together with Khas/Nepali, not replacing the latter. In the central province, Kathmandu Municipality declared that it would revive Nepal Bhasa, the original language of the land and former state language. Several city and town councils in the Swanigah (Kathmandu valley) followed suit recognizing Nepal Bhasa as an additional official language together with Khas/Nepali. In the South, Janakpur City Council adopted the Maithil language and its adjoining Dhanusha District Office followed suit. The new moves were held by Newar in the valley and Maithil in the South. But the intimidators went to court. A vested interest

group submitted a petition to the Supreme Court against the use of national languages other than Khas/Nepali in these local offices. On March 18, 1998, the Supreme Court first issued a stay order preventing the Kathmandu Municipality from the use of Nepal Bhasa, and in its final verdict on June 1, 1999, the SC declared the use of local languages in the local bodies ‘unconstitutional.’ The two Supreme Court verdicts explain how language issues are taken up in the country’s judiciary.

Thus, the judiciary in Nepal has yet to realize the aspirations of the people of Nepal, who have sacrificed themselves for democracy, equal rights and justice shown through 3 uprisings in the past 6 decades. The first revolution in 1950 ousted the Rana oligarchy. The second one in 1990 reduced the subsequent autocratic monarchy into a constitutional one and the latest uprising in April 2006 abolished the monarchy. However, that these uprisings that have taken thousands of invaluable lives of innocent Nepali people seems to have yet to convince the dominant CHHE of the simple desires of the common people made up of diverse nationalities seeking equality, justice and peaceful lives. Chapter Eight is devoted to exploring the uprisings in Nepal.

### **6.1.5. Language in Mass Media: Towards a Change**

Mass media such as print media, radio, television and internet play an important role in facilitating and promoting language policy and practices of the State in countries where mass communication is under state control. In Nepal, besides the state run media organs, political changes in 1990 have facilitated opportunities for private media houses that included both print and electronic media to launch private newspapers, FM radios, television stations and internet service providers in the country, while the state run media revised its strict ‘Khas/Nepali only’ stance to some extent. The state run Gorkhapatra Corporation that had published national dailies only in Khas/Nepali and English, added a special two page supplement accommodating two other national languages every week in its Khas/Nepali daily newspaper, *The Gorkhapatra*. By 2008, Gorkhapatra had inserted supplements from 19 languages and had plans to publish supplements in 7 more languages.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Hundred days of People-elected National Unity Government, [*Khas/Nepali: Jananirvachit rastryiya sarkarko saydin*] Ministry of Information and Communication, Government of Nepal, December 3, 2008.



*The Gorkhapatra* the oldest Khas/Nepali daily had commenced as a weekly in 1901 and was incorporated as a public enterprise in April 1963. Since then it has run as a government mouthpiece. It was after the people's movement in 1990 that the new management accommodated the aforementioned 2 page supplement in the *Gorkhapatra* Khas/Nepali national daily. The supplement originally entertained many readers but its irregularity in publishing sequel supplements, and lack of archived versions, has lessened the interest of the subscribers.

Radio Nepal and Nepal Television, both state run media, also showed flexibility in their programs that had been run only in Khas/Nepali until uprising of the 1990 People's Movement. Soon after the success of the people's uprising, Radio Nepal first reinstated the news broadcasts in Nepal Bhasa and Hindi it had suspended some thirty years ago in line with the 'Khas/Nepali only' policy of the Panchayat regime. Radio Nepal established on April 1, 1951 initially transmitted programs for 4 hours and 30 minutes. It has now expanded up to 18 hours a day that includes 5.15 hours of regional broadcasts in the morning and evening. The station was originally started from Biratnagar during the struggle against Rana autocracy in 1950s. It broadcasted news programmes in Khas/Nepali, Nepal Bhasa and Hindi. As the Rana rule was ousted in 1951, Radio Nepal shifted to Kathmandu. But in 1961, the Panchayat regime suspended the radio programs in Nepal Bhasa and Hindi as it introduced partyless Panchayat rule banning all political parties and media in other languages than Khas/Nepali. Following the uprising in 1990, the first of several tasks carried out by the democratic government was to reinstate the Nepal Bhasa and Hindi programs on Radio Nepal. Later, it added programs in Sanskrit, Maithil, Bhojpuri, Tamang, Sherpa etc. However, time allocated for these languages is 5 minutes for news programs a day and 55 minutes of programming for the whole week which indicates the political changes in 1990 have yet to bear fruit on Radio Nepal. Radio Nepal's protracting refusal to implement the government directive to address the Nepal Bhasa correctly in its programs explains that laws are left at the discretion of the CHHE administrators.

Nepal Television (NTV) established in 1985 followed suit and added programs in several national languages after 1990. In its daily programs, NTV telecasts many programs that include, news, music, features, documentaries in Khas/Nepali and English; it

almost every day relays foreign movies in languages such as Hindi and Urdu. Compared to these programs, the time allocated to programs in Nepal's own national languages is nominal. For example, Nepal Bhasa programming is limited to a half an hour program on Sunday, which reflects the allocation for other languages. Meanwhile, all government websites provide information only in Khas/Nepali while only a few government agencies such as the foreign ministry provide information fully in English. Government online media does not reflect the reality of Nepal's linguistic diversity at all. Only the Khas community which consists of 44.6 percent of the total population enjoys the services provided by the government run mass media including newspapers, radio and television. Besides, the opportunities to open private newspapers, radio and television stations given by the government have not been that successful because of financial losses and content restrictions. Except for some FM radio stations, no private media has yet to emerge as successful in broadcasting programs in other national languages succumbing to Khas/Nepali language broadcasts, an indication that only the state language policy can change these circumstances.

## **6.2. Summing Up**

This chapter examined the single language policy of Nepal virtually known as the 'Khas/Nepali only' policy, a legacy of Panchayat version of 'One nation and one language' policy, which has remained intact for the past six decades. Advocates for the single language policy imply 'national unity' while others implicate 'Khas/Nepali hegemony' in multilingual Nepal as one of the main causes hindering equality and social justice to a large section of the Nepali population. This chapter also explored the constitutional provisions, recommendations by the government appointed commissions for education and language and how public services including NPC, CBS, PSC and mass media as to how these state institutions or the government agencies which serve the public have framed their language policies in response to public aspirations for linguistic diversity in Nepal. Several past constitutions have framed new constitutional provisions or replaced the old in order to promote the use of local/minority languages into national languages while keeping Khas/Nepali intact in its official position. But several important public service providers have remained unnoticed people's aspirations for betterment. While the state mouthpiece

the Radio Nepal has halfheartedly changed its apathy while the Judiciary and the PSC seemed they will take time to change. Other state agencies such as Gorkhapatra, NTV, CDC, DOE have accommodated the concept of multilingualism in their public services. But they need genuine efforts for providing a balanced service in other national languages as closer or as equal to the service they provide in Khas/Nepali. One point of reference is the EFA's praiseworthy project. However, the project's ultimate objective of imparting education in the dominant language after the completion of three year primary education hardly fulfills the government's responsibility of promoting linguistic diversity in education, let alone it's duties of promoting the use of national languages other than Khas/Nepali in administration and mass media.

What I have summarized above should provide a glimpse of the government's progressive efforts in promoting the linguistic diversity in Nepal against its 'Khas/Nepali only' policy. The summary also highlighted that those progressive efforts have yet to bring practical benefit for a major section of Nepali populace – the diverse nationalities of the country – other than the Khas community led by the CHHE. This suggests that it will not be so simple to mitigate the impact of Khas/Nepali only policy carried over by the CHHE as they have inherited century long power of Gorkha coercion, Rana repression and Panchayat autocracy. I shall explore the history of coercion, repression and autocratic rules and how subjugated Newar have resisted them in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **STATE SOCIETY RELATIONS: NEW RULERS & NATIVE NEWAR BACKGROUND ON THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT**

The term ‘state society relations’ refers to interaction between political society (the government) and civil society (citizenry) of a particular territory. In classical thought, both political society and civil society are part and parcel of a political community. But in modern thought political society is distinct from civil society. Gramsci also differentiates political society from civil society as he views the former as the domain of political institutions that are constitutionally controlled such as the police, the army, legal systems, etc, while civil society is in the private or non-state domain such as the family, the education system, trade unions, etc. However, Gramsci emphasizes that the two are different only conceptually; in reality, they overlap.<sup>237</sup> The difference is that political society rules with coercion and civil society consents to political society. In other words, ‘State’ refers to the ruler or ruling system while ‘society’ refers to the ruled people. I shall explore the state society relations between the new rulers (the Gorkhali) and the ruled (the Newar) in reference to Nepal Bhasa in this chapter. I shall document how state society relations between the two parties brought about conflicts and how they shaped the background for the Newar resistance movement during the past two centuries.

#### **7. 1. State Society Relations: The Native Newar and the New Gorkhali Ruler**

With the military occupation of Nepal by the new Gorkhali ruler in 1769, state society relations underwent unprecedentedly drastic changes in Nepal. The Newar people, for the first time, became the subjects of foreign rule inside their own native land. Their own rulers, the Malla kings of the three city-states, were eliminated by the Gorkhali army led by Prithvinarayan. From then and he and his successors ruled Nepal until May 2008. We shall see below how this relationship between the occupier and the occupied developed into during a period that lasted over a two hundred year long rule.

Rising from a chieftain<sup>238</sup> of the Gorkha principality nearby Nepal Mandala,

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<sup>237</sup> Gramsci (1992:160).

<sup>238</sup> Regmi (1961:258).

Prithvinarayan became the king of a sizeable territory of Nepal. As Churchill<sup>239</sup> has stated that the victors write the history books, some historians in Nepal have credited Prithvinarayan for the unification of Nepal Mandala with several petty principalities that existed in the east and the west into modern Nepal despite the meaning of unification differing from the meaning of occupation. Establishing the capital in Yen (Kathmandu), Prithvinarayan and his descendents continued their military expansion further east and west until an Anglo-Nepal war put an end to military expansion in November 1814. Recognizing the present territory of 147,181 square km, a peace treaty was signed between the British Raj and Nepal at Sugauli on December 2, 1815. Thus, with the conquest of Nepal Mandala, and elimination the Malla kings by the Gorkhali king, the Shah period began with Prithvinarayan as its first ruler in Gorkha Nepal.<sup>240</sup>

#### ***Advent of Support Base: CHHE over Newar Courtiers***

The Shah Period can be divided into two: the early period from 1769 to 1845 and the latter period from 1951 to 2008. This division is attributed to the Rana Oligarchy that ruled the country from 1846 to 1950 seizing executive power and keeping the king as titular head. Peoples' revolution launched against the Rana Oligarchy reinstalled the Shah monarchy into power in February 1951. The latter part of the Shah rule resumes afterwards and lasts until its abolishment in May 2008. Within these two centuries, the Gorkhali ruler and his descendants have constructed a ruling class of Caste Hill Hindu Elite Male (CHHE) as a support base for the sustenance of Shah rule. First, the Gorkhali ruler divided the courtiers into two groups: The newly appointed members from the immigrants who accompanied the Gorkha ruler, and those Newar courtiers who were retained by him to support the transition from the Malla administration of Newar kings to rule newly occupied Nepal. Secondly, the state language was replaced by Gorkha Bhasa. The term Gorkha derives from the tiny principality of Gorkha, which Prithvinarayan ruled. The language spoken in Gorkha was Khas Bhasa before Prithvinarayan changed it into Gorkha Bhasa. Third, Buddhist gurus (religious teachers) and Newar Brahmin advisors were replaced by Hindu Brahmin advisors in the palaces left by the Malla kings of Nepal Mandala. The military campaigns

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<sup>239</sup> Winston Churchill (1874-1965), a British orator, author and Prime Minister of Britain during World War II.

<sup>240</sup> Meaning the Gorkha occupied Nepal Mandala; Regmi (2007:512).

to expand Gorkha rule beyond Nepal Mandala were supported by the newly appointed advisors while recruiting men from the hills to support the war and the new administration. The army recruited men from Gorkha and other adjoining areas. They became one of the main source of expansion to Gorkha Bhasa, to the extent that it became the language of the state and the language of administration in the Constitution of Nepal promulgated in 1962. Thus the CHHE was a construction of these men from caste Hindu hill elite male.

### **7.1.1. Early Shah Period (1769-1845): The New Gorkhali Rulers**

The state society relations during the early Shah Period were based on the political ideology of the king and his subjects. The king treated the subjects differently depending on their loyalty. The loyal ones were rewarded with lands and properties while opponents were eliminated. Regmi describes how Prithvinarayan handled the relationship.

After the conquest of Bhatgaon<sup>241</sup> when Prithvinarayana<sup>242</sup> held complete sway over the Nepal Valley<sup>243</sup> he had to do certain things both pleasant and unpleasant to ensure [his] position as the ruler. Among the unpleasant things that he did there was the act of physical removal of all those persons in Patan<sup>244</sup> and Kathmandu,<sup>245</sup> who had plotted to overthrow their rulers and helped to facilitate the conquest of these kingdoms. [...] potential enemies from inside the camp of the valley rulers were thus eliminated. But Prithvinarayana also rewarded those whom he founded to be trustworthy and who had been by his side from the very beginning though they were helping secretly (Regmi 2007:223).

Regmi's attempt to blame the victims may be understandable from the victors' point of view but not from conventional or impartial historians'. Regmi is a well known historian of Nepal. But his remarks align him with the victor's camp. Regmi adds that Prithvinarayan 'seems to have amply paid the Brahman priests who were secretly helping him from Patan and Kathmandu courts. [...] They received free-holding of lands. Similarly religious leaders obtained munificence at his hands for their clandestine assistance' (ibid.:

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<sup>241</sup> Another name for Khopa (Bhaktapur).

<sup>242</sup> Historian Dr. Dilli Raman Regmi uses the written form 'Prithvinarayana' for conventional Prithvinarayan. But he does not follow the same rule for other toponyms such as Yen for Kathmandu, Yala for Lalitpur or Patan, Khopa for Bhaktapur, Bhatgaun etc.

<sup>243</sup> Nepal Valley is English name for Nepal Mandala.

<sup>244</sup> Another name for Yala (Lalitpur).

<sup>245</sup> English name for Yen (Kantipur).

223). Regmi cites a document prepared by Baburam Acharya, another noted historian about a land grant to a Buddhist temple in Kirtipur but reveals no name of the temple. Another source notes that ‘Shah king continued social and cultural affairs adopted by the Mallas but subsequent rulers adopted autocratic rule of direct control with support of the army and with minimal participation of society’ (Bajracharya: 1992 in Stokke et al: 2010: 11). According to Stokke et al, Prithvinarayan was tactful to have adopted the socio-cultural practices of the Mallas. The adoption of such practices was meant ‘for controlling state affairs which helped him win over Newar merchants and traders who held influence in the state affairs’ (ibid.).

As for the terms of State and society, the former must be understood as the rule of Prithvinarayan, the latter as the Newar, who he conquered and took control of. There was hardly any cordial relationship between the new ruler and the society of Newar people. Regmi records that the mass of people of Nepal Mandala were ‘very much fear-stricken’ by their new master, but Prithvinarayan had assured the people of their rights to religion and its traditional rites and practices. Regmi sees ‘Prithvinarayana had the best qualities to know how to best exploit the resources and talents. Thus, he was not only a valiant soldier but also a military general, not only an organizer but also a strategist’ (ibid: 258). Experts hardly disagree with Regmi about the military might of Prithvinarayan or of his strategies. Joshi (2011) confirms that ‘Prithvinarayan has left his everlasting impact on how he wanted to build this country. He replaced the thousand year old national calendar of Nepal Samvat with an Indian Saka Samvat calendar. He terminated the use of historical Nepal Bhasa and replaced it with Gorkhali;<sup>246</sup> and Nepal Lipi, the original script of Nepal with Indian Devanagari script. All these reflect in the coins struck during his rule. Although Prithvinarayan succeeds in promoting Indian Saka Samvat over Nepal Samvat and Indian script Devanagari over Nepal Lipi (script), he could not eliminate the Nepal Bhasa because it was in use for thousands of years by common people and in the royal courts of Nepal.’<sup>247</sup> Nepal Bhasa ‘was designated as *Desabhasa* [state language] or *Nepalabhasa* [language of

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<sup>246</sup> It is said that Prithvinarayan replaced the name of Khas Bhasa (language) into Gorkha Bhasa, Gorkhali etc. Gorkhali was again changed into ‘Nepali’ usurping from Nepal Bhasa the original language of Nepal. In this study, I use Khas/Nepali to mean those times. It is important to respect the original name, rather than usurping someone else’s name.

<sup>247</sup> From the interview with Chancellor Dr. Satya Mohan Joshi, who has received the highest award for his study about coinage, the first such study in Nepal.

Nepal] in inscriptions of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries’ (Regmi 1961: 220). Despite these changes, Nepal Bhasa was continued as both a spoken and written language in the courts of the Early Shah Period. King Rajendravikram Shah<sup>248</sup> during his reign provides an ample example of such practices at the royal court and outside. He is also credited with writing the well-known *Mahasatva Pakhyan*, a stage drama based on a Buddhist story in 1831. Thus, state society relations in the early Shah period can be summarized as consolidating newly gained power to keep the citizenry under control. During this period, the native Newar become subjugated to foreign rule, their language was discouraged while Nepal Lipi (script) and Nepal Samvat (calendar) of the land were discarded for the first time in the history of Nepal Mandala, now Nepal.

### **7.1.2. Rana Period (1846-1950): The Anarchy**

Rana rule began in 1846 with Janga Bahadur Rana taking over executive power, reducing the king to a titular head. He introduced a system of hereditary prime ministers from his family that would rule the country for 104 years (Stokke et al. 2010: 11). During this century-long rule, Rana prime ministers engaged in power struggles that led to conflict, conspiracy and even to murders of courtiers including the ruling family members. The Ranas were more concerned with consolidating their power than developing state society relations. Rana hereditary prime ministers followed an autocratic rule imposing strict rule and restrictions on language, culture and religion of the citizenry. The violators were fined, punished with harsh penalties from confiscation of properties to expulsion from the country the victims were born. These punishments only induced anarchy on the one hand and people to revolt against the autocracy on the other hand. As a result, the Rana Oligarchy was overthrown by the peoples’ revolution in 1950. However, the Ranas are also credited for their initiatives of a public service system. A closer look at their rule should provide us an understanding how they maintained state society relations during their 104 year rule.

Janga<sup>249</sup> Bahadur Kunwar, a young military officer in the royal court, seized power after taking advantage of conflict among the courtiers, and massacring all his opponents on September 1846. The event is recorded as ‘Kotparva’ (court massacre) in the

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<sup>248</sup> Rajendravikram Shah (1813-1881 AD) ruled from November 20, 1816 to May 12, 1847.

<sup>249</sup> Some spell as Jang, or Jung



modern history of Nepal. He took up the post of prime minister, reduced the king to a titular head and introduced a system of hereditary prime ministers limited to his family and generation. Janga Bahadur took up a Rana title to show his connection to Rajput royalty in India. The tactful Janga Bahadur also knew that his power would be sustained only if the British in India supported it. Hence, he developed a stronger relationship with the British Raj and provided military men to support their rule in India. Junga Bahadur had gone to England for about a year since 1856. While he was returning to Nepal, a mutiny broke out in India in (1857-8), he provided military men to fight the mutiny, for which Rana was rewarded by the British. Although Nepal was not involved in the war, the State was highly focused on military activities during the Rana Oligarchy (ibid.).

Further, Junga Bahadur issued a new country code in 1854 which was followed to penalize the people depending on their castes and the nature of their offenses. Referring to the code, Stokke et al. suggest that ‘the contradiction between equitable judgment and caste-based exemptions laid the foundations for state-society relations.’ They also credit the Ranas for initiating basic services such formal education in 1853, setup of a hospital in 1889 and electricity in 1911 (ibid.). Although those services were not opened for public benefit but limited to the Ranas and their children originally, the initiatives made the public aware of such services, which induced the citizen groups later to open libraries and schools to educate the public despite the government ban on such public initiatives. People involved not only in opening such institutions but those who wrote and published books were reprimanded, arrested and tortured by the Rana Government. Those who were charged with seducing the Rana Oligarchy faced property confiscation. Even the Buddhist monks were not spared. They were not only imprisoned for preaching Buddhism to people in the land of the Buddha’s birth but were also expelled twice. A closer examination of the Newar, the natives of Nepal Mandala, their language Nepal Bhasa and culture would reflect the repression of Rana, and how the anarchy ruled 104 long years.

### ***Nepal Bhasa under Rana Oligarchy***

As evident with the compilation of stage drama in Nepal Bhasa by a ruling monarch Rajendravikram Shah, Nepal Bhasa retained its official status of *Desabhasa* (state language) and *Nepal Bhasa* (language of Nepal). Despite it being discouraged after

Prithvinarayan's invasion in 1769, Nepal Bhasa remained a living language and was freely used by both common people and the royal family during the Early Shah period. Nepal Bhasa and its literature came under attack during the latter part of the Rana Rule.

Following the court massacre (*Kotparva*) and reduction of the ruling monarch to a titular king, the rise of the Ranas into power meant the repression of the citizenry. Historians pointed out that Nepal Bhasa suffered the most during Rana Rule and afterwards. According to Tuladhar (2000 A.D.), Nepal Bhasa was subjected to direct oppression of the Rana Government. 'With the start of Rana rule, whose motive was to keep the citizenry under control for the sustenance of their power, the Ranas imposed one hindrance after another on Nepal Bhasa and its literature. During their 104 year long autocratic rule, the second half turned out to be the most brutal one towards the Newar and their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa' (ibid.: 71).

First, Chandra Shumser,<sup>250</sup> the 5<sup>th</sup> hereditary Rana prime minister imposed restrictions on documents written in Nepal Bhasa, that such documents after 1906 would be rejected by the judicial court and government offices (ibid.: 79). This meant that thousands of documents from notes on borrowing and lending of money, agreements on properties to deeds of land the native people of Nepal possessed were made 'null and void.' The level of adverse effect of the imposition of this brutal restriction on documents written in Nepal Bhasa has not yet been assessed. (Despite my great interest in the matter, the scope of this study restricts my capacity and time to undertake such a venture. Therefore, I suggest a separate undertaking for that purpose.) However, the aim of the imposition of this restriction on documents written in Nepal Bhasa was 'crystal clear to destroy' Nepal Bhasa and the Newar (ibid.). The restriction affected not only reading and writing in Nepal Bhasa but also the whole education system of Nepal Bhasa diminishing the creation of literature in Nepal Bhasa. Nepal Bhasa scholars divide this period of repression that deterred the progress of Nepal Bhasa into two: 'Dark Period' or 'Pre-Renaissance' from 1847 to 1909, and 'Renaissance Period' from 1909 to 1941, during which Nepal Bhasa faced unprecedented strict restrictions (ibid.).

Secondly, the Rana Regime did not tolerate even hymns or simple verses of

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<sup>250</sup> Chandra Shumser ruled from June 27, 1901 to November 1929.

devotion written in Nepal Bhasa. Those who wrote some simple verses<sup>251</sup> of devotion to the deities they worshipped were arrested and admonished not to repeat writing in Nepal Bhasa. As a result, the use of Nepal Bhasa further decreased. The Newar working in the royal and judicial courts, and other offices, started to teach their children the Khas/Nepali as reading and writing in Nepal Bhasa were considered a kind of challenge to the Rana Government, and illegal as well. Thus, Nepal Bhasa fell into a pathetic situation, its existence endangered. According to Tuladhar (2000), it was at this juncture that several Nepal Bhasa writers rose to change the pathetic course of Nepal Bhasa which was about to take its last breath, and paved way for revival of Nepal Bhasa (ibid.). Learned Newar men came forward to contribute to the task. Among them, Pundit Nishthananda Vajracharya took up writing prose (belles-lettres) in spoken Nepal Bhasa in 1909 so that the readers would not have to read difficult written words and terms. He was compelled to print his first book in Indian Devanagari script because no Nepal script was available in print format. Other reason was that by then the Devanagari script had already been imposed in Nepal by both Shah and Rana rulers. Great poet Siddhidasa Mahaju introduced poetry in simple spoken language in 1906 so that the readers and listeners have no difficulty in reading classical old words. Master Jagat Sundar Malla emphasized the value of education in mother tongue and Yogabir Singh Kansakar shared his feelings of mother tongue and Buddhism to be promoted among the Newar. They were joined by two other activists such as Shukra Raj Shastri, who wrote grammar books of Nepal Bhasa for the first time and translated English books into Nepal Bhasa while Dharmaditya Dharmacharya initiated Nepali journalism through disseminating values of Nepal Bhasa, and their religion - Buddhism - in Nepal Bhasa. These efforts were individual and spontaneous, not organized, but paved the way for the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa literature at a later stage.

Thirdly, the Rana Regime was persistent in their repression to an extreme level. Rana rulers put every possible hardship on the use of Nepal Bhasa. They did not tolerate the publications in that language. They jailed many prominent writers of Nepal Bhasa. In 1939, suddenly editors and contributors to *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* (Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa), and *Nepali Vihara* were arrested and tortured for publishing articles and

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<sup>251</sup> Offering verses of devotion to deities is a religious tradition in Nepal. Copying canonical text is another practice considered meritorious in Buddhism.

poems in Nepal Bhasa. *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* was a quarterly that published articles on Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa literature, while *Nepali Vihara* was an anthology of nineteen short poems. The anthology was published in response to a small note sent by French historian Sylvan Levi to Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, the editor of *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa*. The note read:

I was so sad to see how you have abandoned the old language Nepal Bhasa without any care in the same way the children abandoned their old mother without any care.

Fatte Bahadur Singh, a Nepali poet and writer, was shocked to see this note. Having seen the note, Singh organized to publish an anthology of poems - *Nepali Vihara* - with contributions of poems in Nepal Bhasa by noted poets of the time. The Rana Regime arrested Singh for editing and publishing the anthology of poems and others for contributing poems to it. The government sentenced them to life imprisonment and tortured them on unspecified charges despite the defenders being originally charged for publishing the anthology of poems. It is also reported that various documents without any discrimination were confiscated from writers' homes. Rana rulers harsh control did not diminish the people's spirit, but instead induced patriotism towards their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa. Despite warnings, men of letters contested the repression reflected in the *Nepali Vihara* itself. A four-line editorial on the anthology of poems was enough reason for the Rana Government to punish the victims of the oppressive rule. The four lines read:

थौं मीगु रासयागु सम्मान दसँ ह्या बन्न	Respect for our language today is being erased
उकीयाग जवनजकिँ दव याना गल	It is high handedly being oppressed
झाळ्यिँ जीविग जया बन्नैँ अमिगु रासयाग	The speakers are still alive
थथे मृतरासया नामँ सञ्चान जया बन्न	But their language is considered dead <sup>252</sup>

The content of the anthology reflected the importance of Nepal Bhasa as a mother tongue. But in consideration of the time it was published, the *Nepali Vihara* is treated as a masterpiece in terms of the role it played when published against the repression of the Rana Government, rather than in terms of the contents of the publication (ibid: 106).

In 1941, the autocratic Rana government jailed again many writers and language activists and accused them of running underground organization such as *Praja Parishad*

<sup>252</sup> The Nepal Bhasa original editorial by Fatte Bahadur Singh in the *Nepali Vihara* cited in Tuladhar (2000:330). The English translation is mine.

(People's Council - 1936), *Nepal Nagarik Adhikar Samiti* (Nepal Citizens' Right Committee - 1937) and attempted sedition. The government charged leaders for their alleged involvement in opening a library (1930) and Mahaveera School (1940) and instigating the people against the Rana Regime. Those who were arrested on the above charges included Gangalal Shrestha, Dharmabhakta Mathema, Shukraraj Shastri, Dasharath Chand, Tanka Prasad Acharya<sup>253</sup>, and Ganesh Man Singh.<sup>254</sup> Others arrested and imprisoned on charges of violating the ban on languages included prominent poets and writers of Nepal Bhasa Yogbir Singh Kansakar, who headed a committee which petitioned the government for permission to open a library, but was arrested and fined; Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, the editor and publisher of *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa*; Fatte Bahadur Singh for editing and publishing the *Nepali Vihara* anthology of poems; Chittadhara Hridaya for writing a poem about his mother; Siddhicharan Shrestha for writing a poem titled 'Out of Revolt, Out of Peace.'<sup>255</sup> Of these arrested, the first four above were martyred within four months by the order of the Rana Government. Others were outcasted by 'feeding pork' and 'shaving their head.' As Kansakar was old and fell ill inside the prison, he was released after three months but died soon after his release. Among others, some were sentenced to life imprisonment, while others faced property confiscation.

Fourth, Rana rulers go down in the world history as probably the sole authority who not only harassed but also banished Buddhist monks for preaching the peace taught by the Buddha, who was born in Nepal itself. Rana Regime arrested writers and editors of Nepal Bhasa books and magazines on the one hand and expelled the Buddhist monks out of Nepal in 1924, on the other. The expelled monks were Mahapragyan, Mahachandra, Mahagyana, Mahakshanti, Mahaveerya. Some went to India while others went to Tibet. Except Mahapragyan, there is no record of other four monks, whether they ever returned to Nepal afterwards.

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<sup>253</sup> Member of Praja Parishad who became prime minister (1956-1957) after the revolution in 1950.

<sup>254</sup> He started his political career as a member of Praja Parishad, the first political party, and later championing democracy with the Nepali Congress became a minister in the government formed after the first election in 1959. Later he became the Supreme Leader of Nepali Congress commanding the peoples' movement in 1990. He is known to have been the only Nepalese who refused to become prime minister at the request of both the king and the people.

<sup>255</sup> My translation from Nepal Bhasa original "ब्रान्नि विना दळ्मस्व थन शान्नि"

The Rana Regime concluded that there could be no further teachings of Buddha or Nepal Bhasa activism under their rule, as they had locked up and harassed the Nepal Bhasa writers and expelled the Buddhist monks out of Nepal. But to their surprise, they found another group of monks teaching Buddhism in Nepal Bhasa, and another lay group promoting Buddhism through *Bhajans* (hymns). In 1935, a group of devotees who visited to worship the Swayambhu *stupa* (pagoda) every morning started a practice of reciting hymns at the foot of the pagoda for awhile after their worship and circumambulating the pagoda. They believed that circumambulating the pagoda by wheeling the *Mani Mandala* is equal to chanting of the sutras. And reciting hymns in one's own language, Nepal Bhasa, attracted more people both young and old to join the recital of hymns. The gathering enlarged day by day that they formed a *Gyanamala Bhajan Mandala* (Hymn Chorus Group), and started publishing hymns in Nepal Bhasa while distributing the books free of charge or selling them at nominal fees. Meanwhile, several monks (*Bhikkhu*) that included Karmaseela (later Pragyananda <sup>256</sup>) Dhammaloka, Subodhananda, Pragyashmi, Shakyanda, Amritananda, Aniruddha, Sumangala, were preaching the Buddha's teachings to the devotees visiting their viharas (temples). Their teachings in soft spoken peaceful voices attracted more devotees day by day. Their writings of Buddhism<sup>257</sup> in Nepal Bhasa also attracted a larger readership.

Both the lay chorus group and monks were engaged in sharing Buddhism with devotees. No sooner the Ranas came to know of these religious activities, they ordered the arrest of all the members of *Gyānamāla Bhajan Mandala* in 1943 while the Buddhist monks were expelled for the second time out of Nepal on charges of preaching Buddhism in Nepal Bhasa on August 15, 1944. The Rana regime let the nuns stay behind but forced them to sign statements that they would neither conduct religious activities nor preach Buddha's teachings in Nepal Bhasa. At the time of expulsion, the monks were observing a

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<sup>256</sup> Later, Bhante Pragyananda was appointed Sangha Mahanayaka (His Holiness Chief Prelate, the Great), the highest rank in the order of monks in Nepal, followed by Bhante Sakyananda, Bhante Subodhananda as Sanghanayaka (Chief Prelate), and Kumara Kassapa as Upa Sanghanayaka (Deputy Chief Prelate), the second highest rank among the monks. The tradition of appointing Sanghanayaka began after Bhante Amritananda was appointed Mahanayaka (another term for chief prelate) of Nepal by the Buddhist Order of Monks in Sri Lanka.

<sup>257</sup> Amritananda (1942), *Grihagyanadarshana*; Amritananda and Dhammaloka (1942), *Gyanamala*; Karmaseela (1942), *Visuddha gyanadarshana*; Karmaseela (1941), *Buddhopadesa*; Karmaseela (1941), *Dhatuvedananupassana*.

*Vassāna* retreat (observing rainy retreat). In terms of Buddhist tradition, monks in a *Vassāna* retreat are required to stay where they have been invited for the purpose of practicing and preaching Buddhism. They were forced to disrupt the religious observation by the government's order of forced expulsion. This sort of disruption is an unheard of event perhaps in over 2500 years of Buddhism. The monks expelled included the first four monks in the aforementioned group, and junior monks (*Sāmanera*) Pragyarasa, Ratnajyoti, Aggadhamma, Kumara (later Kumara Kassapa). Meanwhile, the lay members of the Swayambhu choir were imprisoned for one year. The expelled monks went to Chatgaon, India (now Chittagong in Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Burma (now Myanmar) etc. The monks who went to India formed Dharmodaya Sabha, which became active in looking after other monks and propagating Buddhism through publications from an Indian base.

Finally in 1945, the political situation changed for the positive. Eighteen jailed Nepal Bhasa activists were released gaining freedom to publish what they had created inside the prison. The brutal ruler Juddha Shumser was replaced by Padma Shumser. At the same year, a Buddhist delegation led by Narada Mahathero<sup>258</sup> met with Padma Shumser and requested that the expelled monks be allowed to return to Nepal, and provided a facility to use Nepal Bhasa inter alia. As a result of this delegation, the monks returned and the post office which had blocked many imported books returned to monks. The *Gorkha Bhasa Prakashan Samiti* (Gorkha Bhasa Publication Committee) appointed Khadgaman Malla as the controller and opened a department to pass both Khas/Nepali and Nepal Bhasa books. The first Nepal Bhasa book the GB Publication Committee published was *Narada Moha* by Ratnadhaj Joshi (Tuladhar 2000: 113).

Thus, state society relations during the Rana rule were based on autocracy that consolidated the state power by the Rana rulers. They kept the common people strictly under control. Nepal Bhasa and its native speakers suffered under the repressive Rana Government. An armed revolution organized by the Nepali Congress and supported by the Newar inter alia and the exiled King Tribhuvan, India and Burmese (Myanmar) socialists ultimately brought down the Rana Autocracy on February 18, 1951.<sup>259</sup> The day began to be celebrated as the Day of Democracy (*Prajatantra Divas*) since then.

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<sup>258</sup> A respectable Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka, who mentored many people that included late president J. R. Jayawardane.

<sup>259</sup> (Falgun 7, 2007 V.S.).

## **7.2. Democratic Governance: Three Phases of Transition**

Nepal experienced its first taste of democracy in 1951 after the revolution overthrew the 104-year-long autocratic rule of the Ranas. The power of governance was shared by the defeated Rana rulers, the reinstated king and the political parties for a decade. But the people reinstated monarchy under the titular king from Rana repression; he emerged to seize state power in 1960 pushing the country back to autocracy for three long decades. Since then, several attempts of peoples' movements to institutionalize democracy have so far failed, leaving the country in transition. As a result, cultural pluralism, linguistic diversity and economic progress have stagnated. Hence, in examining the democratic period of governance in Nepal, I shall divide the democratic period into three transitional phases as Early Democracy (1951-60), Multi-party Democracy (1990-2008), and Inclusive Democracy (2008-2012). I shall also document the events of Panchayat governance that ruled Nepal in between these phases of transition.

The Early Democracy phase can be referred to as a decade of transition that attempted to institutionalize democratic norms under a new governance system after the Rana Oligarchy was overthrown. Consequently, a democratic system of governance was established on February 18, 1951 as the first phase of transition. The second phase can be referred to as a period that saw the end of the direct rule of autocratic monarchy also known as the Panchayat Government in 1990, and the advent of a period that practiced multi-party democracy until 2008. The third phase can be referred to as a period that saw the end of 239-year-long autocratic monarchy in May 2008. It gave Nepal a taste of inclusive democracy until 2012. All these transitional phases of democracy are analogous in one way or other as the political players failed to consolidate democratic rule. One difference is that phase 2 saw a new constitution promulgated which quickly proved to be a failure. Players of both phases 1 and 3 failed to draft the people-aspired constitutions despite having the mandate of the people. Several governments formed in all these phases were ineffective. In the case of phase 2, the political players failed though they had a people-given mandate to rectify various ills. Finally, all in all, in the first phase, the people written constitution was discarded but a 2 member drafted constitution was adopted before the general election. In 1959, the first general election was held and the Nepali Congress won with an overwhelming majority. But on December 15, 1960 'King Mahendra



dismissed the government with the help of the army' (Stokke et al.: 2010: 12). The second phase saw similar failures. Several governments formed were ineffective. Similarly, phase 3 failed to draft the intended new constitution despite the CA term extending for 2 additional years. We shall now look at these 3 phases of transition in some detail.

### **7.2.1. Early Democracy Period (1951-1960): The Taste of Basic Rights**

Despite the failure to establish democratic rule in phase 1 of Nepal's transition, a closer examination of state society relations during this period will find a new but gradual development of institutionalization of democratic norms.

First, the advent of democracy in 1951 provided greater freedom in politics, economics and journalism as well as linguistics. Advocates of democracy and political parties became openly active and published newspapers. *Awaj*<sup>260</sup> (meaning 'voice'), the first daily newspaper in Khas/Nepali (during the democracy) was published on February 19, 1951 within 24 hours of the official proclamation of democracy<sup>261</sup>. It was edited and published by Siddhicharan Shrestha who was jailed by the Rana Government in 1941. The publication of *Awaj* contributed to initial stage of modern journalism in Nepal. It inspired interest in journalism and the publication of newspapers and journals thereafter. In 1952, *Mahila* (women) was edited and published by Sadhana Pradhan and Kamakhcha Devi as the first female journalists in Nepal. They were followed by the publications from one newspaper or journal to another not only in Khas/Nepali but also in Nepal Bhasa, Hindi and English. By 1961, there were 170 newspapers published in the country, expanding into several categories such as news-oriented dailies; view-oriented weeklies; half weeklies and fortnightlies; language-and-literature-oriented monthlies and bimonthlies; house journals such as publications of parties and other institutions; and the government publications (ibid.). The publications included 35 party mouthpieces which were mostly weeklies.

Further, the establishment of democracy during the Early Democracy period also resulted in the development of radio transmissions in Nepal. The state Radio Nepal was formally established in Kathmandu with its first broadcast on April 2, 1951 two months after the revolution established the democracy by defeating the 104 year old Rana

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<sup>260</sup> The paper was published daily for two consecutive years.

<sup>261</sup> NPI (February 16, 2010).

Oligarchy. The radio broadcast played an important role in mobilizing people against Rana's autocratic rule. One of the first transmissions is credited to Narad Muni Thulung and Jayandra Bahadur Thapalia who sent out a radio frequency for the first time in Nepal from Bhojpur in November 1950. Another – the 'Radio Prajatantra' (Radio Democracy) was started by Tarini Prasad Koirala from Biratnagar down in a southeastern city. The Prajatantra Radio was later shifted to Kathmandu and established as the state-owned Radio Nepal. Thus, the Early Democracy period saw noteworthy contributions in the establishment of some democratic norms. These efforts also helped reduce the repercussions the citizenry had endured during the century-long Rana Autocracy. I shall next look at the practices of democratic norms; how they were set forth and how the citizenry benefited. We shall examine this matter in reference to Nepal Bhasa, the language of the land.

### ***Nepal Bhasa in the Early Democracy Period***

As democracy marked a new dawn in the country's history on February 18, 1951, many Newar writers were relieved from the oppression they had endured during the Rana Regime. They made use of the opportunity to publish books, magazines and newspapers. During this period, Nepal Bhasa was given commendable recognition in mass media, education and in public services. I shall explore that recognition in some detail.

First, in 1953, a fortnightly newspaper *Pasa*<sup>262</sup> (meaning 'Friend') in Nepal Bhasa was published. Its editor and publisher was Asharam Shakya, who was active in politics as a Nepali Congress member and became a professor at the Tribhuvan University later (Shakya: 2008: 68). Two years later on Oct. 2, 1955, daily newspaper *Nepal Bhasa Patrika* (Nepal Bhasa Journal) was published by its editor Phatte Bahadur Singh<sup>263</sup>. The journal mainly aimed at promoting Nepal Bhasa and its culture. It also covered other important spheres such as Nepali business (Rose 1971: 211).

Second, radio program and news in Nepal Bhasa were officially launched. The state-owned Radio Nepal began to broadcast news in Nepal Bhasa once everyday. This was

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> A poet and writer both in Nepal Bhasa and Khas/Nepali, and grandson of Great Poet Siddhidas Mahaju. He faced imprisonment under Rana regime for publishing *Nepali Vihara*.

a continuation of the radio broadcast initiated from Biratnagar during the revolutionary days. The radio broadcast in Nepal Bhasa during the revolutionary days mobilized the Newar of Nepal Mandala, who took to the street in support of the Peoples' Revolution for democracy. The Newar citizenry considered the continuation of news broadcast in Nepal Bhasa as democratic government's reciprocation to their support for the revolution. Later, a literary and culture oriented program *Jeevan Daboo* (Life's Stage) also began airing every week.

Third, importantly, Nepal Bhasa received long-due recognition in the education sector. In response to the Nepal Bhasa advocates, the government and educational institutes recognized it as an alternative medium of instruction, as a subject of oriental language as well as an optional subject. Consequently, Nepal Bhasa was introduced as a curriculum subject in schools and colleges. According to Hoek and Shrestha, 'Nepal Rastriya Vidyapeeth [Nepal National Academy] recognized Nepal Bhasa as an alternative medium of instruction in its affiliated schools and colleges. In 1953, the government recognized Nepal Bhasa as a subject of oriental language, while the Nepal Educational Council adopted it as an optional subject' (Hoek at el.:1995:75). By 1954, Nepal Bhasa was introduced as a subject offered from grade six to ten in high schools inside the Kathmandu valley. It was gradually introduced in a higher level of studies: In 1960 at the intermediate level and in 1962 at the bachelor level. Within two decades, 'Nepal Bhasa was widely taught in schools and colleges in the Kathmandu Valley and other parts of Nepal with thousands of students studying it as an optional subject' (ibid.)

Fourth, most importantly, Nepal Bhasa received recognition as a language in public services. In 1958, Kathmandu Municipality passed a resolution that it would accept applications for services at its offices, and publish major decisions in Nepal Bhasa in addition to the Khas/Nepali language.<sup>264</sup> Thus, the Early Democracy period, otherwise the known as phase 1 of Nepal's transition to democracy, saw an unprecedented sound state society relation, though it was short lived.

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<sup>264</sup> *Sandhya Times* (July 1, 1997).

### **7.2.2. Panchayat Period (1961-1990): Return to Autocracy**

The state society relation during the Panchayat period was based on the relationship between ‘the king and his subjects.’ Panchayat period refers to a three decade long rule of Nepal by a partyless governance known as the Panchayat system from 1961 to 1990. The Panchayat system was instituted by King Mahendra, who provided people the right to vote, but the power remained in his hands. Though autocracy was discarded by the peoples’ revolution in 1950-51, King Mahendra’s consolidation of power within a short period of time induced him to return to autocracy. I shall explore how state society relations were maintained during the Panchayat period with a focus on some major events such as King Mahendra’s political move, his imposition of Khas/Nepali on the non-Khas/Nepali speaking population and his promotion of Hinduism at the expense of Buddhism and other religions.

First, as we saw in Chapter Two, King Mahendra’s coup d’état that dismissed a democratically elected government, imprisoned the sitting prime minister and his ministers and banned the political parties was not a democratic practice. This was neither the first event in Nepal nor in South Asia or beyond. However, the significance of the event was that it took place soon after the introduction of democracy for the first time in Nepal after the century-long Rana repression. As a son of the titular king, Mahendra could have experienced the oppression in the palace prison had he failed to empathize with the people who had long been subjected to Rana oppression, who resisted, sacrificed and finally fought the tyranny. The coup d’état was not mounted by another army officer like Janga Bahadur in 1846, from when Mahendra’s forefathers were forced to become titular kings. It was the reigning monarch himself that mounted the royal coup d’état to dismiss, not another Rana Regime, but a democratically elected government for the first time in the history of Nepal. But King Mahendra’s coup d’état received not only the backing of the country’s army but also the silent support of the people, who could do nothing but to accept the events reminding them of what happened in 1768 when the armed Gorkhali force led by Prithvinarayan rounded up the religious procession in honor of the Living Goddess (Kumari) and the merrymaking Newar people of Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley), who either ran away or looked on unable to utter a word. However, the difference between these two events was that Prithvinarayan was not the king of Nepal when he launched the war on the unarmed Newar. But Mahendra was already the king of Nepal when he

mounted the coup d'état in 1961 against his own government led by a leader elected by the people. The charges he made against the incumbent prime minister were 'corruption, inefficiency and anti-national activities'<sup>265</sup> though there was no free trial ever held against the accused as such. The State, run by King Mahendra in the name of the Panchayat; the society, represented by diverse nationalities; and both political and apolitical forces were in conflict for some time. But the society was powerless to face state power backed by armed forces. Some political parties afflicted by the Panchayat ban either left the country, went underground or crossed over to the Panchayat system. Others joined together with the Nepali Congress propounded first with non-violent struggle against the new order and launched violent action later along the Indian border. But the insurgency failed to garner support especially from India. Unexpectedly, India was at war with China, a conflict erupting on October 20, 1962 over a border dispute. India had to withdraw support to Nepali insurgents and establish closer relations with the king of Nepal. Four years later in October 1968, the political prisoners were released. But by that time the Nepali Congress had disintegrated into three factions only to put aside the struggle against the Panchayat system. 'The disunity of the political opposition left King Mahendra to do as he wished' (Savada 1991).

Mahendra represented the State as the king. He took Nepal, a society of diverse nationalities, as his 'subjects' despite the people already enjoying the taste of freedom and dignity under the democracy period. But the Mahendra regime retracted the democracy and enacted his own version of 'partyless democratic Panchayat system'<sup>266</sup> through which he exercised the sovereign powers against the conventional democratic system. He claimed that sovereign powers and prerogatives were inherent in him, not with the people. He declared:

I, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva, in exercise of the sovereign powers and prerogatives inherent in Us according to the constitutional law, custom and usage of Our country as handed down to Us by Our August and Revered Forefathers, do hereby enact and promulgate this Constitution (ibid.)

The political move King Mahendra took not only by dismissing the people-elected government but also imprisoning the prime minister, his cabinet ministers and party leaders

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<sup>265</sup> From personal communication with a journalist VPK (December 2013).

<sup>266</sup> The Constitution of Nepal (1962).

was a gross violation of the rights of the people, political parties and the government elected through general election. But this was not the first damage Mahendra had caused to state society relations. Since he succeeded his late father, he differed from what his father had agreed to with the people concerned: To hold a constitutional assembly election to draft a people-aspired constitution for parliamentary democracy in Nepal. He did not believe that Nepal could afford parliamentary democracy in a country where he presumed that the percentage of literacy was just 16% and most of its population was poor. He flatly rejected the urging of B. P. Koirala, the president of the Nepali Congress, when they met before the first general election in 1959. Koirala persuaded the king to hold the election for Constituent Assembly (CA), which would allow people to write the constitution by themselves. Asharam Shakya,<sup>267</sup> who accompanied B. P. Koirala to see King Mahendra has recorded the conversation between the king and Koirala as below:

Your Majesty, you must be bold enough to be magnanimous in having election for the Constituent Assembly.’ The king firmly replied that it would never be possible in such a poor and illiterate country. The talks could not make any progress. Both of them kept their stands unmoved.<sup>268</sup>

Writing in his aide-memoire, Shakya has recalled how King Tribhuvan<sup>269</sup> had approved the holding of an election for the CA through which he sought to implement a full fledged parliamentary democracy. King Tribhuvan had bitter experiences under Rana repression as he was kept a titular king for 39 long years. Hence he eschewed autocracy in favor of parliamentary democracy. But he did not live to see it. His son’s experience seemed different from his own though Mahendra also lived together with his father in the palace prison under the Rana Regime. He seemed to have been influenced by the coercive rule of the Rana Regime. His use of the army to dismiss the people-elected government and imprison the country’s elected prime minister attested to it. This coercive policy remained throughout the Panchayat Period.

Second, the imposition of a single language as the ‘national language’<sup>270</sup> turned

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<sup>267</sup> Member of Nepali Congress, who later became professor in English at Tribhuvan University, and engaged in socio-cultural activities rather than politics. He was the general secretary of the Dharmodaya Sabha that organized the special Buddha’s relic exhibition in Nepal soon after democracy was established in 1951.

<sup>268</sup> Shakya (2008:68).

<sup>269</sup> King Mahendra’s father

<sup>270</sup> The term here meant both the ‘state’ and the ‘official’ language as other languages have been ignored officially.

out to be another coercive policy for the non-Khas/Nepali speaking population. It affected entire lives of people from childhood to adulthood. The children were obliged to learn, speak and receive education in Khas/Nepali at the expense of their own mother tongue. The obligation to learn a foreign language (Khas/Nepali) instead of one's mother tongue in early childhood deprived the children from learning their mother tongue. This very fact hindered the development of the language of the children. Even when learning Khas/Nepali, the non-Khas/Nepali children were either reprimanded by the teachers or humiliated by Khas/Nepali peers for their failure to properly pronounce the Indo-Aryan sounds of Khas/Nepali. For example, Newar children often fail to pronounce two different sets of Khas/Nepali letters such as *ta, tha, da, dha, na* as there are no spoken vocabulary pronounced in two different sounds in Nepal Bhasa. Nepal Bhasa alphabet does consist of two sets of said letters. They are used to write only loaned or foreign words deriving from Sanskrit or English in general. But the Khas/Nepali-speaking teachers easily found the faulty pronunciation a reason to fail the non-Khas/Nepali speaking children in language lessons. Pierre Bourdieu explains this problem as bodily-hexis in his concept of linguistic habitus (Thompson 1991:17). Bodily-hexis refers to differences of accents of agents in speeches which reflect different social backgrounds. The imposition of Khas/Nepali deprived the non-Khas/Nepali speakers from opportunities in the linguistic market as they failed to compete with Khas/Nepali speakers because of their faulty pronunciation. Therefore, despite the former being forced to learn the latter's language, the former fails to compete at the Khas/Nepali linguistic market with its linguistic products such as accents, moving the tongue, the lips, etc. On the other hand, some children achieve competency in Khas/Nepali, and they tend to lose competency in their own linguistic product, or in language fluency. This attests that the 'Khas/Nepali only' policy imposed by Panchayat regime has benefitted Khas children only, not the non-Khas/Nepali children of wider population of the country. This also suggests that the children fare or compete better in their own mother tongue. The imposition of 'Khas/Nepali only' affects the children throughout their lives. Most non-Khas/Nepali children give up learning Khas/Nepali after Grade 10, which in turn hinders their access to government jobs. The government jobs require all applicants, Khas/Nepali speaker or not, to pass the compulsory Khas/Nepali subject at the special pre-job qualification examination held by the Public Service

Commission (PSC) (See 6.1.4.c.). PSC is another state authority instituted by the Panchayat Government that promotes the Khas/Nepali and their community at the expense of other languages in this country. There are a good number of non-Khas nationalities that have passed the examination of Khas/Nepali of the PSC. But they have become not only competent in Khas/Nepali but also lost their literacy in their mother tongues. Both the compulsory Khas/Nepali education policy and the Public Service Commission's compulsion have constructed a new class or segment which I would call 'mother tongue illiterate class (MTIC)' in every non-Khas community in the country. The MTIC elites behave like the CHHE or aspire to imitate them though the aspirants retain their family name which still identifies which community they belong to. The Panchayat induced people to change their surname. Among the Newar, there are three patterns of changing surnames. One: To drop the surname and use the middle name as surname. Example: Kamal Jyoti (after dropping the surname 'Sthapit'). Two: To replace one's surname with an entirely different one. Example: Rajbhai Shrestha (after replacing the surname 'Maharjan' with a new surname 'Shrestha'). Three: To partition the long surname name into two and use the last part as surname. Example: Jagat Raj Bhandari (after partitioning the surname 'Rajbhandari' into two and indicating the last part as surname).<sup>271</sup> These patterns of changing surnames are attributed to two factors. One, the official hindrance or objection to the use of Newar surnames. The supreme leader of democracy Ganesh Man Singh Shrestha's surname 'Shrestha' is neither used by the government nor by his family in public. The discriminatory practice was carried over from the Rana Period to the Panchayat Period while its legacy still persists today. This discriminatory practice was started with the exclusion of surnames of three Newar freedom fighters martyred in 1941 by the Rana Autocracy. The government authority, historians and the mass media have continued excluding these three Newar surnames of the four martyrs: Ganga Lal ('Shrestha' is excluded), Shukra Raj Shastri ('Joshi' is excluded), Dharma Bhakta ('Mathema' is excluded). But the fourth martyr's name, Dasarath Chand, is used as it is because he is a 'Thakuri.' A 'voluntary' reason for excluding one's own surname is apparently fear of refusal, losing jobs or opportunities. Many examples attest to this. Many Newar singers used only their first and middle names for fear that their songs would not be aired by the

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<sup>271</sup> These names are pseudonyms.



state radio during the Panchayat Period. The discrimination persisted throughout the 3-decade long Panchayat Period. Famous singers of the Panchayat Period such as Taradevi, Narayan Gopal, musicians such as Kancha Buddha, Ratna Behoshi were not known they were Newar artists until democracy was restored in 1990.

Third, the impact of the imposition of Khas/Nepali in education, public services and the media was such that some are reluctant to speak their mother tongue among peers in public. This is particularly so with some elite Newar, who have held higher positions in the government. I was reluctant to believe this truth until I personally underwent the new experience after several encounters with a highly respectable ambassador of Nepal for a well known country in Asia. Responding to a cordial invitation by the ambassador for a national day public party at his official residence, I joined the party with several peers of both Newar and Non-Newar Nepalis to exchange greetings. At the first encounter, I greeted the ambassador in Khas/Nepali as it has become a habit to use Khas/Nepali when there are Nepalis from different linguistic background together. After awhile everybody was settled chatting with friends and acquaintances while the ambassador found free time to go through a supplement appeared about the national day on the newspaper, several of us got the second opportunity to talk with the ambassador. As he is a Newar and others around me were also Newar, I spoke to him in Nepal Bhasa. He was so polite when he said ‘do not speak to me in Newari.’ Although ‘Newari’ is a derogative term for Nepal Bhasa, we still had a ‘friendly’ chat for a short while. It was not any special surprise to me as I can presume that he finds it difficult to use Nepal Bhasa for the reason that he received his education in Khas/Nepali and served as a high-level government officer. The circumstances of the country made him another MTIC, who deserved sympathy. But he proved my presumption completely wrong several months later. I met the ambassador at several occasions and our conversation often resumed either in Khas/Nepali or in English, another habit we South Asians have inherited. But the new occasion in question was an unexpected private encounter. I happened to accompany a guest couple from Nepal to see the ambassador as the male guest, I was told, was a cousin to the ambassador. We met in front of a well-known park in the metropolis. We arrived near the park half-an-hour later than we expected. I apologized for the delay as I was responsible for my miscalculation of the time. Both the guest couples spoke to the ambassador in Nepal Bhasa. To my greatest

surprise, the ambassador reciprocated in Nepal Bhasa and urged us to hurry as the park was closing. The ambassador hurried walking in the park while chatting with the male guest while his wife and I followed the two cousins who went on chatting in Nepal Bhasa. Having left the park, the ambassador offered coffee at a Pizza Hut nearby the park. During the meeting and conversation among the three relatives at the Pizza Hut, I was more or less a listener smiling or nodding at times than a joiner as their conversation developed into a family talk. But when I got the opportunity to join the conversation, I expressed my unexpected surprise at his communication with his cousins in Nepal Bhasa without any difficulty. He also told us how he had participated in the Nepal New Year celebrations in Kathmandu and about his acquaintance with Newar leaders like Dr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar and several others. The conversation went on in a friendly atmosphere until the end. As we were bidding good bye, I could not thank him more for his coffee and friendly manner, I said 'It was a pleasant surprise that you spoke Nepal Bhasa, Mr. Ambassador.' 'Yes, this is also the first time I was able to talk with you in Nepal Bhasa' he replied diplomatically but comfortably.

The whole encounter suggests that Nepal Bhasa is not acceptable in public even among the peers of the community when someone is holding an official position such as ambassador. Such was the general situation during the Panchayat Period. Even a father was reluctant to speak to his children in Nepal Bhasa in public except at home. But the impact of the Khas/Nepali policy did not take that long to be felt in Newar families in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) at the expense of their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa.

The fourth impact of the imposition of the 'Khas/Nepali only' policy adds insult to injury. The Panchayat Government bringing out the 'New Education' in 1971, of which I have given a short outline earlier (See also 6.1.3.2.), was meant to promote the state language into 'a better medium of instruction by combining various words from different languages in the country' (NEPS 1971-75). In fact this was not what materialized. Instead, the non-Khas/Nepali students were made to study compulsory Sanskrit language in addition to Khas/Nepali which has already covered 40 percent of the whole school education. The New Education also disbanded teaching local languages (Nepal Bhasa in Swanigah) lumped language subjects (other than Khas/Nepali) together with technical subjects in the optional group. The target was clear that the non-Khas students had to take

technical courses such as computing at the expense of their own mother language.

Moreover, the imposition of Sanskrit became not only an extra burden for the non-Khas students but it also imparted Hinduism on the young minds with wrong impressions that all other religions are either branches of Hinduism (e.g. Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc.) or derogative religions to justify the imposition of Hinduism as the state religion despite Nepal being the birthplace of the Buddha. Sanskrit language teaching was cleverly designed to promote both Hinduism and Khas/Nepali as the latter heavily depends on the Sanskrit sources. The Panchayat Government promoted Sanskrit education from junior high school to the university level giving it an extraordinary status and providing special facilities to students with stipends and freedom from paying tuition fees, whereas all other languages were banned. The Panchayat Government established a separate Sanskrit University in 1986 with 13 constituent colleges all over the country, for which the government is known to have spent huge amounts of State funds. According to the University Grant Commission report of 2010-11, the government has spent 173,000 Nepal Rupees per student per annum for Sanskrit University, which has only 1697 students;<sup>272</sup> the government spent only 23,000 Nepal Rupees per student per annum for Tribhuvan University which has 143,899 students.<sup>273</sup> Sanskrit is not a mother tongue of any community in Nepal. Although the Census of Nepal (2011) has recorded 1669 persons claiming Sanskrit as their mother tongue, it has not located the community which speaks Sanskrit as mother tongue. The funding for Sanskrit alone attests to the nature of the imbalanced language policy during the Panchayat Period. The successive governments have carried over this policy.

### ***Nepal Bhasa under Panchayat Rule***

‘Nepal Bhasa is one language that has to continue its struggle for its identity, and rights together with political changes in Nepal’ (Tuladhar 2000: 113). It was only a short period of time that Nepal Bhasa (together with other languages) received its long due recognition during the democracy period (1951-1960). But Nepal Bhasa, the mother tongue of the Newar suffered again at the hands of Shah rulers, this time, through Panchayat governance. The Panchayat Government retracted all the achievements gained during the short period

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<sup>272</sup> Nepal Sanskrit University

<sup>273</sup> Tribhuvan University

of democracy common citizenry, including the Newar people, tasted: The right to use their other tongues in education, public service and mass media. With the imposition of 'Khas/Nepali only' single language policy, the Panchayat Government curtailed mass media facilities for Nepal Bhasa first. Since the establishment of democracy on February 18, 1951, the state-owned Radio Nepal had broadcast its programs in Khas/Nepali and given a 5 minute daily news broadcast to both Nepal Bhasa and Hindi, and a 15 minute weekly feature program known as *Jeevan Daboo* (Life Stage). News in Nepal Bhasa and Hindi continued broadcasting after the revolution. Radio *Prajatantra* (Radio Democracy) mobilized people speaking Hindi in the south and Newar people speaking Nepal Bhasa in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) for support to the revolution. Aftermath of the success of revolution that established democracy, Radio *Prajatantra* turned into state-owned Radio Nepal and continued news broadcasts both in Nepal Bhasa and Hindi in addition to Khas/Nepali. *Jiwan Daboo* program was added in 1960. The program had been run by Newar students from Trichandra College for a while. It became popular for two reasons. One, *Jeevan Daboo* was the only feature radio program in Nepal Bhasa for the whole week while the rest of the time was used for programs in Khas/Nepali and many programs for Hindi songs. Two, though the airtime allocated for *Jeevan Daboo* program was limited only to 15 minutes, the program's content and presentation style was so popular that a respondent, while replying our survey questionnaire, recollected the *Jeevan Daboo* program and the news with a vicarious thrill:

Those were the gone days, we enjoyed listening to the news and *Jeevan Daboo* programs presented in high-spirited Nepal Bhasa every week without failure.<sup>274</sup>

But both the popular program *Jeevan Dabu* and news were terminated in 1965. People were openly notified of the termination of the radio program in Nepal Bhasa. A newspaper notice was placed in the state-run newspaper Gorkhapatra on April 8, 1965 stating that both news and the *Jeevandaboo* radio program in Nepal Bhasa would be terminated on April 13 sending shocked alarms to the Newar population of Nepal Mandala. The community leaders made every effort to peacefully reverse the unilateral decision of Radio Nepal against Nepal Bhasa and its speech community, the native people of Nepal Mandala. They appealed to King Mahendra, who ran the government. Their appeal went

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<sup>274</sup> From interview with a member of Vajracharya Preservation Trust (VPT) in Yen (Kathmandu).

unheard but triggered an unprecedented Nepal Bhasa resistance movement in Nepal for the first time. I shall return to this in the proceeding chapter.

Secondly, the Panchayat Government curtailed the right to education in Nepal Bhasa. As noted earlier, the New Education Plan brought out during this period undermined the languages of Nepal other than Khas/Nepali. The new plan removed languages from independent subjects and lumped them together with other technical subjects. It only discouraged the non-Khas students to study their own mother tongue. As a result, Nepal Bhasa and other languages began to stagnate in the field of education as fewer and fewer students studied it.

Third, the Panchayat Government also forced the Kathmandu Municipality in 1963 to revoke its earlier decision that recognized Nepal Bhasa as regional/local language. The municipality had provided public services in its offices in Nepal Bhasa in addition to Khas/Nepali.

Thus, by 1965, the Panchayat Government closed all avenues of development for Nepal Bhasa and other languages from their official use in education, public services and mass media ushering in a second 'Dark Period' for Nepal Bhasa, the historical, state and administrative language of Nepal, and the mother tongue of the Newar, the indigenous people of Nepal Mandala.

Thus, Panchayat Period marks a period that activated King Mahendra's political move, the single language policy that favored the Khas nationality, its Khas language and its religion, Hinduism, at the expense of a major section of the Nepali population, their languages and religions. King Mahendra died in 1972 but his policies were carried over by his son. All this culminated into a mass uprising that ousted the Panchayat system in 1990, attesting that state society relations during the Panchayat period were not comfortable between the king and his subjects.

### **7.2.3. Multiparty Democracy Period (1990-2006): Advent of Hegemony**

Multiparty democracy period refers to a democratic system of governance with constitutional monarchy as the head of the State run by political parties from 1990 to 2006. This period is also known as 'Post restoration of democracy' as it was introduced after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Democracy was first established in 1951 but before it

was fully institutionalized the country was lost to the Panchayat Government which turned out to be an autocracy. Another mass uprising with the peoples' movement 1 restored democracy after overthrowing the Panchayat autocracy. The multiparty democracy period saw a new constitution was promulgated but marked several parties replacing one government after another indicating no sign of a stable government during a period of fifteen years of governance. This was the shortest period during which thirteen prime ministers ran the government until the reigning monarch Gyanendra imposed his direct rule in February 2005. But his intervention turned out to be a catch copy of his father Mahendra's royal coup d'état mounted in December 1960, only to be forced out of power by another mass uprising of peoples' movement 2 in 2006, leading the country finally to federalism in 2008.

State society relations during this period were not stable though the peoples' representatives ran the realm. Several examples attest to this. First, the leaders, though democratically elected seemed to have been influenced by the old Panchayat legacy that despite political change they maintained practices of Hindu social order and showed indifferent attitudes to the grievances of the common citizens. Peoples' demands for equality and rightful representation in decision making bodies, were ignored on the one hand while state suppression and marginalization of peoples were maintained on the other hand. Political leadership engaged in putting up and pulling down the government rather than paying attention to the grievances of the common citizens. The political dispute between the Nepali Congress led United Left Front and Maoist-led Communist group pushed the country into civil war in 1996 that lasted ten years and killed more than 12,000 civilians and 3,000 Maoists. Insurgency experts point out that the civil war which the Maoists label as 'peoples' war' attracted the state suppressed and marginalized people and their grievances to join the fighting forces, sometimes leading as heads of 'people's governments formed by the Maoist during the civil war' (Stokke et al.:2010:13). The ruling parties led by the CHHE ignored not only the grievances of common citizenry, but also suppressed the Maoist insurgency. This culminated into a challenge to the state, which in turn burdened the common citizens with the imposition of price hikes on food and fuel only to sustain their high cost of living.

On top of the insurgency, this period also marks the assassination of King

Birendra and his family members in the palace massacre on June 1, 2001. Although the dead crown prince was blamed for the massacre, what happened after the elimination of King Birendra confused the citizens. Constitutional monarch Gyanendra, who succeeded his late brother, took the government under his direct control by dismissing the incumbent prime minister. The episode of control was so analogous to the royal coup d'état that his father had mounted four decades ago that his attempt backfired within a year. His takeover of direct rule on February 1, 2005 ended on April 6, 2006 when the mass uprising known as peoples' movement 2 forced him out of power. An interim government replaced the direct rule of the king leading to the dawn of federation that abolished the monarchy in May 2008. The entire period of multiparty democracy marked with instability stemming from inter and intra political wrangling, insurgency, palace massacre and repetition of peoples uprising against the state providing less meaning to the sacrifice people made during the peoples' movement 1. Several examples should attest to this. We shall see them below in our reference to the case of Newar, who sacrificed their invaluable lives for the cause of peoples' movement 1 for democracy, freedom, equality and justice.

### ***Nepal Bhasa During the Multiparty Democracy***

The multiparty democracy period commenced with the victory of the peoples' movement jointly organized by seven political parties and led by the movement's supreme leader Ganesh Man Singh (Shrestha) of the Nepali Congress party. It was in his house at Chakusibari, Kathmandu that the movement against the Panchayat Autocracy was proposed and launched on Feb. 18, 1990, the day of democracy. Like three early Newar martyrs, Singh had long been involved in the resistance movement. He was among those imprisoned by the Rana Regime in the 1940s. He continued opposing not only Rana Autocracy but also objected to king Mahendra's coup d'état for which he was again imprisoned together with B.P. Koirala. Singh viewed language problem as a part of political problems and asserted that 'only if the democratic movement succeeds, the doors for language development will be opened. Until the democratic system of administration was not formed, there will be no space for any mother tongue' (Shakya: 2011: 36). As expected by the movement leaders that the support of the Newar, the indigenous people of the capital and their taking to street was indispensable, thousands of Newar people from

four corners of Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kirtipur etc.) took to street to join the people's movement's rallies and agitation. The prodemocracy uprising defeated the autocratic Panchayat Government within fifty days of street agitation. The Newar made a notable contribution to the success of the movement against the autocratic Panchayat Government. 'None of these would have succeeded if the people of Bhaktapur and Lalitpur (Patan) had not been willing to revolt and die in front of the soldier's bullets' (Gellner 2008: 164 in Shakya: 2010: 37). Many of those were brave enough to die in their agitation for the success of the prodemocracy movement. According to Shakya (2010), of those 40 men martyred in the 1990 peoples' movement's uprising, 23 were from Nepal Mandala (Nepal Valley) while twenty who sacrificed their lives were Newar martyrs of several families – 9 Maharjan and Dangol, 5 Shakya and Vajracharya, 2 Udas, 2 Khadgi and 1 Nakarmi (ibid.). Thanks to these sacrifices, the peoples' movement succeeded. But no government that came to power from time after time during the multiparty democracy period was serious to listen to the grievances of the Newar, the indigenous community in the Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) that provided decisive support to win the peoples' movement in 1990.

First, a closer look at the demands made by the Newar, who were an integral part of restoration of democracy, should be clear that their demands were rather for the benefit of a wider population than only for their own group benefit. They were:

- a) To safeguard the human and material rights of all Nepali people;
- b) To provide impartial treatment to all languages, nationalities and religions in the country alike;
- c) To incorporate all languages of Nepal as national languages and provide equal rights;
- d) To provide education in mother tongues (ibid.:38).

The Newar people demanded the government guarantee these rights in the new Constitution. These demands were meant for all citizenry made up of diverse languages, nationalities and religions, through which the Newar also expected that some of their rights would also be guaranteed. Consequently, the new Constitution was drafted and promulgated by the new government elected in the first democratic election in November 1990. The new Constitution has incorporated all of above demands. But the language of



the content was ambiguous to the extent that the provisions can be interpreted in many ways. As we saw in the single language policy imposed by the Panchayat Government, the new democratic Constitution of Nepal (1990) depicted nothing more than a patchwork of the old Panchayat system particularly with regard to the demands of the citizenry for equality and inclusion. It is worthwhile to examine how the provisions in the nation's fundamental laws have been enshrined in the new Constitution of Nepal (1990) and how they differed from the Panchayat Constitution (1962).

The provisions of the nation in the both constitutions in Table-6 confirm as one nation that collectively constitutes the 'Nepalese people irrespective of religion, race, caste or tribe.' But provisions of the State has articulated a Hindu monopoly depriving the people of other faiths such as Buddhism, Kirat, Christianity, Islam etc. The demands made by the Newar – b) and c) above – were completely ignored. Instead, the Hindu monopoly of the State was given further continuity by the democratic Constitution of Nepal (1990).

Table-6: Comparison of important provisions between the constitutions of 1962 and 1990

Provisions	The Constitution of Nepal, 1962	The Constitution of Nepal, 1990
Nation (Except the underlined phrases, the Constitution of Nepal, 1990 has carried over the same interpretation in the Constitution of Nepal, 1962)	Having common aspirations and united by the common bond of allegiance to the Crown, the Nepalese people irrespective of religion, race, caste or tribe collectively constitute the nation (Part-1.2.).	Having common aspirations and united by the common bond of <u>allegiance to national independence and integrity of Nepal</u> , the Nepalese people irrespective of religion, race, caste or tribe collectively constitute the nation (Part-1.2).
State (The change is underlined)	Nepal is an independent, indivisible and sovereign monarchical Hindu State (Part-1.2).	Nepal is a <u>multiethnic, multilingual, democratic,</u> independent, indivisible, sovereign Hindu and <u>Constitutional</u> Monarchical Kingdom (Part-1.4).
National Language (The term 'national' in the constitution of Nepal, 1962 has been replaced with 'nation' and 'official' for the Nepali language in the Devanagari script, while all the mother tongues have been termed as the 'national' languages in the 1990 constitution)	The national language of Nepal is the Nepali language in the Devanagari script. (Part-1.4)	The Nepali language in the Devanagari script is the language of the <u>nation</u> of Nepal. The Nepali language shall be the <u>official</u> language. (Part-1.6.1).  All the languages spoken as the mother tongues in the various parts of Nepal are the <u>national</u> languages of Nepal (Part-1.6.2)

Moreover, the constitution framers did in fact incorporate ‘all languages of Nepal as national languages’ as demanded by the Newar but failed to provide equality to all languages of Nepal. The Khas/Nepali language was further consolidated not only as the ‘language of the nation’ but also as the ‘official language’ in the democratic Constitution of Nepal (1990). With regard to the demand for education in mother tongue, the new Constitution articulated a new provision recognizing the ‘right to education in mother tongue’ but articulated no responsibility for the government. The provision for mother tongue education has been added in the democratic Constitution of Nepal (1990) as:

- (1) Each community residing within the Kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture.
- (2) Each community shall have the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to its children (Part-3-18).

The government had no proper plan for education in mother tongue other than in Khas/Nepali, the mother tongue of the CHHE and their community until 1992 when a government appointed body, the National Education Commission (NEC), report made some recommendations. Consequently, the government ‘permitted’ the concerned communities to open primary schools on their own with condition that the school year in the mother tongue is capped at the first three years. Afterwards, the students are supposed to shift mother tongue education to Khas/Nepali (See also 5.1.3.c.). Thus, despite support and immense sacrifice to the prodemocracy movements, the Newar achieved nothing of worth. The only notable achievement was that the Radio Nepal resumed news in Newari, the label the CHHE imposed on Nepal Bhasa. The CHHE had usurped Nepali from Nepal Bhasa and attached the label Newari on Nepal Bhasa since Panchayat Period. And the Newar had protested against the derogatory term ‘Newari.’ During this period, two Newar delegations met government authorities demanding a stop to the official use of the derogatory ‘Newari,’ and that it be replaced by the correct term ‘Nepal Bhasa.’ In response to the delegation that met Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari, the premier gave his cabinet approved directive to the government on September 8, 1995, but his directive was not heeded by government agencies such as Radio Nepal, National Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics, Department of Education. The multiparty democracy period ended in 2008. As discussed in an earlier chapter this period clearly implied that the

hegemony of the CHHE has replaced the autocracy and taken control of the administration and functioning of its agencies. During the Panchayat, the king, both head of the state and the government saw that his decisions were implemented by government agencies. But the multi-democratic period discloses that decisions taken in the name of the common people who are subjugated to the dominant class are those stances the hegemony takes. According to Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, one of the important stances the ruling class takes to dominate the subjugated is one of negotiation. They take a flexible stance to negotiate with the subjugated and give part of what they want. This will decrease the resistance of the subjugated group and ultimately strengthens the hegemony (Dorsher 2001). This hegemonic stance of negotiation prevails not only in the ruling class of the government but also among any dominant group regardless of the government or political parties. The dominant in any political party takes a similar stance. On a similar request by the Newar members of the CPN (UML), the Central Committee passed a proposal on November 7, 1999 to terminate the derogative term 'Newari' in official mass media and to replace it with 'Nepal Bhasa' (Shakya 2010: 61). But it has yet to be known if this proposal has taken effect.

Returning to our attempt to examine how the grievances of Newar were ignored after the success of the peoples' movement by the ruling parties who took turn governing from time after time during the multiparty democracy period, the Newar has since long demanded that consecutive governments restore Nepal Bhasa usage in education, public services and mass media. Instead, the multiparty democracy period marks another humiliation for the Nepal Bhasa and its speech community. In the local election held in April 1997, the CPN (UML) which carried their commitment to restore Nepal Bhasa in their election manifesto won the election of Yen (Kathmandu) Municipality with an overwhelming majority. On June 27, 1997, the first meeting of the Board of Yen (Kathmandu) Municipality led by Mayor Keshav Sthapit discussed the official language and appointed a team to study the feasibility of reviving the use of Nepal Bhasa together with Khas/Nepali as Nepal Bhasa had been removed from official use by the Panchayat Government. With the return of multiparty democracy in Nepal, the Kathmandu Municipality went ahead to revive Nepal Bhasa, and the board meeting on July 24, 1997 officially recognized it as an additional official language. Several town councils such as

Khopa (Bhaktapur), Thimi and the sub-municipality of Yala (Lalitpur) inside Nepal Mandala followed suit and declared the former state language Nepal Bhasa as an additional language in their local offices.

Following suit, Dhanusha District Development Committee (DDDC) and Rajbiraj Town Council (RTC) in the south declared the local Maithil language as an additional official language in their offices respectively. But these decisions disturbed the status quo and their vested interest group who had enjoyed the monopoly of Khas/Nepali over other languages and speech communities. One Shriram Dawadi petitioned the cabinet against the decisions of Kathmandu Municipality demanding its termination (Shakya 2011: 74). Another interest group went to court to nullify the decision restoring Nepal Bhasa. In response to the petition filed, the Supreme Court not only gave its verdict in favor of the interest group but also declared the use of the local languages in the local offices 'unconstitutional.' The verdict triggered widespread street agitation by the Newar and their supporters closing down the whole Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) on June 1, 1999, which has since then been condemned as 'Black Day' every year. I have discussed it in some detail when I explored the judicial stance on language earlier (See also 5.1.4.d.).

Thus, the multiparty democratic period carried over most of the Panchayat policies despite multiparty democracy claiming its victory over the autocratic Panchayat. The Newar played an indispensable role in the prodemocracy movement's success. Yet, the period in question foresaw a prolonging struggle for Nepal Bhasa and its speech community the Newar for equality and inclusion as this period marked the hegemonic replacement of the autocracy.

#### **7.2.4. Inclusive Democracy Period (2008-Present): Secularism and Federalism**

A new period began in Nepal with the dawn of a federal system of governance for the first time in its history. Of the several periods of state society relations we have discussed in this chapter, this period has marked the most significant events. The declaration of federalism, secularism and the new constitution to institutionalize the ideals of inclusive democracy and restructure Nepal into a new republic, and the abolishment of a 2 century long autocratic Hindu monarchy, were the most noted occurrences. Although the drafting of the new constitution was not completed within the stipulated or extended timeframe, the most

thematic drafts were completed at the time of the dissolution of the 1<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Assembly (CA). If not for the supreme court order that terminated further extensions for the CA, the draft could have been completed within another year.

Meanwhile, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) has acted as a guide for the upcoming new constitution. As I have discussed in Chapter Six, pointing out some loopholes in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), rectification of those provisions that have called for revision could play a guiding role for drafting the proposed new constitution. While examining state society relations during this period of inclusive democracy, I shall focus on some important events, how they affected those relations and how they would stimulate future relations between the two parties, the state and the society, in reference to Nepal Bhasa and its speech community the Newar.

### ***Political Transformation***

With the birth of the CA on May 28, 2008, its first meeting declared Nepal as a secular, fully democratic and federal republic. All but 4 members of the newly elected 575 member CA voted for to abolish the past political system based on Hindu favoritism, autocracy, and central governance that has held since the conquest of Nepal Mandala by Gorkhali king in 1769. Those at the first meeting also decided to write a new inclusive constitution restructuring Nepal into a federation while finding a suitable federal system of governance based either on ethnic and linguistic diversity, region or geographic base replacing the centrally controlled administrative areas of 14 zones (provinces) and 75 districts, which served the benefit of the CHHE, the ruling class of Nepal, only.

The Inclusive Democracy Period also marked the elections of the first president and vice president with two members of common citizenry elected by the representatives of the citizens of the country, replacing the unelected king for the first time. But the first political wrangling and power sharing among the political parties led to 2 members<sup>275</sup> of the same Maithil community and Madhesh area in Nepal occupying both high-ranking posts, instead of elections following the inclusive system. The election of the president and the vice president no doubt was a democratic exercise, but implied that the democratic system still works on the power of majority rather than the doctrine of inclusion. The event

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<sup>275</sup> Dr. Ram Baran Yadav was elected president while Paramanand Jha was elected vice president.

was a starting point that led to disputes among the power sharers throughout the period. Although the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) won as the 1<sup>st</sup> majority party in the CA and its leader was elected to be the first Maoist prime minister,<sup>276</sup> he resigned without completing his 2 year term over a controversy regarding his attempt to dismiss the chief of the Army while the president intervened against his decision. The event fueled another set of disputes in electing his successor to the premier post. In electing a new successor after the second prime minister<sup>277</sup> resigned on February 6, 2011, the election for the post of the prime minister was held 6 times until a consensus was reached among the stake holders in the CA. The third premier resigned after 7 months in office while the last prime minister dissolved the CA at the end of his 2 year extended period. The dissolution of CA is attributed to further factors. One, the extended period of 2 years was expiring and the supreme court gave a termination order on further extensions. Two, 4 major political parties which were represented in the taskforce drafting the new constitution could not reach consensus in allocating the number of states, nor in naming them, when restructuring the country into a federation. Three, some major parties, particularly Nepali Congress and CPN (UML), were not in favor of the federation though the fact was kept secret until it came to light when the 2 of the Special Commission for the Recommendation of State Restructure (SCRSR) gave their recommendation against the federation. A 4 member SCRSR had been appointed by the government to give recommendations on a draft prepared by a CA Committee for state restructuring. The SCRSR made two separate recommendations: One for the proposed 14 state<sup>278</sup> restructuring on ethnic, regional and geographical lines, another against the federation itself. The 2 members who recommended 'for' the federation were nominees of UCPN (Maoist) and Madheshi alliance while those that recommended 'against' the federation were nominees of both Nepali Congress and CPN (UML). These factors suggest that the interests of the political parties, particularly the

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<sup>276</sup> In political history, he is the second communist prime minister after Man Mohan Adhiakari, the Chairman of CPN (UML) who became the 1<sup>st</sup> communist prime minister (1994-1995).

<sup>277</sup> Madhav Kumar Nepal (May 25, 2009 – February 6, 2011).

<sup>278</sup> CA Committee on State Restructuring and Division of State Power had proposed 14 state federations such as Jadan, Tamuan, Tamsaling, Sherpa (4 in the Himalayan range), Khaptad, Karnali, Magarat, Narayani, Newa, Sukoshi, Kirat, Limbuwan (8 in the middle mountain range), Lumbini-Awadh-Tharuwan and Mithila-Bhojpura-Koch-Awadh (2 in the Tarai strip).

major 4 parties and their CA members, were centered more on consolidating their political power by extending the CA term illegitimately rather than becoming serious about drafting the constitution. The 4 years of constitution drafting ended without the CA completing its mandated task before it was dissolved on May 28, 2012. However, the Inclusive Democracy Period marks some opportunities and challenges.

### ***The Opportunities***

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), though a temporary measure, is the fundamental law until the new constitution is promulgated. Accommodating the aspirations of the people who sacrificed in the people's movements in 2006 and before, the provisions therein have provided several opportunities to take note of. The first was the disposing of 'one country, one ruler, one language and one religion,' an autocratic Panchayat version of 'one country one language' concept of governance carried over in the 1990 constitution. The concept of 'one country and one language' itself is not always condemnable. What is condemnable is how it is imposed arbitrarily on others. During the Panchayat period, the government imposed the concept in the name of national unity. But the Hindu religious monopoly conversely discriminated, dominated and excluded followers of other religions from state services. Finally, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) replaced the provision of 'Hindu monopoly' revoking the clause of 'sovereign Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom'<sup>279</sup> with the provision of secularism invoking a new clause making Nepal a '...sovereign, secular, inclusive and fully democratic State.'<sup>280</sup> The provision provided an unprecedented relief to the majority of citizenry who had suffered from Hindu dominated and discriminative state policies in the past. The new provision guarantees the opportunity to adhere to the faith of their choice and practice it in their day to day lives. It was a long awaited justice for non-Hindus, not a revocation of Hindu rights as some had propagated against the new provision of opportunity for equality. Opposition to equality is a problem stemming from the difficulty differentiating empathy from apathy. One example should suffice to reveal the apathetic attitude of the CHHE.

During the Panchayat Period, every main Hindu temple placed a notice that read 'No entry for non-Hindus' in the entrance and inside the temple site. The notice barred the

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<sup>279</sup> The Constitution of Nepal (1990) Article:1.4.

<sup>280</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) Article:1.4.

country's Buddhists and followers of other religions but allowed Indians and other Hindus or anyone 'looking like a Hindu.' I have yet to figure out how the security guards in and around the temples differentiate the non-Hindus from Hindus. An episode which occurred inside the Pashupatinath<sup>281</sup> temple in Kathmandu still puzzles me. I had already entered the temple from the main gate accompanied by a couple of friends from Sri Lanka. While we were walking to another area inside the temple, the policeman on guard stopped me from entry while letting my friends in. Before I ask anything, the guard said 'No Japanese inside Pashupatinath' in Khas/Nepali showing a notice nearby that read 'No entry for non-Hindus' in both Khas/Nepali and English. I simply asked the police guard in the same language whether he thinks 'any Japanese understand Khas/Nepali?' He was puzzled for a while but let me in soon. Although Nepal was declared secular in May 2008, those notices still remained when I returned to another Hindu temple after some time. But there was a visible change. While accompanied by a European friend, we walked towards a temple inside the Khopa (Bhaktapur) palace famed for golden windows known as '55 window palace.' Among the two police security guards, the first officer stopped both of us saying 'No non-Hindus.' I responded in Khas/Nepali he spoke 'What if I am Buddhist.' He simply repeated the same words. But the second officer told the first officer 'I think Hindus and Buddhists are same Nepali.' I later found out the second officer belongs to the Tamang nationality. He was clear about his religion. He said he is 'Buddhist.' The episode reflects the political change in the country. It has given non-Hindus the courage to speak, but not yet transformed the Hindu apathy to empathy. The episode occurred in March 2010, two years after the proclamation declaring Nepal a secular and federal republic.

However, the change has benefitted many others. The Newar, especially the Buddhist Newar, should benefit from revocation of the provision that favored Hinduism over Buddhism and several other religions practiced in Nepal as they were the most oppressed religious community in Nepal. Buddhist monks have been barred from preaching Buddhism in Nepal Bhasa in the land where the Buddha was born and Nepal Bhasa originated. The monks have not only been barred from teaching Buddhism in Nepal Bhasa but have also been imprisoned and expelled in the past for preaching the Buddha's

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<sup>281</sup> Main Hindu temple in Yen (Kathmandu) dedicated to God Siva. A crown of the Buddha head is mounted on the Sivalinga once a year on a specific religious day in November known as 'Mukha Astami' when the Buddhists come to worship.



message of peace. The new freedom provided in the Interim Constitution will also equally benefit the Christian, Muslim, Kirat, Bahai and many religious communities that had suffered from the repressive religious policies of the Nepal Government dominated by Hindu monopoly in the past, though the constitutional provision remains intact: ‘... no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another...’<sup>282</sup> Thus, the first opportunity we discussed above at least means Nepal has pledged to the maintenance of cultural pluralism, which has a space for diversity.

Second, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) also has revised the provision for language rights giving a national status to all languages spoken as mother tongues in Nepal. While keeping Khas/Nepali in Devanagari script as the official language in tact, a new sub-article has been added to guarantee the use of local languages in the local (public) offices in various parts of Nepal where other different languages than Khas/Nepali are spoken. The sub article also guarantees that the local office will keep records of such local language documents translated into the official language as in the following:

Notwithstanding sub-article (2)<sup>283</sup> the usage of mother language at local bodies and offices shall not be considered objectionable. Languages used in such manner shall be translated in the official language of the state for the record.<sup>284</sup>

The new provision provides opportunities to use local language in local bodies where such public services are sought. For example, Nepal Bhasa should now be freely usable in local offices such as Kathmandu Municipality and its offices which once had used Nepal Bhasa as an additional language for public services in addition to the Khas/Nepali language. It was banned by the Panchayat during its autocratic governance. The use of Nepal Bhasa was also terminated by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional during the multiparty democracy period for lack of clear cut provision like the above. The new provision has encouraged many different languages of Nepal and their speech communities together.

Third, the provisions of the right to education have also changed in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) from the provisions of the Constitution of Nepal (1990). The

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<sup>282</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), Article 23.

<sup>283</sup> The sub-article: (2) The Nepali Language in the Devanagari script shall be the official language for Government businesses (Pant 2007:16).

<sup>284</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), Article: 1.5.3.

new provision guarantees at least the basic education in the mother tongue. In the last Constitution, the law provided right to education in mother tongues but guaranteed no basic education in mother tongue. So those communities who could afford to establish schools in their mother tongue did so but the majority failed to make use of the right given to them. However, the new law has provided the opportunity to those interested in setting up schools and seek government support for sustenance of such schools. During the multiparty democracy period, the Newar were able to establish only one school where education is given in Nepal Bhasa. The new legal facility should provide opportunities to set up more new primary schools countrywide.

Fourth, in addition to the constitutional provisions, the new government formed with the support of People's Movement-II also responded to people's demands through cabinet decisions. One such decision was the reinstatement of Nepal Samvat<sup>285</sup> as the national calendar from the New Year 1129. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal got his cabinet a proposal approved to recognize Nepal Samvat as the national samvat of Nepal, which had been displaced by the Rana Regime. Joining the New Year celebrations of Nepal Samvat held in the Basantapur Open Square near the old royal palace in Kathmandu on Kachala 1, 1129 N.S. the first day of the Nepal Samvat calendar (October 26, 2008), he declared the decision at the celebration. The announcement of his decision received uproar of applause from thousands of participants. Since then Nepal Samvat was given due respect as a national calendar. Mass media both national and private began to use Nepal Samvat calendar together with Indian Vikram Samvat which has been in use since the Rana Period.

Fifth, on the occasion of the 1132<sup>nd</sup> Nepal Samvat New Year, (October 27, 2011) Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, while attending the New Year celebration held in the open theater in Kathmandu, made his New Year greeting message in Nepal Bhasa. It received an unprecedented applause longer than 5 minutes. This was the first such speech given by an incumbent prime minister in the political history of Nepal. All the newspapers published in Nepal Bhasa covered the full speech in their reporting. For the Newar community, the event was the most pleasant New Year message by the prime minister at the celebration. This is one approach the Maoists leaders have successfully used to attract

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<sup>285</sup> Meaning Nepal Era, the name of the calendar in practice for the past 1134 years.

voters. Similarly, former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal is also known to have made speeches in Hindi when he visited to the south. Southern areas of Nepal are inhabited mostly by Maithil, Bhojpur and Tharu Bhasa speaking communities. They speak Hindi as a lingua franca. Thus, the Inclusive Democracy Period was a period that developed state society relation closer than the periods before. However, challenges remain.

### ***The Challenges***

The Inclusive Democracy Period or Phase 3 of Nepal's transition ended on May 28, 2012 together with the dissolution of the CA. The biggest challenge left unattended was the drafting of the new constitution. The task was passed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> CA, which was elected on November 2013 through the general election held for the purpose. The head of the Election Government, incumbent chief justice Khilaraj Regmi is credited for a smooth handing over of the helm of the government to the newly elected Prime Minister Sushil Koirala on February 11, 2014. The new premier has pledged that he will promulgate the constitution within a year. Political pledges are easier said than done. Although the scope of this study is limited to this period, the overall findings of this study constitute some important references for forming language policy and its implementation in a diverse linguistic setting of Nepal. Besides the challenge of completing the rest of the draft constitution, the legal provisions articulated in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) can be challenges if they are not implemented as functioning laws. It is clear that these challenges are to be faced by both the State and stake holders in society alike. For example, the same opportunities I have referred to above can become severe challenges to state-society relations if they are not properly followed or transferred into functioning laws.

The replacement of the Hindu monopoly with secularism can be considered as a challenge for both the CHHE and the common citizenry. The CHHE have enjoyed their dominant position by mobilizing ordinary Hindus under them while dominating the followers of other faiths such as the indigenous Newar, Magar, Gurung, Sherpa etc whose majority adheres to Buddhism. If the CHHE fails to uphold the new laws of secularism, they will be responsible for consequences while the believers in other religion will be

responsible if they fail to observe their religious freedom properly. Failure of proper observation of the regulations on religious freedom might cause unexpected disharmony among the religious denominations in any country with a multi-religious background. Nepal is no exception. These responsibilities and awareness are imperative in understanding the legal consciousness which, in terms of Ewick and Silbey, allow people to become 'both authors and victims of their history' (Silbey 2008).

The five opportunities I have pointed to above are legal provisions. While, 1-3 were articulated in the fundamental law of the Constitution, the 4<sup>th</sup> was constituted by the cabinet decision and the 5<sup>th</sup> was legalized by the symbolic power of the prime ministerial position. If these opportunities are not enforced into functioning laws, they inevitably become challenges regardless of the dominant CHHE or the subjugated peoples like the Newar or other indigenous nationalities. It is because the dominant tend to try their best to avoid attaching enforcement to the legal provisions while the dominated subalterns tend to launch resistance until such provisions are legalized with the power of enforcement. However, there are exceptions where the subalterns are not ready to resist for the lack of proper knowledge, unity and activism depending on individual capacity of awareness, experience and experiment of events. The will for resistance depends on individual legal consciousness. Ewick and Silbey explain that people look at the law in three different orientations. One, for some, the law is magisterial (knowledge and understanding) for others it is remote (something inaccessible). Two, for some, the law is game with rules as they can manipulate it. Three, for others the law is arbitrary hence actively resisted (Ewick et al. 1998:46).

My discussion on constitutional provisions related to replacement of Hindu autocracy to secular democracy, and rectification of provisions on language rights and facilities in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) reflected the legal consciousness of both the State run by the CHHE and the society that constitutes of subalterns. The new changes in the constitutional provisions are ascribed to the realization of the arbitrary policies and resistance by the subalterns against the policy making of the CHEE. In short, when the subjugated subalterns realized the arbitrary policies of the repressive regimes, and the dominant class, they responded with resistance. The change of language provision and educational rights clearly reflected the arbitrary impositions of the laws in the past.

Some laws have been rectified but their enforcement into functioning laws has yet to be carried out. The legal consciousness of both parties the CHHE and the subjected people play imperative roles in this task. According to Kaugia, the legal consciousness plays an important role particularly in drafting and implementing of laws in a society because such drafting and implementing must be done in conformity with principles of justification and effectiveness (Kaugia 1996:16). Thus, the Inclusive Democracy Period is notable as a period that brought changes and opportunities while leaving challenges to stakeholders of state society relations.

### **7.3. Summing up**

This chapter focused on state society relations during the Shah Rule that lasted 2 centuries and 4 decades, divided into several periods. It also examined how relations were maintained between the new immigrant Gorkhali ruler and the native Newar society with special reference to Nepal Bhasa. The chapter first outlined briefly what constructed a new ruling class called CHHE after the invasion of Nepal Mandala by Gorkhali army led by Pritvinarayan Shah and the immigrants brought in by the subsequent Shah rulers to Nepal Mandala. State and society relations thus examined against a framework of the native Newar civil society and the political society run by the CHHE is confirmed as a system based on coercion by the latter at the consent of the former. During the past 2 centuries and 4 decades, we saw the Nepal Bhasa becoming a political tool for the dominant and the dominated Newar in state society relations. First, the invading Gorkhali king disbanded and further discouraged the use of Nepal Bhasa while discarding Nepal Samvat, Nepali Lipi and Buddhism. Second, the Ranas banned the public use of Nepal Bhasa along with Nepal Samvat and Buddhism. Third, importantly, the democratic rulers reinstated Nepal Bhasa. Fourth, most notoriously, the Panchayat closed the last route of Nepal Bhasa. Fifth, the restored democratic government revived Nepal Bhasa, Nepal Samvat and Buddhism together but kept them under control, limiting their full growth unlike in the past. This attests to the importance of Nepal Bhasa for both dominant and dominated. In the past Nepal Bhasa was dominated to suppress its speech community, the Newar from returning to their past influence in state affairs. It was reinstated during the revolution and other 2 uprisings to mobilize their support to overthrow the autocratic regimes. In comparing all

the periods of state society relations I examined, the Inclusive Democracy Period offered some important opportunities to promote state society relations by accommodating the aspirations of the Newar and other dominated subalterns because they hold significance in the state society relations. In the case of the Newar, it was Nepal Bhasa which has united them to claim a separate identity and empowered them to resist the 'Khas/Nepali only' state policy. This suggests that when the separate identity of Nepal Bhasa loses its value, the Newar will have no relevance as an independent nationality. It was the Nepal Bhasa identity that the Newar have survived in so far, resisting all the dominations and oppressions in the 2 century and 4 decade long past. I shall return to this in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE NEWAR RESISTANCE AGAINST PERSISTANT STATE POLICY

The resistance movement launched by the Newar has been non-violent. Despite the harsh oppression and persistent policies of the Government of Nepal under different regimes, the Newar approach to resistance has been a peaceful one. Before we document the Newar approach, it will be useful to examine the meanings of resistance and movement in the context of Nepal in some detail.

#### **8.1. Resistance and Movement: Some Theoretical Aspects**

‘Resistance movement’ refers to a group of people whose main objective is to resist oppression imposed by an authority directly or in the guise of change, restriction, policy, law etc. Authority can be an individual, group of individuals, a private company, government or its public agency which holds the power to impose law or rule and regulation on the people concerned or the whole citizenry of a country. The oppression or disguised change the resistance movement seeks to resist may vary from subject to time period and people affected. Therefore, support to resistance depends on the objective the resistance movement aims to achieve. The resistance movement may seek to achieve their objectives through either the use of nonviolent means or violent ones. Depending on the method of resistance, such a movement may be known as ‘non-violent resistance’ or sometimes as ‘civil resistance’ or ‘civil disobedience’ or may be charged for ‘sedition’ or even labeled ‘terrorist tag’ by the government or the authority that faces the resistance. However, a resistance movement that uses violence may also claim to be a movement struggling for freedom, and its members to be freedom fighters.

A resistance movement is a social movement, which has originated from one struggle to another human struggle. The communist manifesto of Marxism claims that ‘The history of all human society, past and present, has been the history of class struggle’ (Cox: 1998:3). Social movement theorists point out that this claim was analyzed to develop the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie on the one hand and the worker’s movement on the other hand. According to Cox, the Marxist claim was used to explain the bourgeoisie

revolutionary role in destroying feudalism through a revolution and creating a new world order, while the same claim was used to explain ‘the “development of the workers” movement from the experience of misery to the struggle against oppression, aided by growing concentration and communication, into a complex learning process of increasing political self confidence and clarity towards another and final revolution’ (ibid.). Reconstructing ‘the strongly activist and humanist turn of thoughts, and its constant rejection of structuralist and fatalist points of view’ as a western Marxism, which distinguishes itself within the Marxist tradition of thoughts, Cox (1998) finds that western Marxism is the theory of social movement. He attributes the most developed expression of this point of view to Gramsci and a combination of thoughts of Lukacs (1971) who developed a movement-centered ontology and epistemology elaborated by Touraine (1981), an analysis of working-class history by Thompson (1963) and a movement-oriented theory of knowledge by Wainwright (1994). Cox further asserts that the western Marxism is ‘one which elevates social movements to the central, perhaps the only, feature of the historical process and the social structure’ (ibid.). He points out that the Marxist version of the theory of social movements represents two particular concepts: Social class and hegemony.

As for the concept of social class, Cox finds in one formulation by Lukacs and Touraine that ‘social movements are class movements in the sense that they are essentially movements of one class only; they represent a subordinate class coming to consciousness of its own situation and interests and expressing that consciousness in conflict with a dominant class which has achieved this level of self-awareness and self-organization.’ As for the concept of hegemony, Cox finds Gramsci’s formulation is slightly different from Lukacs and Touraine’s. Gramsci’s ‘social movements are class movements in the rather different sense that they are movements led by a single class or social formations representing that class; they entail an interaction between the way in which a given class organizes its own activities and the way in which it organizes the practices of other social classes’ (ibid.:4). However, Gramsci’s analysis emphasizes the need to build links between different classes. His emphasis on building links between the working class and the peasantry illustrates this point. His movement is built on a combination of two different classes: The workers in the town and the peasants in the country. Gramsci’s main objective is not only resistance against the cultural hegemony of the bourgeois but also to help create



a proletarian culture with the working-class worldview, develop unity between the workers and the peasants and build their own intellectual socio-cultural class that will counter the bourgeois cultural hegemony. We shall see how these theoretical views can be applied in documenting the Newar approach in their resistance movement.

## **8.2. Resistance Movement in Nepal: A Historical Perspective**

The documenting of history or the events related to the resistance movement in Nepal has yet to be conducted in an analytical way. This can be attributed mainly to the strict government rule and regulation that shaped the policies on education, public services and mass media, which the scholars of today's Nepal have grown up in. Although Nepal has a long history of calamities in the past particularly during the past 240 years, terms such as 'movement,' 'resistance,' 'uprising,' 'insurgency' etc. still strike fear or annoyance in the common citizenry. The majority of diverse nationalities in Nepal are peace-loving people. However, depending on rulers and regimes of governance in Nepal, they have witnessed a chronology of incidents that has been documented in different perspectives. Formal education system began in Nepal only in 1853. Though originally meant for Rana children, the education was upgraded to a college level in 1918 and a full fledged university in 1959; local scholars began documenting historical events afterwards. However, there are thousands of manuscripts written in Nepal Bhasa that included varieties of subjects of events that have yet to be studied by independent historians. Today the bulk of historical events have been recorded by those who studied under 'Khas/Nepali only' education imposed by one language, one nation and one religion policy. Therefore, most of the local historical documentation in Khas/Nepali is irreproachable. My efforts here in documenting the history of movements in Nepal are done objectively and with utmost care. The documentation is divided into two categories and analyzed objectively.

### **8.2.1. Resistance During the Past 240 Years**

There are a number of resistance events and movements recorded in the history of Nepal over the past 240 years. The first resistance is attributed to the last king of Nepal Mandala and the latest movement was launched against the last king of Nepal. Nepal Mandala must be understood as original Nepal, while the present Nepal as the expanded Nepal. In this

chapter, I shall examine some selected resistance events and movements related to the Newar movements.

***a) Ranajit Malla's Resistance: The Last King of Nepal Mandala (1769)***

As noted above, several resistance events and movements were launched by individuals and groups. They were basically peaceful unless provoked. The first of such resistance initiative is ascribed to Ranajit Malla, the last king of Khopa (Bhaktapur) in Nepal Mandala. He expressed his resistance through a song which has been recorded as a historical song. Ranajit Malla spontaneously sang a song when he was deposed from his throne and the country in 1769<sup>286</sup>.

King Ranajit Malla was leaving Nepal to take refuge in Varanasi, India to live his last days as he was deposed by Prithvinarayan Shah who attacked and overpowered him on September 21, 1769. When his Gorkha army attacked the Khopa palace, Prithvinarayan captured King Jayaprakash Malla of Yen (Kathmandu), King Tejanarasimha Malla of Yala (Lalitpur) together with Ranajit Malla. The former two had taken refuge in Khopa as Prithvinarayan had conquered the two city-states earlier. Khopa was the last city-state of Nepal Mandala attacked by Prithvinarayan. Although there are differing sources that report this incident, one source has recorded the incident as follows:

The rulers were taken into prisoner. Jayaprakasa became seriously ill because of the grievous wound [by a bullet], and he died soon after. Tejanarasimha was kept in confinement where he died, while the ruler of Bhatgaon<sup>287</sup> was permitted to go to Benaras.<sup>288</sup>

Other sources describes that Jayaprakash Malla committed suicide on the spot while Tejanarayan was buried alive in a vault. Ranajit, whose life was spared, was offered a choice: To be ruler of Banepa or another locality under Prithvinarayan, except the three city-states, or to leave his kingdom for Varanasi, India for the rest of his life. The sources agree here that Ranajit had to leave his kingdom. Having reached the Chandragiri peak over Kirtipura, Ranajit Malla had a last glance at his kingdom before leaving it forever. He spontaneously sang the following song:

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<sup>286</sup> From interview with Tilaka Prakasa, writer and activist from Khopa.

<sup>287</sup> Some write Bhatgaun, Bhadgaun for Khopa (Bhaktapur).

<sup>288</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007:216); some write Banaras, Benaras for Varanasi.

Oh God! How could I forget my country Nepal!<sup>289</sup>  
The evil enemy has finished it off! Oh God!!

No place for me in this country of twelve thousand people!  
But to take refuge in a foreign land from now on! Oh God!! (1)

No idea what sin have I committed in my past life  
No point in this life if I have to live in a cage! Oh! God!! (2)

Oh Goddess Nava-Durga and God Ganesa, I beg a million times  
For a pardon had I committed any crime! Oh God!! (3)

To how many people could I express this grief of pain?  
No one can relieve me from this anguish! Oh God!! (4)

The one I showed my affection, the same one turned a conspirator!  
Alas! What sort of heart can one have to cause this harm? Oh God!! (5)

To me, Ranajit Malla, the noble of the Solar Dynasty,  
An abode in heaven is granted by Goddess Taleju! Oh God!! (6)

This was the least resistance King Ranajit Malla was able to exhibit in protest against the invading ‘once affectionate’ Prithvinarayan turned ‘conspirator’ as indicated in the song. Ranajit had treated Prithvinarayan like his own son and trained him all arts of a prince for five years in the past. Ranajit’s son Veeranasimha and Prithvinarayan had become intimate friends that Ranajit could not believe that the same child he gave his affection in the past was wielding the sword and ordering to leave the country or live in a cage. Ranajit chose to leave Nepal, his country he ruled for five decades and his people to spend his last days in a foreign land: near the Ganaga (Ganges) river in Varanasi, India. On his way leaving the country, he had expressed his resistance in the above song, which is still popular among elder residents of Khopa.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> My translation of the Nepal Bhasa original song. See appendix A for the translation found in ‘A Historical Account of Nepal’ by B.H. Hodgson in the 1840s, the British Resident in Kathmandu, cited in Dhungel (2007:97).

<sup>290</sup> From interview with Tilak Prakash, a well-known writer, activist and resident of Khopa. Thanks to his reminder of this song, I searched for it.

***b) Chopu Uprising (1770)***<sup>291</sup>

Chopu<sup>292</sup> is known to have the first uprising against Prithvinarayan's seizure of lands owned by the Newar, the indigenous people of Nepal Mandala. After the invasion of all three city-states in Nepal Mandala, Prithvinarayan made Kathmandu the capital city of his newly conquered country. He then brought in a large number of Khas Bahun and Chhetri people from Gorkha, among many others, to live in Kathmandu. He ordered the seizure of many properties, houses and lands owned by local Newar courtiers and property owned by ordinary citizens including the villagers. Those seized properties were given to feudal officials came from Gorkha to the capital (Shrestha 2010:84). As noted in an early section of this study (See page 227.), Prithvinarayan established his new administration appointing his courtiers who came from Gorkha with him in the invasion of Nepal Mandala, retaining a few Newar former courtiers of the Malla kings. As a result almost all Newar officials lost their governing and military power. While many were eradicated (either by being killed or by being banished out of Nepal Mandala) the rest were reduced from the ruling group to the ruled group. They also faced property confiscations. Properties of Bhim Malla, the highest civil officer of the Malla king, were confiscated to be given to Khas officers. Another noted example of land seizure is the land of Bagh Durbar, the building presently occupied by Kathmandu Municipality was built on the seized land of the Newar. It was built as a residence for Bhimsen Thapa who became prime minister in 1805. Many plots of lands were also seized from ordinary Newar citizens. Against this arbitrary seizure of land, the native Newar of Chopura (Chitrapur) staged an uprising. But they were soon suppressed. Those who were involved in the uprising were tortured, their noses cut off and their hands amputated.<sup>293</sup>

***c) Resistance against the Banishing of Infants (1777-1799)***

The second example of resistance expressed in poetic form can be traced from another incident during the reign of Ranabhadur Shah (1777-1799). An epidemic of smallpox infected the children of the country. Ranabhadur ordered that all the afflicted children be banished. The song was sung by affected people in indirect resistance to Ranabhadur's

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<sup>291</sup> 891 N.S.

<sup>292</sup> Chopu, Chopura and Chitrapura are names of the same place.

<sup>293</sup> Shrestha (2010:85) and Vajracharya(1962:36, 38 and 71).

oppression (Shakya 2011:15). Some excerpts of the song below depict the incident of the time.

It has never been heard of, never been seen that children with chickenpox cannot be kept in the country. It was king's order. (1)

Nairs<sup>294</sup> were appointed to beat drums and, surrounded by soldiers, the children were driven out of the country. (2)

It was not with a whip, it was not with a cane, it was with a bundle of stinging nettles that they were beaten. They were surrounded by soldiers. (12)

Having caught a cold, a child died at a place where no sunlight fell. The parents wept, beating their breasts. (15)

We could not burn the dead child nor bury it in a pit. Behold, oh Goddess, the piteous state of your people! (16)

Half of the child's body being seized by his mother, half of the child's body being seized by his father, the parents threw it down into the river Tama. (17)

Since the King had no *dharma*, he made the parents abandon their smallpox-afflicted children. They had to cross the river Tama. (18)

The people suffered much, when Rana Bahadura was King of Nepal. (19)<sup>295</sup>

Chickenpox is neither dangerous nor a disease anyone can prevent from catching. Yet, for King Ranabahadur Shah of Nepal, it was dangerous hence he did not want his son to catch it. To prevent his son from catching the disease, he ordered that all the afflicted children be driven out of the country instead of seeking medical help to cure them. According to Lienhard, who translated the song into English, Ranabahdur's son Girvanayuddha caught the disease but survived<sup>296</sup>. But the suffering inflicted by his order

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<sup>294</sup> English term for Nay, a caste in Newar society professing as musicians.

<sup>295</sup> The original Nepal Bhasa song has been translated into English by late Professor Siegfried Lienhard of Indology in the University of Stockholm, Sweden. He was the first person to bring out a collection of a hundred important Nepal Bhasa songs translated into English in 1972, and republished in the Indian edition in 1992, while Prem Bahadur Kasah, the Founder of Asha Archives in Kathmandu is credited for publishing Nepal Bhasa original songs in his *Bakham-mye* [In Nepal Bhasa: Narrative Poems] in 1962.

<sup>296</sup> Wright (1877) confirms the order of King Ranabahadur (who was then called Swami Raja for his ascetic life) of the smallpox afflicted children out of the country but reports that Girivanayuddha died of smallpox at Aryaghat in 938 N.S. (1818 A.D.)

to drive out the afflicted children to save his son was unheard of. What the affected parents of that time could do was to sing this song in resistance. The song satirically narrates the situation of the country under Ranabhadur.

First, his order: 'Smallpox afflicted children cannot be kept in the country' depicts the knowledge of a king or his advisors about smallpox, its nature and how it affects children. And such children, if they died were neither allowed to be cremated nor buried inside the country. They had to be thrown across the river that borders the country. Second, his order reflects the gap of affection of a king towards his own child and the children of the country's populace. The smallpox afflicted children were driven away in a parade in which the Nay<sup>297</sup> caste group beat drums as soldiers surrounded them. To banish the children, they were beaten 'not with a whip, not a can but with a bundle of stinging nettles.' The parents of the smallpox children had to abandon their own children by throwing them across the river not of their own will but to obey the king's order given with no *dharma* (justice). That was how people suffered when Rana Bahadur was king of Nepal. The song is still popular among the Newar people even some 234 years after its composition. The anguish it has inflicted is inscribed in the bodies and minds of the concerned Newar people. Third, the entire song exhibits how royal orders were carried out by the soldiers and how much agony can be inflicted upon the people of a country.

#### ***d) Lakhan Thapa Resistance (1877)***

Lakhan Thapa resistance refers to an uprising launched against the Rana Regime by an army officer who opposed the massacre of nobles in the royal court by Janga Bahadur Rana, who took state power by massacring his opponents in the royal court (Kotparva) in 1846 (See page 231.). The army officer known as *Lakhan Thapa Magar* had organized a resistance group to oppose Janga Bahadur's iron-fisted rule which had scared people in the country. But he was captured with his seven friends only to be hung to death by Janga Bahadur regime on February 27, 1877. While most historians agree with his martyrdom<sup>298</sup> a descendant of Janga Bahadur claims that Thapa was released a few days after he was imprisoned (Rana: 2008:51). Although scholars agree this resistance was the first of the

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(Wright: 2007:263 and 265).

<sup>297</sup> Lienhard terms them as Nairs.

<sup>298</sup> Sharma(1979:91).

series against the Rana Regime, and people from the Magar nationality were involved, some disagree with the objective of the movement. One such view is that Thapa's single intention was to kill Janga Bahadur and be the ruler of Nepal (Pokharel: 2010:92).

***e) Bakupau Uprising (1887)***

The Bakupau uprising was a resistance by the Newar against the oppression of the Rana Government in 1008 N.S. (1887 A.D.). During the de facto rule of Bir Shumser Rana (1885-1901), his government nullified the deeds of land known as Bakupau and declared that such documents would not be recognized officially henceforth. Bakupau (meaning half paper) is part of a document halved and shared by two parties: the seller and the buyer. In some cases, half the document was retained by the authority while the other part was given to the owner. The document is stamped with an official seal known as 'Srivatsa.' When the document is halved, the seal also separates into two parts. When presenting the document, if the two parts submitted as evidence were found to match, the document was accepted. In other word, one holds claim and another has liability.<sup>299</sup> The Bakupau is a historic document. It was written in Nepal Bhasa, which was the state language of Nepal then. Bakupau was nullified because it was written in Nepal Bhasa. Ranas did speak Nepal Bhasa but did not read and write it as they spoke Gorkha Bhasa as their mother tongue. According to Shakya, the Newar people from Yala (Patan) and Khopa (Bhaktapur) launched a resistance movement and agitated vigorously against the ban. As a result, the government was compelled to legally recognize the Bakupau written before May 1888. This is evident in the Country Code (Muluki Ain) which has articulated that the Bakupa written until the reign of king Prithviveeravikram Shah (1881-1911)<sup>300</sup> shall be legal and any legal complaint or lawsuit made based on the Bakupau must be heard and provided justice (Shakya: 2011:16). Thus, the resistant movement launched during the strict rule of Rana Regime under Bir Shumser achieved its goal of winning back their rights. Although

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<sup>299</sup> From a personal communication with Dr. Pushpa Raj Rajkarnikar, Chairman, Institute for Policy Research and Development (IPRAD); Former Member, National Planning Commission (NPC) and Former Deputy Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank; and former President of Nepal Bhasa Manka Khala (NBMK), Yala. Dr. Rajkarnikar is also a co-author of '*Bhasik andolanay khalapuchahya yogadan* (In Nepal Bhasa: Contributions of Organizations to Language Movement).'

<sup>300</sup> 30 year long titular reign of Prithviveeravikram was run by Ranadip Singh Kunwar (1877-1885), Bir Sumsher (1885-1901), Dev Shumser (1901-1901), Chandra Shumser (1901-1929).

the resistance was primarily meant for the right to their legal document, some scholars also attribute the resistance movement to the Nepal Bhasa movement as the Bakupau was an important historical document written in Nepal Bhasa. The Bakupau movement launched in 1008 N.S. (1887 A.D.) was meant for their language rights (Kayastha and Rajkarnikar 2003:27; Shakya 2011:15).

### **8.2.2. Resistance against Rana Oppression and Provocation**

Following the suppression of the Lakhan Thapa rebellion (1877) and Bakupau uprising of the Newar (1887) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, several movements appeared to have targeted social reformation and welfare in Nepal. However, the Rana Government feared them as activities of insurrections and oppressed such movements, charging the people involved with sedition. A valuable documentation of these movements can be found in the study of Pokharel (2010). Although the documentation provides an outline of each movement, they provide a useful guidance for further study and analysis of several movements as well. Overall, they can be grouped into two types: Social reformation oriented movements and political rights oriented movements. The latter group targeted the resistance against the Rana Autocracy and the goal for their ouster. Rana autocratic regime was opposed by many who launched resistances in several ways by individuals and through organizations. I shall explore some of the events and movements we have come to know.

First, Arya Samaj (Society of Arya) was one of several movements that aimed for social reformation. It intended to reform the social practices of child marriage, polygamy, untouchable cast system and idol worship following the teachings of an Indian reformist named Swami Dayananda. It was established by Madhav Raj Joshi in Nepal in 1896. The Rana regime not only suppressed the movement but also expelled his two sons Amarraj and Shukraraj from Durbar High School, the only school in the country (ibid.:92). This forced Madhavraj Joshi to take his family to India for their safety. Later, his younger son Shukraraj Shastri would return to Nepal to be a social reformer, writer and linguistic activist against the will of Rana oppression. I shall return to this later (See page 298.).

Despite Rana oppression, many resisted and continued activities intended for the social reformation and benefit for the people to fill the gap the Rana regime had created by their apathetic attitude toward the progress of the people. Library Parva (event) was such



an attempt that was initiated to provide an opportunity for common people to have education. Although the Rana children had the state-facilitated opportunity for education, common people were barred from education. Having come to realize the importance of, and need for, education, a group of youth sought government permission to open a public library, but the Rana ruler arrested the youth group led by Yogaweerasingh Kansakar and fined them Rs.100 each. The account of the purpose of the initiative and the members arrested differs in several sources. In one source, the initiative was politically motivated and hence leaders such as Jogveerasingh Kansakar, Harikrishna Shrestha, Dharmaraj Thapalia, Thakurnath etc were arrested and charged in the court by Bheem Sumsher (Pradhan 1991:57; Pokharel 2010:93).

Another source reports that the episode occurred in 1929 as a group of literary activists that included Basanta Mani Acharya Dixit, Hariskrishna Shrestha, Jugbir Singh<sup>301</sup> and Baikunthaa Prasad Shrestha planned to open the library. But a Ram Chandra Adhikari informed Prime Minister Juddha Sumsher of the plan. The Rana ruler fined all the activists Rs. 100 each. The object of opening the library was not realized (Acharya 1994:111-112). Except for names of the members in the group and the actions of Rana rule, the above source tallies with another source<sup>302</sup> which confirms that it was a group of literary activists led by Yogaweerasingh Kansakar that were arrested and fined in 1929 during the reign of Bhim Sumsher (1929-1932). Yogaweerasingh, a Khas Bhasa writer also contributed later to the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa, for which he was honored as one of the four pillars and a poet. I shall return to this in a proceeding section (See page 292.).

Several other groups attempted to open schools. One, a Charka Prachar (Spinning Wheel) movement started to open schools following the Gandhian footsteps in Yen (Kathmandu). It was initiated by Tulsi Meher Shrestha in 1931.<sup>303</sup> No sooner had the movement become popular and spread out to Yala (Lalitpur), Khopa (Bhaktapur), Kipu (Kirtipur) and Bhotia (Banepa), than the Rana Government suppressed it. Another group made up of those who returned home after completing studies in India opened a Mahaveera School in Khila Tva, in Yen (Kathmandu) which ran for five years. But all the teachers were arrested on no particular charges when the Rana Regime started arresting common

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<sup>301</sup> Yogaweerasingh Kansakar's name is spelled as Jogbir, Jugbir etc. by some.

<sup>302</sup> Tuladhar (2000:91).

<sup>303</sup> Kayastha (2007:59).

people indiscriminately during the mass crackdown notoriously known as *Gharpakad* (See the detail in proceeding section.). All four teachers, namely Chiniyalal Vajracharya<sup>304</sup>, Gangalal Shrestha, Anandaram Shrestha and Haribhakta Shrestha were arrested (Pokharel: 2010:93). The arrested people were imprisoned and tortured only to instigate further resistance. It was these provocations that politically motivated resistance movements used against the Rana Regime. They can be considered the second type of resistance movement which emerged against the Rana autocratic government.

### **8.2.3. Advent of Political Organizations**

Political organizations emerged in 1936 for the first time in the history of Nepal. They played important roles in resisting the Rana regime's oppression, leading to support for the peoples' revolution that overthrow the 104-year-old oligarchy.

#### ***Nepal Praja Parishad***

Nepal Praja Parishad (Nepal Peoples' Council), founded on June 2, 1936 by Tanka Prasad Acharya with a group five youths, is considered to be the post-political party and the earliest political organization that was engaged in resisting Rana oppression. It is credited for distributing handouts against the Rana Oligarchy. It began with the first handout in Kathmandu on June 22, 1940, and the second outside Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) reaching out to Bhimphedi, Birganj, Janakpur, Bhairahawa, and Butawal in the south. Despite the Rana Government publishing a notice on the Gorkhapatra Khas/Nepali daily announcing a 5000 rupee reward for anyone arresting or providing clues leading to the arrest of the members of Nepal Prajaparishad, they distributed handout for the third time on September 8 (ibid.:95). The Rana Government could not find who distributed the handouts against them, but it attributed these handouts to a serious reason for the Rana regime to perform a mass crackdown (*Gharpakad*) afterwards. Another important organization involved in resistance against the Rana Government was a civil rights committee.

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<sup>304</sup> Kayastha (2007:70).

### ***Nagarik Adhikar Samiti (Civil Rights Committee)***

The Nagarik Adhikar Samiti was founded by Shukra Raj Shastri in 1938 for the purpose of protecting civil rights. It was a citizens committee in today's terms, which aimed to awaken the citizens to their rights and protect them. However, for the Ranas, who did not tolerate civil activities, Shukra Raja and his committee posed a challenge. The committee defied the official ban on public gathering. In one such gathering held in Indracok, a main crossroad in central Kathmandu, Sukraraj Shastri gave a speech to awaken the people to their pathetic state and demanded the restoration of their civil rights. Shukraraj's oratory posed a challenge to the Rana Regime. Instead of restoring civil rights to the people, the regime arrested Shukraraj and sentenced him to death. Other members in the committee were Kedarman Vyathit, Anandaraj Joshi, Gangalal Shrestha, Muralidhar and others, who would go on to be active in resistance against Rana repression.

### ***Gharpakad (Crackdown) – 1940: Stoking Peoples' Revolution***

Gharpakad, (meaning house arrest) refers to indiscriminate arrests and mass crackdowns on many citizens by the Rana autocratic government, which conversely stoked the resistance into a revolution against them. The crackdown further consolidated the opposition groups to protest Rana oppression. The crackdown was launched on October 18, 1940 arresting anyone suspected. They first arrested Dharmabhakta Mathema, followed by Dasarath Chand, Gangalal Shrestha, Gamesh Man Singh, and Puskarnath Upreti, and later Tanka Prasad Acharya who had been in India for self-protection since the day before the handout-distributing campaign began. The Rana Government arrested him by sending a tactful wire message. Two others arrested were Dasarath Chand and Ramhari Sharma. The Rana ruler of the time, Juddha Sumsher, ordered the executions of the detained freedom fighters (Acharya 1994:175). Except for the two Brahmins, the detainees were killed by the Rana Government (Yadav 2006:266). Of the six arrested, two were killed by hanging, two were shot and two were spared from the death penalty. Shukraraj Shastri was hung to death from a tree at Pachali, Kathmandu on January 24, 1941; Dharmabhakta Mathema was hung to death next day at Shiphal, Kathmandu while Gangalal Shrestha and Dasarath Chand were shot to death on the river bank of Shobha Bhagavati, Kathmandu on the 28 of the same month. Of the four killed, the first three were Newar nationals while the fourth was a

Thakuri. Tanka Prasad Acharya and Ram Hari Sharma were spared from the death penalty because they were Bahun caste. They were sentenced to life imprisonment (Pokharel 2010:95). The 1940 crackdown is considered to be the most notorious event that the resistance movement members faced. The Rana Regime tried as hard as they could to eliminate the resistance movements and their activists. 'It was an oppressive movement of the Ranas, who punished their own citizens' (ibid:96). But the death of four freedom fighters paved the way for overthrowing Rana repression, ending the state tyranny. The way to freedom was not easy. It took a decade of further resistance to achieve. Those imprisoned since the crackdown were released only after four years. Of the 32 jailed individuals, almost all renowned poets and writers of Nepal Bhasa were included. They were Chittadhara 'Hridaya,' Siddhicharan Shrestha, Fatte Bahadur Singh, Kedar Man Vyathit, Dharma Ratna Yami, Hari Krishna Shrestha, Purnanarayan. Their contributions to Nepal Bhasa literature created a new era called 'Literature in Jail.' The writers made use of their jail years to compile more works than they had before they were jailed since October 1940. Their compiled works were taken out of jail secretly. Most of them were printed soon after they were released from jail (Tuladhar 2000:108). It was another silent resistance against Rana oppression on the Newar and their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa. The contributions by these prominent writers accumulated to a total of 18 works of different genres in Nepal Bhasa. Others who were released returned to social reform, and rights related movements, while some formed political parties outside Nepal. The resistance movement resumed with a shift to direct political activism which they supported with armed resistance. Thus began the first labor strike in a factory.

### ***Biratnagar Labour Strike - 1947***

The resistance movement, though suppressed by the Rana Regime, did not subside. On the contrary, it spread out over a larger part of the country. A labour strike in Biratnagar, (an industrialized town now) in down south of Nepal has added value to the resistance movements that began in Kathmandu with various methods. The laborers launched their strike on March 4, 1947 demanding a 35 percent increase in salary, a working hour limit of 8 hours and housing facilities. Nepali Congress acting President B. P. Koirala had joined the strikers in support of the labors on strike while the government sent a troop of 250

army men to quell the strike (ibid:96). Thus, the resistance movement continued for a period of a decade. In between, several political groups were formed.

### ***National Nepali Congress to Nepali Congress (1947-1950)***

Today, the Nepali Congress refers to a major political party in Nepal which returned to power in the 2<sup>nd</sup> CA election held in November 2013. The present party was a combination of several different parties and their factions. It started with the first formation of Nepal Rastriya Kangress (Nepal National Congress) which was formed in a conference at Bhawanpur, India on January 26, 1947. It was the second political party that emerged after Nepal Prajaparishad, which went defunct after 1940 as its leader Tanka Prasad Acharya was jailed while his fellow members<sup>305</sup> were sentenced to death by the Rana regime. In the wake of the labor strike in Biratnagar, the NRC launched a massive countrywide anti-Rana demonstration on March 13, 1947. Later, the NRC merged with the Nepal Democratic Congress (NDC)<sup>306</sup> to form the Nepali Congress (NC) on April 9, 1950 in Calcutta. It was at this meeting that they called for an armed struggle against the Rana Regime. The strategy for the revolt was adopted at two NC conferences of Bargania, India on September 26-27, 1950 before the armed revolution<sup>307</sup> was finally launched on November 6, 1950. While the founding members of the NC were B.P. Koirala, Bal Chandra Sharma, Dilli Raman Regmi, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Rudra Prasad Giri, Ganesh Man Singh Shrestha, and Tanka Prasad Acharya, who was jailed in Nepal, was appointed as the president of the merged Nepali Congress party (Acharya 1994:149).

### ***Nepal Communist Party (NCP) - 1949***

The Nepal Communist Party was established in 1949. It was the first leftist party in Nepal. The founder General Secretary was comrade Pushpalal Shrestha<sup>308</sup> while the founder members included Mana Mohan Adhikari and Kehsar Jung Rayamajhi. NCP was formed in

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<sup>305</sup> The four martyrs (Shukraraj Shastri (Joshi), Gangalal Shrestha, Dharmabhakta Mathema and Dasrath Chand) who were executed during the Gharpakad (Crackdown) 1940-41.

<sup>306</sup> Formed on August 4, 1948.

<sup>307</sup> Nepali Congress. See also [www.nepalicongress.org](http://www.nepalicongress.org).

<sup>308</sup> Younger brother of Martyr Gangalal Shrestha, and husband of Sahana Pradhan, an active woman member of NCP, who became foreign minister during the interim government of 2006-2008.

resistance to the Rana Autocracy and indirectly supported the revolution of 1950. The party was outlawed during the NC rule in 1951-1956. Later, the NCP participated in the first General Election held in 1958 and won 4 seats in the 104 member Parliament (Acharya:1994:145). We shall next explore the Revolution of 1950 in some detail.

### ***Satsalko Kranti (Revolution of 1950)***

*Satsalko Kranti* refers to the outburst of the peoples' revolution against the oppressive rule of the Rana autocracy in late 1950. The revolution launched by both civil resistance movement and the armed revolt led to the defeat of the Rana regime that liberated the whole common citizenry from 104-year-long repression, inscribing a new history in Nepal. The revolution popularly known as Satsalko Kranti (Revolution of 1950) though it was formally called the Peoples' Revolution for Democracy. It liberated not only the people from the iron hands of the Ranas but also reinstated the titular king to power and led to the formation of a new democratic government for the first time in our history.

The events are attributed to two incidents occurred in the night of November 6, 1950. People in the capital were informed that King Tribhuvan left for India, and ten hours later, an armed group of protestors launched a revolt from Birganj in the south and soon spread to various parts of the country. Widespread agitations were staged in Kathmandu by a mass protest while the armed group went on defeating the army and taking control of areas in Biratnagar, Bhairahawa, Palpa, Bhojpur, Ilam etc (Pokharel 2010:99). The uprising continued with the support of the local communities, attracted international community opinion and changed senior army officers' mindset. Hence, the uprising forced the Rana Government of Mohan Sumsher's officials to fly to New Delhi for talks. The Government of India facilitated the talk between the warring parties of the king, Rana government and the Nepali Congress. As a result King Tribhuvan returned to Nepal and declared the first day of democracy on February 18, 1951, appointing an interim government led by incumbent Prime Minister Mohan Sumsher Rana. The latter agreed to appoint five from his group and five from Nepali Congress as members of his cabinet. The interim government was entrusted to draft an interim constitution, prepare elections for a Constitution Assembly (CA) in order for people to draft a constitution of their own, and to institutionalize the democratic ideals won through the revolution.

There were three major grounds for the revolutionary uprising to succeed. Two had long histories, and one was a new situation generated at the time. The first was the century long Rana oppression of the people of Nepal, among whom the Newar suffered the most as they were the majority in the capital who braved resisting the tyranny. The Rana Oligarchy launched its autocratic rule after overpowering the reigning king making him and his descendents titular ever since 1846. The second was the accumulated impatience of the subjected people who continued resisting since the early Shah Period, finally resisting the tyranny of the 104-year-long anarchy. The third was the helpless circumstance of King Tribhuvan; the titular king had to seek support from India primarily for his own and his family's security from the Rana de facto rulers. Having read the repercussions in advance of persistent Rana aggression and the resistance of the citizenry supported by political organizations, King Tribhuvan sought asylum in India through its embassy in Kathmandu. He flew to New Delhi in an Indian plane on November 6, 1950. His seeking India's support for his own security and the situation in Nepal undoubtedly compelled India to intervene. India facilitated the talk among the warring parties: The king, the Rana Government and the Nepali Congress representing the people. The Indians help for our internal conflict carried Indian mediation as a reward on every major conflict and political development in Nepal since then. But, in comparing the events of how Prithvinarayan went to Varanasi for Indian support - to conquer Nakvah<sup>309</sup> of Nepal Mandala in 1743, when his father's army was defeated<sup>310</sup> in 1737, his consequent attempt to conquer Nepal which he lost in 1747, and when King Rajendravikram's midnight visit to give the intelligence to the British Residency in 1846 - with King Tribhuvan's seeking asylum in India and the latter's mediation in 1950 - neither the titular king nor India can be blamed for the consequences that are the Rana oppression's alone. The revolution was retaliation against the 104-year-long oppression.

The armed revolt led by the Nepali Congress and civil resistance was joined by the people from different parts of the country. The Newar agitation was a decisive force that made the revolution succeed as the main mass protest was staged in the capital. The revolution forced the Rana Government to finally give into the resistance movement, and paved way for the formation of a new and democratic governance system in Nepal. In

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<sup>309</sup> Nakva, Noakot; Regmi (1961; 2007:97).

<sup>310</sup> Regmi (1961; 2007:91).

other words it was the end of not just hereditary rule but the tyranny and oppressive Rana rule that started eliminating the rival courtiers, overpowering the reigning king in 1846 and imprisoning him in July 1847<sup>311</sup>. Then, the repressive rule put to death four freedom fighters, among whom were three Newar leaders, in January 1941. The event freed the people and reinstated the titular king to power. Meanwhile, India became indirectly involved henceforth in making the governments in Nepal. All these events occurred for the first time. In short, it was a celebrated victory of the resistance movement in the history of Nepal.

### ***Jana Andolan ((Peoples' Movement - 1990)***

The second resistance movement is known as *Jana Andolan* (People's Movement) in 1990. It was launched against the autocratic Panchayat rule imposed by King Mahendra in 1960 after dissolving the democratically elected government. The three-decade-old Panchayat autocracy was continued by his son King Birendra inciting the second major resistance movement in 1990. The movement was launched by the coalition of NC, NCP and several political and civic organizations. A new Constitution of Nepal 1990 was promulgated. It retained both king as constitutional monarch and Nepal as a Hindu kingdom, a label vehemently opposed by the supporters of secularism but sustained at the CHHE (Bahun Chetri) monopoly among the Constitution drafting members.<sup>312</sup>

### ***Lokatantrik Andolan (Democracy Movement - 2006)***

The third mass movement is known as *Lokatantrik Andolan* (Democracy Movement) but popularly known as *Jana Andolan II* (people's movement II). It was launched against King Gyanendra's undemocratic move in 2006 by a seven party alliance of NC, NCP and several leftist parties, indirectly supported by the underground NCP (Maoist). King Gyanendra, who succeeded King Birendra after the palace massacre that killed all of Birendra's family and several members of the royalty in 2001, attempted a repeat of what his father Mahendra succeeded at in 1960. Gyanendra dissolved the parliament, appointed and fired the government as he wished until he finally took over the government under his direct rule. The political parties and people who were placid to his direct rule at the beginning

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<sup>311</sup> Bajracharya (1996:22).

<sup>312</sup> From interview with Dr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar.



eventually forced the king out of power on April 6, 2006. The *Jana Andolan-2* led to abolition of the autocratic monarchy once and for all on May 28, 2008, the first sitting of the Constitution Assembly after its election in April. Except four members, the whole house of 601 member assembly adopted the resolution to officially end the Hindu monarchy and declare a Federal Republic of Nepal based on the principles of inclusive democracy with secularism, multi-culturalism and linguistic diversity.

### **8.3. Resistance Movements against Khas/Nepali Hegemony**

Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony analyzes the hegemony of the ruling class that manipulate culture, ideology and the power they have over the people they rule. What we saw in the movements we discussed above were the resistance movements that replaced the hegemony with another hegemony belonging to the same CHHE group only under different labels. However, what is different with the hegemony Gramsci has advocated is that it aims to build a united movement with the workers in the town and peasants in the country to counter the state hegemony. In other words, Gramsci aims to defeat the hegemony rather than building another hegemony to replace the first. He also admonishes how the subjugated group should build their capacity to counter hegemony, and to learn why they fail to quell the manipulation of the ruling class. We shall explore this point in the Newar resistant movements.

#### **8.3.1. Newar Resistance Movements: Nepal Bhasa to Autonomous State**

The history of Newar resistance movement goes back to the time soon after the invasion of Nepal Mandala by Prithvinarayan Shah. As we have discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, first we saw the last king of Khopa in Nepal Mandala express his resistance against the invasion of his country. Second, we witnessed how the Chophu Newar staged the first uprising against the new rulers in 891 N.S. (1770 A.D.) who started seizing properties and the land of local Newar to be given to those loyal to Prithvinarayan. Third, the resistance launched by the afflicted parents against the merciless banishment of Newar children at the order of the reigning king. These are some early examples. Except in the case of Lakhan Thapa uprising and a couple of resistances staged by individual, almost all resistance events and movements we documented from the time of last king of Nepal

Mandala to the time of last king of Nepal above were either launched by the Newar or they joined the movements in solidarity with the people in general. However, as the Newar are the indigenous people of Nepal Mandala, the invasion by Prithvinarayan Shah forced unexpected changes in Swainigah as the three states were urbanized area. The Newar lost their three kings for Prithvinarayan Shah the new ruler. They lost their courtiers, men and women in thousands to pave the way for those who were brought in with Gorkha army. The Newar lost private properties of lands and houses to the Gorkha men and women. No sooner had Prithvinarayan Shah took over Nepal Mandala, he replaced Nepal Samvat with Saka Samvat, Nepal Lipi with Indian Devanagara lipi, he also discouraged the use of Nepal Bhasa and promoted Gorkha Bhasa. His descendents and the Ranas who overpowered the Shah ruler continued his policy of eradicating the language, culture and religion of the Newar. In response to these oppressive policies, the Newar stood up and launched their resistance from as documented above. As a movement, they first started to resist the ban on the use of their language launching the Nepal Bhasa movement to win back their linguistic rights.

The Newar movement so started has now turned into the movement that demands the right to an autonomous state. For the first time, a *Newa Swayatta Rajya – Manka Sangharsha Samiti* (Common Struggle Committee for Autonomous State of Newar: CSC for ASoN) has been formed and declared the ASoN officially at a mass gathering held at the Kathmandu Stadium (*Dasarath Rangasala*) on December 4, 2008. It was attended by hundreds of thousands of Newar living in Nepal Mandala and joining from outside districts. We shall explore the Newar movements in this section and document the events from the beginning of the Nepal Bhasa movement to the Newar movement that is now demanding ASoN.

### **8.3.2. Nepal Bhasa Renaissance: Early Stage of Newar Movement**

The Nepal Bhasa movement – I refers to the initiatives launched by a few literati who braved defying the official ban on writing in Nepal Bhasa during a period from 1909 to 1941. In 1906, the Rana Government of Chandra Shamsheer (1901-1929) officially banned:

- 1) The use of Nepal Bhasa, the language of the land and the State
- 2) The use of Nepal Samvat calendar, and

3) The documents written in Nepal Bhasa, also declared not acceptable in court.

Those that defied the ban were fined, reprimanded, jailed, their books were confiscated and some were even exiled (Lienhard 1992:4). However, the literati not only continued writing in Nepal Bhasa but also started printing, translating and educating the younger generation while restructuring the language to suit the time. Their individual resistance against the government ban on Nepal Bhasa set forth a foundation for and unprecedented renaissance in Nepal Bhasa. We shall examine their contributions to resistance in some detail.

**a) Nishthananda Vajracharya (1857-1934)<sup>313</sup>**

Pundit Nishthananda Vajracharya is credited for printing the first Nepal Bhasa book himself. Until 1029 N.S. (1908 A.D.), when he started printing his own book, authors had written books by hand and distributed hand written copies. The practice had allowed only a handful of copies of the books, hence only a few people were able to afford to get such copies. Reminded that printing emerged in renaissance Italy with the advent of a printing machine by Gutenberg<sup>314</sup> of Mainz, Germany in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe, Pundit Nishthananda printed his first book by using moveable type himself. The book became known not only as his first printed book but also the first printed book in Nepal Bhasa (Tuladhar 2001:81). The book was about the wisdom of Buddhism expressed in 21 Sanskrit stanzas translated into Nepal Bhasa. Hence it was titled '*Ekavimsati Prajnaparamita*.' Pundit Nishthananda is credited for three other books: *Lalitavistara* (Biography of Buddha) in 1034 N.S. (1913 A.D.); *Bodhicaryavatara* (The Way of the Bodhisatva) in 1042 N.S. (1921 A.D.) and *Bodhigya* (Buddhahood) in 1043 N.S. (1923 A.D.). Among them, the *Lalitavistara* was his masterpiece. He took four years to compile it (1909-1913).<sup>315</sup> It was based on a Sanskrit original biography of the Buddha. But it was not a direct translation. According to Tuladhar, it is a contribution of his own to Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa as he has taken the labor of including the events of the Buddha's life into his book referring different to sources such as Swayambhu Purana and many other Buddhist texts. Further, the language used in the book is spoken Nepal Bhasa instead of

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<sup>313</sup> 978-1055 N.S.

<sup>314</sup> Gutenberg (2013).

<sup>315</sup> 1030-1034 N.S.

conventional written language. The *Lalitavistara*, therefore, is considered to be a masterpiece that stimulated a greening renaissance in Nepal Bhasa literature. It has also inspired several prominent Newar to become Buddhist monks. Thus, Pundit Nisthananda Vajracharya became one of those great contributors to both Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa, also as one of pioneers in reviving Nepal Bhasa in resistance against the official ban on writing in Nepal Bhasa. Henceforth, he was honored as the *Gadyaguru* (Master of Prose) in the field of Nepal Bhasa and later as one of the four pillars of the Nepal Bhasa renaissance.

**b) Siddhidas Mahaju (1866-1929)<sup>316</sup>**

Great Poet Siddhidas Mahaju is a prolific poet in modern Nepal Bhasa. He is credited to have produced 44 books of poetry that included modern poetry, narrative poems, epics, short stories and essays during his short span of contribution to Nepal Bhasa. Among the language activists of his caliber, he was the first to notice the endangerment of a nation if its mother tongue is lost. It must be why his dictum became popular among the Nepal Bhasa activists and its speech community. Having lived through the gravity of the State disapproval since the advent of Gorkha rulers and subsequent ban on Nepal Bhasa by the Rana rulers, Siddhidas cautioned against the endangerment of Nepal Bhasa if something is not done. He alerted the people of that time: ‘if the language survives, the nation will survive.’ His dictum was not limited to a public statement only. Despite the official ban on the use of Nepal Bhasa, he started writing poems in simple spoken language understood by the ordinary citizenry. His messages warned that if Nepal Bhasa is endangered the nation of Newar will be in jeopardy.

Siddhidas’s statement reminds one of Herder who wrote about the importance of language and its relation with its nation. Herder in 1772 cautioned that a nation will survive as a separate group until they preserve their language as a collective inheritance and articulated that ‘a nation’s self-respect hinges upon its ability and willingness to defend itself, but its very existence is inconceivable without its own language’ (See also 3.1.1.). Exactly a century and a quarter later, Siddhidas Mahaju made a similar statement of dictum

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<sup>316</sup> 987-1050 N.S.

referring to the situation of Nepal Bhasa by alerting the Newar of the need for consciousness about Nepal Bhasa in the early twentieth century.

Siddhidas Mahaju<sup>317</sup> grew up in Newar society which was under the strict control of the Rana Oligarchy. His mother tongue Nepal Bhasa was in decline due to government restrictions on language and education. In the face of the military might of the Rana Regime, Siddhidas could do nothing except write what he saw and what he felt. He shared those social difficulties not as agonies but as advisory messages for solutions to the problems. His first poem *Bindu samasya* (Zero Problem) was published in 1026 N.S. (1905 A.D.) in *Sundari*, a journal printed in Varanasi, India. The publication is historically important as it was not only his first poem but also the first ever write-up printed in Nepal Bhasa. Since then he wrote many poems from short poetry to epics of Ramayana, accumulating 44 books. Siddhidas's poems provided a new style of poetry in modern Nepal Bhasa that was free from the hard and fast rules of the classical poetry. His modern poems alluded that even without following specific rules in writing, simple, easy and beautiful poems can be created. He was also the first to compile narrative poems, and inspired many young poets. Hence, he became known as the Padyaguru (Master of Verse) and was honored with the title of Mahakavi (Great Poet) similar to Gadyaguru (Master of Prose) title Pundit Nishthananda Vajracharya was honored with for his contribution to the promotion of prose in Nepal Bhasa. Most of Siddhidas's books were hand written ones. However, by 1040 N.S. (1919 A.D.), he was able to print his *Sajjan Hridayabharana* (Gentle Hearted) and several have been published after his death while copies of other unpublished manuscripts are archived in the library of Nepal Bhasa Parishad (Nepal Bhasa Council) in Yen (Kathmandu) (Tuladhar 2000:84). Siddhidas's work inspired the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa. His work also provided support for the resistance movement of Nepal Bhasa while influencing a group of young writers and poets in the modern period, who would take initiative in language activism. Siddhidas was mentor to second generation men of letters such as Siddhicharan Shrestha, Thakurlal Manandhar, Vaikunthaprasad Lakaul. He inspired and provided orientation to them in appreciating and writing poems (ibid.). The two men of letters, one who introduced the appreciation of prose and the other verse in Nepal Bhasa were joined by Jagatsundar Malla.

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<sup>317</sup> Alternatively known as Siddhidas Amatya.

*c) Jagatsundar Malla (1882-1952)*<sup>318</sup>

Master Jagatsundar Malla emphasized the value of education in mother tongue. At the time of the ban imposed by the Rana Government on Nepal Bhasa and education, his contribution to teaching children in Nepal Bhasa was a bold step. It was both a challenge to the harsh rule of the Government of Nepal and a valuable contribution to promote education in Nepal Bhasa. As one of very few English educated commoners, he taught English at the schools he established in 1913, first at his hometown Khopa (Bhaktapur) and in Yen (Kathmandu) after he moved from Khopa. Despite the children of the palace, courtiers and high officials being given education in English, Hindi, Urdu and Khas/Nepali at Durbar High School, the children of commoners were not allowed education. On top of that, the use of Nepal Bhasa was banned, and its speech community was losing its own mother tongue. Jagatsundar believed that ‘children will learn quicker if they are educated in their own mother tongue. It is also their right to be educated in their own mother tongue’<sup>319</sup>. He first taught English in Nepal Bhasa to children of his hometown, and the new locality he moved to. He could have become prosperous had he decided only to teach English as there was hardly anyone teaching English. But he initiated teaching in Nepal Bhasa while emphasizing the value in teaching in mother tongue (Tuladhar 2000:88). Thus, he is known to be the first man of letters in Nepal, who emphasized the value of education in one’s own mother tongue. He is also the first person that introduced the culture of translation. His first translation was *Aesop’s Fables* into Nepal Bhasa. The book with 47 translated stories is known as *Isapan daykatahgu bakhan*<sup>320</sup> (Aesop’s Fables), printed in moveable type letters in 1035 N.S. (1914 A.D.). He is also credited for translating an Italian historical novel by Petar Parly, and an English dictionary with meanings in Khas/Nepali. Master Jagatsundar’s contribution to education in mother tongue influenced particularly the Nepal Bhasa speech community. Hence, he is considered to be another great pillar of the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa at the time when a strict ban was imposed by the government of his own country. His work guided the resistance movements against the official ban on Nepal Bhasa inspiring many of his followers to carry out his principles of

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<sup>318</sup> 1003-1073 N.S.

<sup>319</sup> Hriday (1102 N.S. :87) in Tuladhar (2000:88).

<sup>320</sup> वसय दयकागु वाख

teaching children in their mother tongue<sup>321</sup>. His endeavors continued even in his old age. He kept on emphasizing the need to teach children in their mother tongue. He would ask anybody he met on his morning walk around the Tinkhyah (Tundikhel) the open ground and park in the center of Yen (Kathmandu) even after the advent of democracy in 1951: ‘teach your children in their mother tongue, will you’.<sup>322</sup> He died the next year.

**d) *Yogaweerasingh Kansakar (1885-1941)***<sup>323</sup>

Yogaweerasingh Kansakar, a businessman turned modern poet, who is credited for taking an initiative in the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa. In the beginning he was writing in Khas Bhasa and most of his friends were from the Khas community. As a businessman, he was quite comfortable with whatever language he came into contact with. But his attitude towards language changed with two events: One, the strict state restriction imposed on Nepal Bhasa by the Rana Government, and the patriotism he saw among the Bengalese in Calcutta on his regular business trips. It was the Bengalese, who first took initiative to promote Hindi in Bengal, and the Bengal language at a later stage. Their mission was to promote Hindi as equal as to Urdu, which was then a de facto official language in North India. The British Government is known to have supported Urdu over Hindi. In parallel, there was a movement to promote the Bengali language, the success of which would create a new nation called Bangladesh in 1970. Yogaweerasingh was inspired by these events, and his poems were influenced by them. Though a son of a trader, he was attracted to men of letters such as Siddhidasa, Lekhanatha, Shambhuprasad, Chakrapani etc. He originally wrote in Khas Bhasa, as it was the language that had been imposed on Newar. His modern poems were laden with thoughts for mother tongue, literary advancement, social awakening and welfare. They also attracted him to social activities that benefitted the citizenry in general. He was a member of several movements that advocated Aryasamaj, Spinning-wheel, restart of Kasah Trust and initiation of public libraries when he came into contact with the journal *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* (Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa) in 1047 N.S. (1926 A.D.). Since then, every edition of this journal published a poem of

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<sup>321</sup> After democracy was restored in 1990 and mother tongue schools were permitted, the first Nepal Bhasa medium school was opened in Yen (Kathmandu) in his honor and named after him: Jagatsundar Bvanekuthi (Jagatsundar School) in 1991.

<sup>322</sup> From interview with Dr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar.

<sup>323</sup> 1006-1062 N.S.

Yogaweerasingh, so much so that he became a bilingual poet. He also became the first activist originating the renaissance of Nepal in an organized manner. His poems represented his concepts about language manifesto, religious view, business understanding and awakening education. But he also became the first to be punished for his magnanimous thinking and involvement in social movements. The Rana Government ordered him to pay Rs.10 on charges of writing a song titled *Dharmasara* (Essence of Religion) and distributing it. He was also arrested for leading a mission to the Rana prime minister to submit a petition for permission to open a library in 1049 N.S. (1929 A.D.). All of his publications were confiscated by the government<sup>324</sup>. Yogaweerasingh's contribution is best reflected by one of his own poems:

नयालयास जीर्णद्वगु अस्मि मवास रिंकन्  
रानगीय शास्त्ररत्नं मान थ्रुल्लग वीकन्<sup>325</sup>

Let us revive the waning Nepal Bhasa without being lazy  
Let us give it honor at the Indian center of higher learning<sup>326</sup>

The poem is a reflection of educational situation in Nepal at the time. It provides two explicit messages: one implies that Nepal Bhasa is waning, let us revive it without being lazy. Another is, to let us honor Nepal Bhasa at a university in India. Why India? The implicit message here is that there was no educational facility for Nepal Bhasa in Nepal and hence Nepal Bhasa is decaying. Therefore, let us provide education opportunity for Nepal Bhasa students in an Indian institute of higher learning. In true sense, Nepal did not have centers of higher learning at the time of writing this poem. Those who passed grade ten from the single high school that existed in the country were used to sit for matriculation examination to enter a university and those that passed were admitted into universities such as Calcutta and Patna in India. In a pathetic sense, the use of Nepal Bhasa was banned in the country it originated in.<sup>327</sup>

<sup>324</sup> In 1995 (1116 N.S.), Sharadchandra Bhattarai collected some non-confiscated poems written by Yogaweerasingh in Nepal Bhasa and Khas Bhasa. He edited and published them into a book titled: *Jogamandilika kavi ra kavita* (In Khas/Nepali: Poet Jogaveera and his poems).

<sup>325</sup> Yogasudha: 1949 (1070 N.S.: 1) in Tuladhar (2000:92).

<sup>326</sup> English translation is mine.

<sup>327</sup> From interview with Dr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar (February 23, 2011).



Yogaweerasingh was instrumental in bringing about Nepal Bhasa as a subject in the center of higher learning. As there was no university in Nepal, he was working together with Dharmaditya Dharmacharya to gain access to study Nepal Bhasa in Indian universities such as Calcutta and Patna. For the purpose, he was involved in supporting a group of students from Durbar High school to sit for the matriculation with Nepal Bhasa as a mother tongue subject in 1047 N.S. (1926 A.D.). The students were not allowed to sit for the mother tongue subject in Nepal Bhasa but had to sit it in Khas/Nepali to their utter disappointment. However, the students were encouraged to work for the promotion of Nepal Bhasa with an intention to introduce it into a subject of higher learning someday. Yogaweerasingh did his best to support the students but did not live to see the dreams of the students. He was arrested by the Rana Government on charges of sedition although he only led a mission to seek permission for opening a library for public use. He died soon after his release in 1062 N.S. (1941 A.D.).

***Dharmaditya Dharmacharya (1901-1962)<sup>328</sup>***

The four pillars of Nepal Bhasa renaissance that supported the Nepal Bhasa resistance movement against the Rana Government's oppression on language were joined by two other activists: Dharmaditya Dharmacharya and Shukraraj Shastri. Incidentally, both were educated abroad: India. We shall take a short look at Dharmaditya and Shukraraj respectively.

Dharmaditya Dharmacharya was the architect of the Nepal Bhasa movement and the first journalist to promote Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa. His unprecedented contribution to the revival of Nepal Bhasa and Buddhism through journalism attributes him to be one of the most respected leaders in the Nepal Bhasa renaissance. Dharmaditya rose from an ordinary nationalist student to a well-organized education planner then to the founder editor and publisher of an influential Nepal Bhasa journal: *The Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* (Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa) from 1045 N.S. (1924 A.D.). Dharmaditya Dharmacharya was a holy name he received after his dedication to the Buddhist way of life in India. Before that he was Jagatman Vaidya, son of a Sakya father who used 'Vaidya' title as his last name as he was a traditional doctor. Jagatman was studying in the University of

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<sup>328</sup> 1022-1083 N.S.

Calcutta when he learnt that the university offers mother tongue as a vernacular subject in matriculation as well as a subject in the university curriculum. He led a delegation of Nepali students already enrolled in the University to demand the Vice Chancellor to consider Khas/Nepali and Nepal Bhasa as vernacular subjects offered in the matriculation and as a course of study in the university. Although the Vice Chancellor Ashutosh Mukharji was an ardent mother tongue advocate, he recognized Khas/Nepali through a press release in 1918 as a subject of university curriculum. But Nepal Bhasa was not recognized citing lack of study materials (Tuladhar 2000:96). Dharmaditya could not believe that Nepal Bhasa could be ill-treated even in India. It was a time that Indian movements were active in the struggle for the right to mother tongue and national sovereignty. But it was different in the case of Nepal Bhasa. Tuladhar has documented how Dharmaditya felt about it as in the following:

Dharmaditya was extremely hurt with the decision of the Calcutta University that it did not recognize Nepal Bhasa as a vernacular subject in its curriculum. Disappointed Dharmaditya with the disregard for Nepal Bhasa resolved that he would dedicate himself for the promotion and preservation of Nepal Bhasa. Consequently, he launched a movement to promote Nepal Bhasa while abroad. In order for progress and prosperity of this language, he dedicated whole of his life.<sup>329</sup>

Dharmaditya realized that it was not an easy task to produce study materials alone. His resolution bred contemplation then a discovery that it is through print media that information can be disseminated to awaken people's concern and support to produce study materials. With this goal, he launched a monthly journal in Nepal Bhasa for the first time and named it as *Buddhadharma* (Buddhism) in Calcutta. He had two worthy reasons for naming the journal he wanted to use to promote Nepal Bhasa this way. One was that he had already been impressed by Buddhism studying under Anagarika Dharmapala, the celibate preacher of Buddhism from Sri Lanka, stationed in Calcutta and running Mahabodhi Society, an organization formed by Dharmapala for the preservation of Buddhist heritage and promotion of Buddhism in India. Dharmapala is credited for wining back the Buddhagaya temple from Hindu control and founding a well-organized management body to maintain and preserve the sacred Bodhitree, under which ascetic Siddhattha attained enlightenment (became the Buddha). Two, Dharmaditya knew that it was impossible to

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<sup>329</sup> Tuladhar (2000:96).

launch any paper or journal in Nepal. There was no journal publication in Nepal at the time and he was sure the Rana regime would never allow it. Hence, he approached the Mahabodhi Society headquarters in Calcutta for support and launched the journal '*Buddhadharma*' (Buddhism) in 1045 N.S. (1924 A.D.). By that time, he had already followed Anagarika Dharmapala and was leading a celibate life under the name of Dharmaditya Dharmacharya. Thus, Dharmaditya became the first journalist, editor and publisher in the history of Nepal Bhasa Journalism. Although his primary goal was to prepare study materials of Nepal Bhasa for higher learning, he was so impressed with Buddhism that he decided to name the journal first as 'Buddhism' and promote it together with Nepal Bhasa. 'Nepal Bhasa' was added only after its second issue. Besides, Buddhism became a source of important materials for his project. The *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* (Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa) played an important role in disseminating both Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa. It published articles of morally valuable Buddhist teachings together with Nepal Bhasa literary materials. The journal accomplished three important goals: One, to publish articles; two, to encourage and attract both writers and readers; and three, to revive and propagate Nepal Bhasa and Buddhism in Nepal Bhasa. It introduced prominent writers such as Yogaweerasingh, Vaikunthprasad Lakaul, Indunada, Fattebahadur Singh, Chittadhar 'Hriday,' Laxminani, Mahaprajna, Harikrishna, Tulsimeher, Ratnaman, Purnaman Sakya, Siddhiratna etc. (Tuladhar 2000:97). The *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* journal became the undeclared official mouthpiece of the Nepal Bhasa renaissance and backbone for Nepal Bhasa resistance movement. As the first and only journal in Nepal Bhasa, it published article and write-ups in several genres of prose and verse in preparation for publishing textbooks. After the revolution in 1951, the materials thus published were adopted as textbooks when Nepal Bhasa was recognized as a subject of study at Nepal National Academy in Biraganj, where Dharmaditya himself returned to teach. But his goal was to introduce Nepal Bhasa as subject of studies at tertiary level. Yogaweerasingh, who was introduced into Nepal Bhasa literary by the *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* shared Dharmaditya Dharmacharya's wishes as his, too.

Dharmaditya's work was not limited to editing and publishing the journal. But he was responsible for entire production of the journal and distribution of its copies in Nepal and India. Moreover, he conducted research on Nepal Bhasa, literature and Buddhism;

analyzed important arguments; translated Buddhist literatures from Pali and Sanskrit languages into Nepal Bhasa. He was the first Newar hence Nepali to have published an important research work on Nepal Bhasa and its literature which analyzed manuscripts from its beginning in the ancient period up to literatures published by him. According to Tuladhar, this was his best and most valuable work. It was a work of many years of research based on volumes of books written and preserved in the library of the Asiatic Society in Bengal. It was an unprecedented effort nobody has attempted again. He presented this work first at All India Intellectuals Assembly in 1047 N.S. (1926 A.D.), published in the *Buddhadharma wa Nepal Bhasa* in installments and finally published under the title of *Nepal Bhasa and its Literature*. It was through this research that Dharmaditya presented enough evidence of the importance of Nepal Bhasa, Nepal Samvat (calendar) and Mhapuja, the most important cultural event in the social life of the Newar. In 1048 N.S. (1927 A.D.), he was the first to suggest and voice that<sup>330</sup>:

- 1) The original name of the language of Nepal is Nepal Bhasa, not Newari. It must dually be rectified.
- 2) Nepal Samvat is the national calendar of Nepal. It must be put into practice for the official use.
- 3) Mhapuja must be celebrated as the main part of Nepal Samvat New Year celebration.

Dharmaditya was both a preacher and practitioner. He believed that any project must be well planned and executed properly. His journal was a product of such a plan, which he and several friends brought out through an organization. It was the Nepal Bhasa Sahitya Mandala founded at Dharmarajika Vihara in Calcutta in 1048 N.S. (1927 A.D.).

Today, Dharmaditya's thoughts and plans have been executed to a greater extent. He saw the Rana Regime overthrown and tasted the dawn of democracy for a while. But he had to witness the re-takeover of the democratic government by the monarchy during his last days. He died in 1962, hence missing both the second Nepal Bhasa movement in 1965 and the day the Nepal Samvat was reinstated as Nepal's national calendar in 1129 N.S. (2008 A.D.).

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<sup>330</sup> In Dharmacharya (Year 5: 1-3). *Nepal Samvat, Mhapuja wa ratriya utsav* (In Nepal Bhasa: Nepal Samvat, Mhapuja and National Festivals) cited in Tuladhar (2000:99).

***Shukra Raj Shastri (1013-1061)***<sup>331</sup>

Shukraraj is doubly honored as a leader in resistant movements in Nepal. First of all, he was one of four national martyrs who sacrificed as freedom fighters against Rana tyranny. At the same time, he was one of the founder supporters of Nepal Bhasa renaissance, which sustained the Nepal Bhasa movement. His call of ‘Hey you, children wake up, open up your eyes and stand on your feet!’<sup>332</sup> to stand against injustice during Rana regime is well remembered even today.

Shukraraj originally contributed to the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa by writing the first grammar books, as there were no grammar books despite Nepal Bhasa being a full-fledged language. But it was not standardized. The vacuum was even felt by Brian Houghton Hodgson,<sup>333</sup> a British resident in Nepal. Shukraraj filled this vacuum exactly after a century by publishing the first Nepal Bhasa grammar textbook in 1048 N.S. (1927 A.D.). It is considered the first effort to standardize Nepal Bhasa. A second Nepal Bhasa grammar book was written by Hans Jorgensen<sup>334</sup> of Denmark. Shukraraj was also the first writer to compile children’s literature in Nepal Bhasa. In 1050 N.S. (1929 A.D.), he wrote several books: one was *Nepal Bhasa Varnamamala*, (Nepal Bhasa Alphabet) meant for primary level children while two were titled in modern style: Nepal Bhasa Reader-1, and Nepal Bhasa Reader-2. The two books were meant for encouraging children to gain wider knowledge through stories. Shukraraj was not only a writer in Nepal Bhasa but also an orator fluent in several languages. He was born in Varanasi as his father Madhavraj Joshi had to move to India to escape harassment from the Rana Regime for a social welfare movement<sup>335</sup> he started in Nepal. Shukraraj studied Vedanta Shastra (Philosophy of the Vedic religion) in Dehradon and passed with the first division for which he won a title of ‘Vidyabhushan’ given by the Government of India. Henceforth, he used ‘Shastri’ as surname instead of his family name ‘Joshi.’ He was equally interested in the socio-political

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<sup>331</sup> 1892-1940 N.S.

<sup>332</sup> ‘हं जक मरु दँदां मिखा ङिगलँ कँकां गुनि ङियाँ चूवा’ Tuladhar (2000:93).

<sup>333</sup> British Resident in Nepal for ten years from 1833. He had lived in Yen (Kathmandu) from 1820 until he moved to Darjeeling in 1845. During his time in Nepal, he collected a huge number of books which are preserved in 100 bound volumes in the British Library in London.

<sup>334</sup> A Grammar of the Classical Newari - Hans Jorgensen published by Sktkoshas in 1939 (1060 N.S.).

<sup>335</sup> Nepali leader of Aryasamaj movement.

advancement of the people and the country. Unlike the men of letters who have taken indirect steps to support the resistance movement, Shukraraj was directly involved in resistance against the Rana regime, and bravely criticized the blatant oppression. He formed *Nagarik Adhikar Samiti* (Citizen's Right Committee) movement<sup>336</sup> with a group of 21 youths. They included leaders such as Kedarman Vyathit, Anandaraj, Gangalal, Muralidhar etc. Shukraraj led committee organized public gatherings from one locality to another in Yen (Kathmandu) to awaken the people in different ways. One way was to organize public gatherings and speak against Rana oppression. Documenting on the activities of the *Nagarik Adhikar Samiti*, Pokharel notes the following:

The commendable lecture given by Shukraraj Shastri in Indrachok against the oppression of Rana Government proved a big challenge. He was arrested and given the capital punishment. The Citizen's Right Committee was mercilessly suppressed by the Rana Government. But the stages of the movement increased one after other calling for the time of change.<sup>337</sup>

Thus, Sukraraj Shastri goes down in the history of the resistance movements as a doubly honored leader. He is honored for his bravery as a national martyr against Rana tyranny and remembered as a charioteer of the Nepal Bhasa renaissance. The Nepal Bhasa renaissance navigated a complex political situation to sustain the Nepal Bhasa movement. We shall see below how the Nepal Bhasa movement continued and what achievements it would make.

In analyzing the contributions of these men of letters, it is clear that their individual initiatives paved way for revival of Nepal Bhasa and Buddhism, and for awakening the concerned people to resist the government obstruction in the development of Nepal Bhasa and Buddhism. Pundit Nishthananda Vajracharya made use of the innovation of the printing press to provide an unprecedentedly greater number of books than the amount produced by hand copying used in the past. For the first time in 1029 N.S. (1908 A.D.), Buddhist texts in Nepal Bhasa were distributed among a larger number of readers than in the past. In Anderson's term, Nishthananda's printed Buddhist books in Nepal Bhasa 'played an important role in forming a new imagined community' of Nepal Bhasa readers (See also 3.1.4.).

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<sup>336</sup> Pokharel (2010:94).

<sup>337</sup> *ibid.* Khas Bhasa original. Translation into English is mine.

Great Poet Siddhidas Mahaju's caution about possible endangerment of a nation if its language deteriorates should have opened eyes of many people who were getting used to the fragmented common sense fabricated by the CHHE that Khas Bhasa is the national language of Nepal. His call prevented attempts to follow the commonsense blindly. Siddhidas not only reminded people of the inseparable link between the language and the nation advocated by Herder but also of Gramsci's warning that following fragmented common sense may be detrimental to one's own survival (See 5.1.4.).

Master Jagat Sundar Malla's advocacy of education in mother tongue and the textbooks he published should open a new avenue of knowledge of the world in Nepal Bhasa. His emphasis on education in mother tongue from childhood reflects the arguments Bourdieu has put forward with regard to linguistic habitus one acquires in early childhood. According to Bourdieu, the habitus so acquired in the early childhood 'is inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable' (See 5.6.2.1.).

Yogaweerasingh and Dharmaditya advocated higher levels of Nepal Bhasa education and campaigned for instituting Nepal Bhasa as both a matriculation and a course study in the university. Yogaweerasingh promoted the cause by writing poems as well as providing educational facilities such as opening a library while Dharmaditya contributed by making use of journalism for the first time. His project with regard to dissemination of Nepal Bhasa and Buddhism were based on his research, planning and organization. His activism, though launched outside Nepal, played a key role in designing the framework for Nepal Bhasa resistant movement indirectly while it contributed immensely to the renaissance of Nepal Bhasa. Meanwhile, Shukraraj Shastri played not only an invaluable role in promoting Nepal Bhasa but also gave his self-sacrifice for the betterment of the society he cared for. Awakened Shukraraj encouraged others to awaken, see and stand against the oppressive Government of Nepal. The initiative, contribution and self-sacrifice of these six leaders set the foundation of both the revival of Nepal Bhasa and the resistance movement against Rana tyranny. We shall see how this awakening stimulated political awakening against the persistent government oppression against its own citizens.

### **8.3.3. Political Awakening of the Newar (1941-50)**

Newar-led resistance movements have emerged, not simply for the sake of opposition to an immigrant power, but to fight against the cynical oppression of the state mechanism structured since the invasion of the Gorkha army led by Prithvinarayan Shah in 1769. The structure of the invasion of Nepal Mandala targeted a gradual eradication of not only language, culture and religion but also the ownership of land and places of abode; the displacement of the whole Newar civilization has been well planned since the beginning. Events in the 240-year-old history of invasion by Shah intruders continue the plan. But the indigenous Newar have failed to notice this master plan of destruction. Their approach to resistance is so weak that their movement is politically naïve and diplomatic. In other words, ‘the Newar resistance is nothing but a passive militancy or only a cultural militancy’ (Shakya 1998). ‘It was not clear whether the Newar intention was limited to periodical resistance or to build their own government to respond to Newar grievances or resolve their demands. All the past movements were limited only to mild resistance activities’ (Shakya 2011:13). Hence, some movement leaders have pointed out the need to change the Newar approach to their movements. ‘Movements mean the activities that are strongly committed to bring in changes. Movements must be politically motivated. Movement is meant for a well organized struggle. Movements must be well coordinated. All those rising for social welfare, resistant activists and revolutionists must unite in the direction of Newar autonomy’ (Shakya 1998). Within the last fifteen years, the concept of autonomy has developed among Newar leaders of both political and social activism as an alternative solution to the state indifference to Newar demands (See also 7.5.).

#### ***The Newar Demands:***

The demands of the Newar, the native people of Nepal Mandala, are products of state oppression. They were not illegitimate demands. The Newar were forced to demand to reinstate their legitimate rights because the state mechanism arbitrarily nullified Nepal Bhasa. The Newar resistance movement was meant to oppose the government’s unilateral arbitration and to win back the legitimate rights they had enjoyed in the past. The demands and the background for them can be summarized as in the following:



1) For recognition of Nepal Bhasa and its reinstatement into its past position. The Newar had to resist the imposition of the ban on Nepal Bhasa imposed by the Rana Government of Chandra Shumser since 1905, and demand the recognition and reinstatement of Nepal Bhasa into its past position. Nepal Bhasa has been a language of the citizenry of Nepal Mandala since ancient times, and the state language since the Malla period. The Chandra Shumser government not only replaced Nepal Bhasa with Khas/Nepali as the state language but also banned its use among its native speakers, the Newar of Nepal Mandala. The Panchayat Government imposed a Khas/Nepali only policy while condemning Nepal Bhasa. The Newar have resisted this arbitrary imposition and have been demanding the recognition and reinstatement of Nepal Bhasa into its past position. As we saw in two constitutions of 1990 and 2007, the provisions in them articulated paving the way for change. But they have remained constitutional provisions only. They have not been made enforceable laws yet.

2) To provide Nepal Bhasa as a language in education curriculum from primary school to tertiary level. As aforementioned, Nepal Bhasa has been the language of people and State of Nepal Mandala. Nepal Bhasa has been in use as a language of the royal court, public services, education, publication and private communication, in the royal court, court of justice, diplomatic communication, religious, social, legal documents; all have been written in Nepal Bhasa. Since the ban on Nepal Bhasa, people have been deprived of learning, using and knowing the historic past because they have lost the knowledge of this language. Thousands of manuscripts written on a variety of subjects have been either destroyed or lie unattended in archives and in unknown places of private homes or collections abroad. Therefore, knowledge of Nepal Bhasa is imperative and the linguistic scholarship and activists have been demanding Nepal Bhasa education from primary school to tertiary level. These demands have attracted attention from the political leadership and some willing officials (for example in the Department of Education), yet the majority of CHHE refuse to budge. As a result, some worthy multilingual education projects have stagnated in the same department.

3) To reinstate the name Nepal Bhasa, replacing the term 'Newari' imposed by the monarchy and its attendants. The term Nepal Bhasa has been used for the spoken language in Nepal since ancient times, articulated in the Jayasthiti Code, a complete law enacted by

King Jayasthiti Malla in the year 500 N.S. (1380 A.D.). Nepal Bhasa has been taught as a subject of tertiary studies. Many Newar, non-Newar and even foreign students have studied it. It was on May 11, 1961 that a directive was issued by the Ministry of Education to use 'Newari' for Nepal Bhasa. This arbitrary imposition was made the moment King Mahendra took over direct rule in 1960, dismantling the democratically elected government. It is quite clear that anti-democratic forces were involved in imposing 'Newari' on Nepal Bhasa, the state language of the country, and the mother language of the indigenous Newar people. King Mahendra's single language policy of 'Khas/Nepali only' added insult to Nepal Bhasa's injury. Thus, it should be clear how the seed for the Nepal Bhasa resistance movement was sowed by a state agency which was responsible for the country's education policy. The Newar could not help but to accept the state agency's challenge to launch their resistance movement openly in 1965, a resistance lasting 14 months against the government's cynically anti-Nepal Bhasa policy. As discussed in the last chapter, there was genuine political will to rectification of the past mistakes, but the government decisions are implemented at the discretion of bureaucracy dominated by the CHHE (See also 1.6.). There is no guarantee whether any law will be implemented.

4) To provide public information in Nepal Bhasa. The fourth demand of the Newar is not new either. The Newar are simply demanding the government authority to reinstate Nepal Bhasa as it was in the past that all public information was distributed in Nepal Bhasa until the Rana Regime disbanded the practice and King Mahendra ignored its importance. Thus, the resistance movement against the 'Khas/Nepali Only' policy is one incited by the government's own indifferent policy, not because the Newar are against Khas/Nepali Bhasa in particular. The Newar are demanding resumption of the arbitrarily abandoned practice of providing public services in Nepal Bhasa at the Municipality of Kathmandu, and other towns of Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Thimi and radio broadcastd. The Panchayat Government's 'Khas/Nepali only' policy blocked all those practices. There were some attempts to resume the practice when political changes have occurred. But in practice it has stagnated at the policy level.

5) To reinstate Nepal Samvat as the national calendar of Nepal. The demands the Newar people have been making look, at times, so absurd that a section of people of Nepal, in this case the Newar, are demanding to reinstate the language of the land to its past

position. However, the government in charge has been oppressing those who demand so, bewildering many, including the scholars. The demand for reinstating the Nepal Samvat as national calendar is analogous to the demand for recognition of Nepal Bhasa. Nepal Samvat, the state calendar of Nepal, had been in use for over a thousand years in every sphere of public and private life of the people including the royal court. But the Rana Government of Chandra Sumsher not only disbanded the use of Nepal Samvat but also banned it from public use from 1905, when he banned the use of Nepal Bhasa. The last demand of the first phase of the Nepal Bhasa resistance movement was incited by the Rana Regime's arbitrary imposition of a ban on the national calendar that had been in use for exactly 1026 years when it was banned. As an indigenous people, the Newar of Nepal Mandala have advocated for the government's responsibility to preserve and promote national heritage. Nepal Samvat is just as much national heritage as Nepal Bhasa. After a long struggle, the government elected after the CA election in 2008 reinstated Nepal Samvat as the national calendar of Nepal. The official decision of the cabinet was proclaimed at the mass gathering of the 1129<sup>th</sup> New Year. But the decision taken some five years ago has yet to be implemented as an enforceable law.

#### **8.4. Nepal Bhasa Movement - II: Demand for Language Rights (1965)<sup>338</sup>**

The five demands of the Newar discussed above set the basic background for the Newar resistance movement against government oppression against Nepal Bhasa. But it was on April 13, 1965 that another arbitrary government decision set in motion the actual launching of the Newar resistance movement. The Newar came down to the street and demonstrated their opposition to the government oppression on Nepal Bhasa. The resistance campaign lasted for a period of 14 months making it a historically distinct resistance movement launched by the Newar people, perhaps the longest in the world.

The Panchayat Government established by King Mahendra not only dismantled newly instituted democratic institutions, but also started constructing a Nepal of Khas/Nepali and its speech community led by Khas and Bahun and their religion Hinduism. Those Non-Khas and Non-Hindu people were treated as second class citizens. As a part of the autocratic Panchayat policy, the government did not tolerate even a 5 minute news

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<sup>338</sup> 1086 N.S.

broadcast and a 15 minute weekly program on radio. Radio Nepal arbitrarily terminated the radio broadcast of news and a feature program in Nepal Bhasa on April 13, 1965. The program had been aired since the establishment of Radio Nepal soon after the revolution that ousted the Rana Oligarchy and founded a democratic government on February 18, 1951. The termination had been made public only five days before through a notice in the *Gorkhapatra*<sup>339</sup>, the Khas/Nepali daily. No sooner was the notice seen by the Newar activists than many organizations issued press releases expressing opposition to Radio Nepal's decision. Others joined the public demonstration against this decision. Hundreds of thousands of Newar gathered at Itumbaha to express their opposition to the government decision. The demonstration of opposition was expressed not through agitation but through a peaceful resistance planned by Loojah Puchah (Nepal Bhasa Activist Group).

In response to the unilateral decision of Radio Nepal, the Loojah Puchah decided to launch a peaceful resistance in their meeting held the previous day (Tuladhar 2000:116). They organized an unprecedented literary convention held in the open ground of Itumbaha, the largest temple ground in Yen (Kathmandu) as protests and agitations were banned under the Panchayat Government. At the convention, poems that reflected the distress of losing linguistic rights were recited and satirical poems added values to their opposition. Speeches delivered on the topic of literature disseminated about government oppression gained enough support for the struggle to protect linguistic rights. In other words the Nepal Bhasa movement demonstrated that resistance against government oppression can be expressed through literary conventions (Shakya 2011:22). Thus various Newar groups and organizations started organizing peaceful protests. The Sewa Khala<sup>340</sup> (Service Group), organized the Nepal Bhasa movement through literary conventions every Saturday at different Twah<sup>341</sup> in Kathmandu giving voice against the government oppression against their mother tongue.

Further established literary organizations such as Chosapasa, Trichandra College Inter-college Nepal Bhasa Literature Club, Nepal Bhasa Nhyajya Khala, Jhee Puchah Bode, Pasapuchah from different areas organized peaceful gathering and expressed opposition to

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<sup>339</sup> The government-owned newspaper.

<sup>340</sup> Leaders of this group included: Durga Lall Shrestha, Isvarananda Shresthacharya, Raja Shakya, Hitakaraveer Singh, Ganesh Sayami, M. K. Kalpit, Pushparatna Tuladhar, Mangalman Shakya, Padmaratna Tuladhar, Vishnu Chitrakar etc.

<sup>341</sup> Nepal Bhasa term for locality. Tole in Khas/Nepali.

the government decision of removing Nepal Bhasa programs from the radio. Despite all these oppositions, Radio Nepal terminated the program on April 13. Though the government's unilateral decision disappointed the general Newar people, the Nepal Bhasa activists did not give up. They continued the peaceful resistance with notable patience.

#### **8.4.1. Delegation to the King**

On April 17, a delegation led by prominent Nepal Bhasa activist Prembahadur Kasah and other prominent Newar personalities such as Bhikkhu Sudarshan, Hitakarabir Singh, Paramananda Vajracharya, Durgalal Shrestha, Suryabahadur Piva approached the royal palace to request the king revert the government decision terminating the only radio broadcast for the Newar community in Nepal Bhasa. But King Mahendra did not see this delegation citing lack of time (Tuladhar 2000:116). The Nepal Bhasa movement continued with literary convention from one locality to another inside Yen (Kathmandu) and the convention style movement reached out not only to cities of Yala (Lalitpur), Khopa (Bhaktapur), but also to towns and villages such as Thakva (Thankot), Balambu, Kipu (Kirtipur), Nangan, Panagan, Bosigan and many others. These conventions were organized by several clubs, groups and organizations that were especially formed for the said purpose. The Nepal Bhasa movement stimulated the establishment of many Nepal Bhasa groups, clubs and organizations in unprecedented numbers. The movement also inspired Newar women to join these conventions and even to set several women's circles. One notable circle was the Jhee Sakalen circle led by Suwarnakeshari Chitrakar, who is now the vice president of a political party advocating Newar rights. The women's circle also published the newsletter 'Sinhajya' (meaning 'farming'). The Nepal Bhasa movement also stimulated publication from leaflet to books including newsletters, newspapers and magazines. With the expansion of the Nepal Bhasa movement in and around Kathmandu, many publications started advocating the need to resume radio programs in Nepal Bhasa while criticizing the government move. Several of those publications were Nepal Bhasa, Samay, Matrubhoomi, Samaj, Nepali, Arati, Samiksha, Lumbini, Commoner, Nepal Times, Situ and Sinhaja (ibid.:117). Besides, the Nepal Bhasa movement became an eye opening movement that the government could not ignore them any more. Conventionally, one would expect any responsible government would invite the movement leaders or activist for talks. But it did

not happen in Nepal under Panchayat Government. Instead the Government played tactics from coercion to divide and rule strategy.

First, the activists were arrested and imprisoned. Bhikkhu Sudarshan, a Buddhist monk scholar of both Buddhism and Nepal Bhasa, was arrested and imprisoned for 9 months for the sermon he gave at a Nepal Bhasa literary convention at Trichandra College, while Hitakaraveersingh Kansakar was imprisoned for a similar period for the speech he made at Lubhu convention. Mangal Man Shakya was arrested for reciting a poem at the convention organized by 'Sahityaya Mulukha' at Yala (Lalitpur).<sup>342</sup> This made many prominent elderly literati reluctant to join the Nepal Bhasa movement's organized conventions. Elder leader such as Siddhicharan Shrestha, Ratnadhajoshi, Asaram Shakya, Vaikunthaprasad Lakaul and Chittadhar 'Hriday' were not seen in these conventions (Shakya 2011:24). This was most probably because the elder leaders had faced harsh imprisonment during Rana rule and by the time of Nepal Bhasa movement in 1965, most of them were over sixty years of age.

Secondly, the government's 'divide and rule' strategy played well among the Nepal Bhasa activists. Government agents were sent to infiltrate the conventions and create dissension among the Nepal Bhasa activists. By the latter part of the movement, convention organizers went apart attracting lesser and lesser participation of the people. Some attribute them to attempting to input communist ideology into the convention. Thus, the Nepal Bhasa movement-organized literary convention started from Shreegha Vihar on April 27, 1965 and attracted the largest crowd in Itumbaha gathering ended with the last convention at Madubahi in June 1966. The goal of the movement to reinstate the radio broadcast in Nepal Bhasa was not achieved. However, the Nepal Bhasa movement made other important achievements, most importantly recognition among the Newar people.

#### **8.4.2. Nepal Bhasa Literary Convention: A Pseudonym Resistance Movement**

The Nepal Bhasa movement – II that lasted for a period of 14 months has also inscribed in the Newar the awareness of their linguistic rights. It was launched under the name of Nepal Bhasa Literary Convention (NBLC) to avoid government obstruction and harassment. It further awakened the Newar of their political rights and how to defend them. Of hundreds

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<sup>342</sup> Kayastha and Rajkarnikar (2004:28); Shakya (2011:25).

of songs sung and poems recited during the Nepal Bhasa movement in 1965, some excerpts of those songs explain the purpose and meaning of the NBLC. They were compiled by Durgalal Shrestha, who was later honored as ‘the poet of the people’ (Janakavi). At times, Durgalal himself recited a song or poem to welcome the audience. All other speeches, poems and songs<sup>343</sup> followed his initial contribution. One such welcome song is as follows:

नृगलय् मिगयाः स्याग यायगु	The situation dictates us today
मीग वृल्लं (थो सयक्काविल	To speak out indignant hearted
जिमिनं मनद् स्याँ (थं क्लिलगु	Pearls fill our eyes though we want
किन् मिस्रँ मागि दंक् विल	To smile open hearted like an opened flower

Despite wishes to welcome the audience with open hearts and smiles like a flower in full blossom, the situation had not permitted that to be so. This was the situation the people had to live disheartened that the single language policy of the Government of Nepal did not spare even a 15 minute Nepal Bhasa program a week nor a 5 minute Nepal Bhasa news program a day over the state owned radio while the rest of the whole week and whole day were allocated for Khas/Nepali programs and news.

In Nepal Bhasa literature, pearl is simile to both drops of water when falling on lotus leaves, and tears that fall from peoples’ eyes, while flower is a metaphor for friendly smiles. I used ‘indignant hearted’ for a term *mitaya nugalay* (meaning full of fire in heart, or burnt hearted) as the Nepal Bhasa phrase expresses a compact meaning of a heavy heart, full of sadness and agony. Hearts of the Newar were burnt by the government’s ill treatment to Nepal Bhasa, the language of the land. No language can either exist on its own nor stand by itself. It is inseparably intertwined with the country, its art and culture. The following combination of excerpts from a couple of songs compiled and recited by Durgalal at the convention speaks of the hearts of the majority of Newar.

जिगु दस छ यः, छजिगः अगि यः	I adore, I cherish my beloved country
थुलि यःकि अद्द, गुलि यः गुलियः	I know not how much I love my country

Attempts at translation of these two lines probably attests to how difficult it is to provide the same meaning from one language to another. The country is personified by the

<sup>343</sup> English translation to all poems and songs in this study are mine.

term *chha* (meaning you). A literal translation will turn out to be: ‘My country, I love you, I love you so much.’ The second line may mean: ‘How much I love, I can not describe it in size, amount or level of my love to you.’ Moreover, the lines below express an unimaginable distress if a country ceased to exist for one to call one’s own.

जिगु दस धका गन धायगु मदे	When I have no country to call my own
थन दाय् श्वथं दुख मगु छु दे?	What an unimaginable distress will it be?

Rightly, the country one lives in cannot be called a country of one’s own, if one’s language, art and culture ceased to exist there. It will be for sure a foreign country. The two lines below define what would constitute a country of one’s own: A country where one’s language, art and culture are well treated, hence one would want to live there forever.

मीगु राय् व कला गन संवृति दु	Where there are my language, art and culture
जिगु दस व खः जि सदाँ अन दु	That is my country where I shall be living forever

Loving a language is both patriotism, and imagination, too. Anderson (1991) compares this passion for language to a lover’s eye: ‘What the eye is to lover – that particular, an ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue-is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and future is dreamed’ (Anderson 1991:154). Durgalal’s imaginative empathy to his subjects’ patriotism is shared in the following:

मीगु रासा मन् धाःसा	When our language ceases to exist
गय् थ नयाः मीगु ऊळ्?	How will Nepal be our country?

The language of Nepal is Nepal Bhasa. It has been the language of the people from ancient times and the language of the State (*Desa Bhasa*) until the immigrant rulers usurped Nepal Bhasa to name their language Khas Bhasa as Nepali and imposed ‘Newari’ on Nepal Bhasa. Some of the charlatan experts of Nepal still find it difficult to rectify themselves. We are not sure whether it is because old habits die hard or, as Bourdieu has rightly cautioned, that habits once learnt will affix to one’s body as sub-dispositions, and become hard to change (Thompson 1991:17).

The organizers of the Nepal Bhasa movement in 1965 were determined despite the harassments of the government, particularly their constant arrest of the organizers and speakers at the conventions despite the pseudonym of the gatherings. What confused the



government authority was how to target particular leaders because the movement was not led by particular leaders. The conventions were held at different localities under auspicious of different clubs and groups or sometimes individual's houses. But when the government succeeded in infiltrating the agents in the Nepal Bhasa movement, the movement started collapsing. Another poem of Durgalal's (which became a hit a long time later) reflects the anguish of government harassment and how the pain burst out against the blatant moves:

घाः ज्ञयाः जक ख्वःगु खः सी	We cry only because we are hurt
आःगुलिं सः गःगु खः	We voice only because of the pain
सी मसीनि! सी मसीनि!	Lo and behold, no we are
धःगु विं जक ख्वेगु खः	Not dead yet, no, not dead yet

Durgalal gave no more of his spontaneous overflow of powerful thoughts to let those concerned hear the voice he made on his people's behalf. He declared 'we are not dead yet,' and demanded the government take lessons from history at how painful hearts have responded. Joshi (2007:4) equals Durgalal to an *Amoghavajra* (infallible thunderbolt) that attracts our heart to his overflowing revolutionary thoughts and ideas.

आन्गः ख्वदं कू इःः स	Open the pages of history
यूःकि यो ःगिहासया	See what happens when painful hearts cried!

The two lines of his thoughts remind the oppressors of how the oppressed overthrew the 104-year-long Rana suppressive regime in 1950 with a revolution that brought about democracy in Nepal for the first time.

सी सीगु निम्नि मख्साँ	Even if it is not for our own sake
नयाःया निम्नि म्नायमाः	We must live for Nepal
सीयि दू (वेगु चीं ह	The sign of our existence itself
नयालयागु आम्ना	Is the soul of Nepal

This excerpt reflects the patriotism of the Newar towards their motherland. They consider their existence more important for the sake of their beloved country than for their own sake, for they are the symbol of the soul of Nepal.

सीयिँ वूह मवूसा – आयिँ द्दिल्लँ	Even if the victors laugh - yet if we never lose
कू ह इःः?	What will that matter?

The two short lines display not only the power of the ruler of the time and the ruling class of the CHHE but also how they misuse that power: The victors even laugh at

the losers. But for Durgalal and the people he represents, they have not yet lost. Victory has yet to follow them. This is the exact situation of state society relations in Nepal.

Thus, the Nepal Bhasa Literary Convention ended, lasting a period of fourteen months. It did not achieve its goal of reinstating the Nepal Bhasa radio programs in state radio. But the NBLC achieved consolidation of solidarity among the Newar people and the Nepal Bhasa activists, who sacrificed for the sake of their language and unity. The Nepal Bhasa movement organized in literary convention was a notable success in inscribing a disposition of knowledge about linguistic rights among the participants during the period that lasted 14 months without a break.

#### **8.4.3. Achievements of the Nepal Bhasa Movement**

The Nepal Bhasa movement was sufficiently successful in motivating the Newar people to fight for their linguistic rights, developing a tradition of participatory literary activities. Literary conventions held for a period of 14 months promoted not only awareness of language rights but also of Nepal Bhasa literature, and attracted them to its sphere (Tuladhar 2000:118). The literary convention produced a large number of writers, some of whom are now prominent contributors to Nepal Bhasa literature. Tuladhar also points out that the Nepal Bhasa movement attracted even those Newar writers who used to write in Khas/Nepali to writing in Nepal Bhasa as well as new writers. She views that Nepal Bhasa movement was a great success from the perspective of the literary development of Nepal Bhasa. The movement produced not only writers and poets but also experts with a specific genre such as the creation of satirical literature that succeeded in exposing autocratic rule through their contributions of stories and poems (ibid.). The development of writing poems particularly in a satirical genre reflects the harsh rule and strict control over the people, that they were not free to express their views. The poem writing also reflects the literacy and skills of the Newar. They amply exhibited their skills at expressing the distress, pain and suffering they have endured in poetic forms that have provided a lasting influence on the new generation of the Newar. They also reflected silent resistance against the tyranny.

Thus, the Nepal Bhasa resistance movement, commencing with the individual initiative to preserve and promote Nepal Bhasa in resistance to Rana oppression, stimulated the movement to the street demonstration and 14 months of peaceful resistance

against the Panchayat Autocracy's single language policy under pseudonym of the Nepal Bhasa literary convention. Despite the success as the convention, it was a failure as its direct objective of reversing the arbitrary decision of the government was not achieved. But the failure to achieve their language rights emboldened them to find an alternative way: The direct involvement in politics. The birth of *Newa Swayata Rajya* (Autonomous State of Newar) was attributed to this shift of approach for resistance against the oppressor. Next, I shall explore the new approach of the Newar resistance movement.

### **8.5. Newa Swayatta Rajya (Autonomous State of Newar – [ASoN])**

The ASoN is a decision taken by the first ever mass gathering of the Newar population of the country on December 28, 2008, held in the Dasarath Stadium in Yen (Kathmandu). It was attended by thousands of Newar individuals and organizations represented by major political parties, and social movements. The political parties were represented by Newar leaders of Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist), CPN (UML), and Nepa Ratriya party while major socio-cultural organizations were represented by Newa Dey Daboo, Nepal Bhasa Manka Khala and various associations that advocate for things from language rights to socio-cultural rights and organizations for the promotion and preservation of their cultural and religious traditions. A political manifesto signed by seven leaders representing the major political parties and social organizations was read out at this mass gathering and adopted with applause by the gathered Newar mass. The manifesto read out in Nepal Bhasa can be summarized as follows.

#### **8.5.1. The Manifesto for ASoN**

The manifesto has been outlined into eight points and the first point they make about '*Restructuring the state into a new Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (FDRN)*' can be summarized as follows:

- 1) While supporting a new FDRN, the Combined Struggle Committee (CSC) for ASoN asserts that in the process of restructuring the country into a FDRN based on distinct identity, creation of a distinct ASoN must be addressed as a part of the main objective of the FDRN's founding as the common aspiration of today's Newar is to achieve their right to rule the ASoN.

- 2) The CSC for ASoN points out that the Newar, as a nation developed in ancient times in this very land have a distinct identity of an advanced heritage of art, culture, language, and literature. The Newar, as a group with a large indigenous population, have built Nepal since historical times and today take a leading responsibility in establishing a new FDRN, a just society inclusive of right to equality and freedom, for which cause the Newar have joined both peaceful and armed uprisings so far.
- 3) The CSC for ASoN believes that restructuring the country into an FDRN will confirm the right to self-determination, the constitutional guarantee of one's priority right to self-rule on a political level and policy making in one's own historical homeland. Creation of ASoN in this context will recognize their past and their capacity to contribute today. Most importantly, it will be a practical response to the voice they have made against state oppression they have faced based on linguistic, cultural and religious differences since long ago.

The second point of the CSC for ASoN refers to the '*Rationale for Autonomous State of Newar.*' It can be summarized as:

- 1) The CSC for ASoN maintains that the Newar have not only established their distinct identity of language and culture but also as those who had a separate political territory of their own and run its state administration independently. From ancient times to this date, they have been living in that territory which is historically known as Nepa/Nepal/Nepal Mandala from Licchavi to the end of the Malla Period. History attests that the state territory of the Malla kings in the valley have spread out to many towns and villages in the twelve districts of the present central zone until the time before the expansion of Gorkha principality started. Therefore, the present aspiration of the Newar fully justifies the demand for an ASoN.
- 2) Nepal is now a FDRN, its interim constitution has already made the people fully sovereign, and resolved that the restructuring of the state will be pursued on the basis of federation inclusive of the autonomous states. Therefore, it is an important responsibility of the State to build the ASoN and the Newar should have the opportunity to use this sovereign right without any hindrance.
- 3) The CSC for ASoN points out that the Interim Parliament of Nepal has affirmed the proposed new federal state structure by ratifying International Labor Organization

Accord (ILOA) 169 which guarantees the priority right of the indigenous people to self-rule of their historical land by themselves as congenial to them. The Interim Parliament of Nepal ratified the ILOA 169 on September 13, 2007 and is currently in operation as equal as to the law of Nepal. Similarly, the Government of Nepal has also supported the UN Declaration on Indigenous Right, which guarantees the indigenous people's right to autonomy and self-rule in their historical land based on their own distinct identity, whereby it is articulated that the Newar should have their opportunity to build an ASoN in their historical land of Nepal Mandala based on nationality and language identity.

The third point in the manifesto of the CSC for ASoN is related to '*ASoN and the Federal Nepal*' and can be summarized as:

- 1) The CSC for ASoN reiterates that the establishment of ASoN implies a political process of building a FDRN that the Center (federal administration) will be strong only if the autonomous states are robust and strong. Similarly, a cornerstone for an invigorated federal administration is immensely important. This will strengthen social goodwill and invigorate the national unity, a spirit that Nepal is a common country of all while ending forever the situation of socio-cultural conflict in the country.
- 2) Establishment of ASoN will institutionalize the state political system based on people's participation; enhance the task of policy making and development work in direct and correct method; and contribute to speedy growth of economic progress and prosperity of the proposed new Nepal.
- 3) While representing as an equal partner and contributor in the Center (federal administration), the CSC for ASoN assures its duties and responsibilities in support to smooth and successful operation of the federal administration.
- 4) The CSC for ASoN also assures the Newar living in the suburbs and in various towns and villages in Nepal (including areas out of Swanigah and Nepal Mandala) the protection of their rights; and engage in negotiations with other autonomies in Nepal with regard to rights of the Newar living therein.

The fourth point the CSC for ASoN deals is with the '*Relation between Center and ASoN*' as in the following:

- 1) Relations between ASoN and Center shall be based on recognition of full autonomy. Except for defense, foreign and monetary affairs, in all other matters inside ASoN, ASoN shall independently move forward making necessary policies and laws. Interference of the Center in all these matters shall not be acceptable.
- 2) Similarly, based on the recognition of indigenous priority right, the Newar shall have the priority right to all water, land, forest and natural sources in the ASoN.
- 3) In the case of any disagreement erupting, or a conflict of interest occurring in the relations between ASoN and other autonomous states, the Center shall, within the perimeters of the constitution, play a neutral role to help solve the problem.

The fifth point is related to assurances of '*ASoN for the preservation and inclusion of minority rights.*'

- 1) The CSC for ASoN stresses that the establishment of ASoN was necessary for political empowerment of the Newar by preserving their rights. Hence it assures that the rights of the non-Newar minorities related to language, nationality, cultural, and religious identity and tradition shall be guaranteed.
- 2) In no situation may ASoN become the source of oppression. Instead, it considers it a moral responsibility to show solidarity with all the indigenous people, and recognize their rights; respect and goodwill towards other language, nationality, and culture shall be a special policy in ASoN.
- 3) ASoN shall follow inclusive principles that its citizenry should face no exclusion. Special arrangements will be made for the non-Newar minorities to represent and participate in all levels of policy making. Depending on the need and possibility, self-rule can be delegated to the minority peoples.

The sixth point in the ASoN manifest reflects its '*Observation of Human Rights and Systematic Administration.*' The CSC for ASoN declares its commitments:

- 1) To follow the principles based on values of worldwide human rights and recognition, and run its governance with elected parliament, executive and independent judiciary.
- 2) To guarantee the fundamental freedom of citizens, free press, and party competition.
- 3) To pursue a systematic administration following provisions and spirits of the international declarations, and manifestos to which Nepal is a signatory to;

- 4) To put a complete end to state (culture) of immunity, the work procedures of the state will be operated with transparency.

Seventh, the CSC for ASoN plans its project for a '*Social welfare state and social justice*' in the ASoN, by executing the principle of social justice as ideal, the ASoN shall implement equal distribution system and social justice into practice; to enhance poor, labor, farmer and backward class forward. The CSC for ASoN aims its main goal to end all kinds of exploitation of human by human based on class, social, cultural and other differences.

Finally, the CSC for ASoN pledges that:

- 1) All the Newar at the CSC for ASoN having expressed their solidarity and unity, shall proclaim commitment to march forward to achieve the common goal of all Newar to establish the ASoN, its stability and successful governance.
- 2) Together with the endeavors to write a new constitution for the FDRN through the CA for restructuring of the state, all necessary and favorable measures (course of action) to achieve the common goal of all Newar to establish the ASoN shall be carried out through this common struggle committee, via constitutional and peaceful means.

The CSC for ASoN also calls the people including youth wings of political parties and Newar organization conformable to ASoN to join in hand with the CSC at any time in order for achievement of the aims and goals of this manifesto. The manifesto has been signed by seven leaders of political parties and other leading social organizations in Swanigha (Kathmandu valley).

## **8.6. Summing Up**

Awakened by the oppressions of both Shah and Rana rule, people of Nepal have risen to resist the autocracy. First, taking a 2 decade long resistance to oust the Rana Oligarchy, people made self-sacrifice by joining the resistance movement. They reinstated the lifetime-imprisoned king in the royal palace under Rana Regime. But King Tribhuvan's mysterious death fell back on the people when his son King Mahendra in 1960 betrayed the very people who fought for freedom for both king and people. He imposed partyless autocratic government, banning the elected government and arresting political leaders while imposing policies of 'Khas/Nepali only' national language; 'Hinduism only' state religion and 'Khas race only' on the very people who reinstated the monarchy which had

been a titular one for a period of 104 long years. Secondly, peoples' movement I forced the Panchayat Government out but still agreed to keep a constitutional monarchy until another mysterious massacre occurred in the royal palace killing the whole family of the ruling monarch King Birendra. The massacre was followed by an autocratic monarch, who attempted to repeat the coup d'état of 1960 launched against the people. Third, the newly elected CA after peoples' movement II abolished the monarchy and introduced inclusive democracy, secularism and ethnic federalism in 2008. All these three major movements played crucial roles for changes of governance in Nepal. But as pointed out by an experienced human rights activist and a former minister, the changes were 'new wine in the same old bottle.'<sup>344</sup>

The CA which ran for four years ended without its mandate of drafting an inclusive constitution completed. The people of Nepal, made up of its diverse nationalities, are left expecting another CA election this November. In considering the achievements people managed in these movements, it is only the CHHE who have gained. The past three movements only replaced one group of CHHE with another group of CHHE. The benefits the people of Nepal have received has stagnated with only assurances for the third time. In Gramsci's term it was a replacement of hegemony by another would-be hegemony, not counter hegemony.

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<sup>344</sup> From interview with Dr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar (February 23, 2011).



## CONCLUSION

### PARADIGMS OF HEGEMONY, COUNTER HEGEMONY AND POLICY CHOICE FOR STATE SOCIETY RELATIONS IN A MULTILINGUAL NATION

*Only if the democratic movement succeeds, the door for language development will be opened. Until the democratic system was formed, there will be no space for any mother tongue.<sup>345</sup>*

- Ganesh Man Singh,  
(The Supreme Commander of Peoples' Movement  
for the Restoration of Democracy).

This concluding chapter will summarize the findings of a close examination of the linguistic reality of Nepal with special reference to Nepal Bhasa and its space in state policy, and how it reflects the impediments to subjugated social groups of Nepal. This chapter will highlight the rectifications in the constitutional provisions, recommendations for language policies related to the public services of education, administration and mass media. This chapter will sum up the repercussions of persistent state policies, and consequences of resistance against the Khas/Nepali hegemony. It will be analyzed by drawing a theoretical framework of hegemony, linguistic habitus and law and policy while examining previous contributions to the literature on language politics and state policies. It concludes with abstracted answers for my theoretical research questions, suggesting what would improve viable state society relations in Nepal's linguistically diverse reality.

#### ***Linguistic Reality of Nepal***

First, I start by summing up the linguistic reality of Nepal, which confirms that Nepal has been a multilingual nation that has traditionally used several languages since ancient times. Nepal had at least 4 languages in use in the past - Nepal Bhasa, Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Pali. Nepal Bhasa was spoken by both the general populace and the members of the royal court while Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali were written languages used by the literati, educators and officials. It is evident that Gorkha Bhasa (Khas Bhasa named Gorkha Bhasa/Gorkhali by

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<sup>345</sup> Singh(1987) in Shakya (2011:37).

Pritvinarayan Shah and Nepali in 1962) was not the language of Nepal until Prithvinarayan brought it into use after his invasion of Nepal in 1769. Thus, Gorkha Bhasa was added to the four existing languages in Nepal. Prithvinaryan's further military expansion over several independent territories around ancient Nepal brought more peoples and obviously more languages they spoke, consequently rendering Nepal a multiethnic, multi-religious and multilingual country. Although census-taking started in 1911, and the Census of 1952/54 recorded 30 different languages among the population of 8 million,<sup>346</sup> the Government of Nepal officially recognized this reality only after the restoration of democracy in 1990. With an increase of the population recorded in every ten-year census, people have asserted their distinct identities.

Among many factors of identity such as ethnicity, caste, religion and culture, language has been predominant for all the nationalities in Nepal. The Census of 2011 reported 125 caste/ethnic groups over 123 mother tongue groups. This depicts that those who asserted separate caste/ethnicity identity as a factor assert their language together with it, which explained that they consider language a more important factor for them to assert with their identity than caste/ethnicity. The assertion of identity occurred as a resistance to the Khas/Nepali hegemony and as the subjugated speech community became aware of their distinct identities in response to coercive, oppressive and hegemonic domination by ruler and ruling class of the Khas/Nepali identity. Before the Khas domination, Nepal was still a multi-lingual nation as aforementioned. During the end of the Malla Period (1200-1769), though Nepal Bhasa was the language of the people and the state language, Maithil Bhasa (of Mithila that covers a part of present southern Nepal and northern India), and Vanga Bhasa (Bengali) had received recognition in the royal court of Nepal as some members came from families of Mithila and Vanga states. In short, Nepal was a multilingual nation with languages of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali that were in use among the literati, educators and officials while Nepal Bhasa was the language of the common citizens and the royal court. Nepal Bhasa originated in the land of Nepal and was named after its toponym, like Maithil Bhasa from the Mithila area, Bhojpuri Bhasa from the Bhojpur area, Avadhi from the Avadh area, Gorkhali Bhasa from the Gorkha area etc. The situation changed with the invasion of Nepal by Prithvinarayan in 1769. His further military expansionism brought

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<sup>346</sup> Malla (1989b:450-451).

people who spoke different languages together into present Nepal, territories of which were negotiated in the aftermath of war with British India in 1816.

After the invasion and military occupation of ancient Nepal by the king of Gorkha, the Gorkhali language was promoted, displacing Nepal Bhasa and other languages in Nepal under Gorkhali rule, and discarding Nepal Lipi (the script of Nepal), Nepal Samvat (calendar era of Nepal) and Buddhism and replaced them with Indian Devanagari Lipi, Saka Samvat and Hinduism. This confirms historian Regmi's assumption that the Gorkhali ruler had three cherished wishes: One, possessing Nepal for himself; two, expansion of the Gorkha empire beyond Nepal; three, building an Asali Hindustan (proper Hindu state) in Nepal on which the Gorkhali policy was to be imposed.

The Rana Regime took over ruling power and reduced de jure kings to titular ones, but carried over the Gorkhali expansionism policy of Hindunization through the Gorkhali language policy. Although the Rana Regime was ousted and the titular king was reinstated by the first Peoples' Revolution (1950)<sup>347</sup>, the son of the king reverted the short lived democracy period of Nepal into a 30 year long autocratic rule. State society relations during these three periods were analogous to one another in that the Gorkhali Early Shah consolidated their newly gained power over the invaded territories keeping the native Newar and other populace under strict control. The Rana Regime went further, oppressing not only the Newar but also suppressing whoever opposed their repressive rule.

Moreover, King Mahendra's Panchayat not only imprisoned the then incumbent prime minister, his ministers and party members but also closed the last avenue to the progress of Nepal Bhasa and its speech community the Newar who had already been weakened by the century long oppressions of the past regimes only to add insult to injury. The Panchayat Autocracy carried over by his son King Birendra was ousted by the Peoples' Movement in 1990. Thus, several contributions with regard to Nepal and its history this study explored confirmed that neither Gorkha principality nor its Gorkha Bhasa were parts of Nepal as purported by some later historians and the state run by Gorkhali-turned-Nepali ruling class, the CHHE. Evidently, Gorkha army led by Prithvinarayan conquered Nepal, and usurped the term 'Nepali' for the Gorkhali language from Nepal Bhasa. Therefore, calling Gorkhali Bhasa 'Nepali' Bhasa is not only a

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<sup>347</sup> *Sātsāṅko Krānti* (Khas/Nepali); *Sātsālyā Krānti* (Nepal Bhasa).

grotesque distortion of the truth but also a crime to disseminate distorted information.<sup>348</sup>

### ***The Fate of Nepal Bhasa***

This study, supplemented by empirical data gathered during a year long fieldwork in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley) and a decade-long participatory observation about the space of Nepal Bhasa in state policy, confirmed the UNESCO theories for endangered languages. Nepal Bhasa has been reduced from the century-long ‘language of the people of Nepal’ and the ‘state language’ to a ‘definitely endangered language.’ The language survey report reflected the UNESCO definition for a definitely endangered language:

The language is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The youngest speakers are thus of the *parental generation*. At this stage, parents may still speak the language to their children, but their children do not typically respond in the language. (UNESCO 2003:8).

My report tallied with the above definition. The figures found in the report implied that Nepal Bhasa speakers are aging (See Table-11.). Those who had the chance to learn Nepal Bhasa declined from older to younger and the last age group is declining because of their old age. In other words those who had learnt Nepal Bhasa as their mother tongue at home and other places are dying. No Newar children under 10-14 reported learning Nepal Bhasa as their mother tongue in the survey. The UNESCO points out this situation as the loss of the chance to pass the mother tongue on to the next generation. It refers to Intergenerational Language Transmission, one of the six major factors that identified the vitality and endangerment of language evaluated from ‘5’ to ‘0’ degrees. Other five major factors are: Absolute number of speakers; Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population; Shifts in Domains of Language Use; Response to New Domains and Media; and Availability of Materials for Language Education and Literacy (ibid.:7). UNESCO advises that all these factors must be considered together, while degree of the language ranked on one factor deserves immediate and urgent attention of another factor.

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<sup>348</sup> In a public notice published in multiple languages by the Ministry of Information and Communication, the Government of Nepal warns the public: “Do not distort the information as dissemination of wrong information is crime.” My rendering to the notice published on Laykoo bimonthly newspaper (March 15-29, 2014): मख्गु स्र्वँ यिगवीगु अयनाव स्रः, उकिं स्र्वंयाग स्रकथँ जक ङ्काङ्गया (Nepal Bhasa) गलत सूचनाको सम्प्रेषण अपराध हो, त्यसैले सूचनाको तोडमरोड नगरौं। (Khas/Nepali).

Among the five degrees ranked from '5' to '0,' degree 5 refers to safe; degree 4 refers to unsafe; degree 3 refers to definitely endangered; degree 2 refers to severely endangered; degree 1 refers to critically endangered while degree 0 (zero) refers to extinct. Accordingly, the Nepal Bhasa is 2 degrees away from extinct. UNESCO also points out factors that endanger the languages and save them to vitality as well. As explored in Chapter Three in detail, the language survey found that the decline of Nepal Bhasa to a definitely endangered language can be ascribed to both internal and external forces. But it explicitly showed that the pressures for the internal forces such as 'community's negative attitude towards its own language' had their source in the external forces such as 'military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation,' as Nepal Bhasa was displaced by the military power of Prithvinnarayan in 1769. It was banned by Rana ruler Chandra Shumsher in 1904. The Panchayat Government not only condemned Nepal Bhasa to the title of 'Newari' but also elevated Gorkhali as official and 'Nepali' usurping the term from Nepal Bhasa. But the democratic governance system proved that the UNESCO concept for language vitality is achievable. The Government of Nepal during the Early Democracy Period (1951-1960) that came to power after Peoples' Revolution (*Satsalya Kranti*) in 1950 provided long-due recognition to Nepal Bhasa and other languages by facilitating the public service in them. Although short lived, the Government of Nepal during the Early Democracy Period introduced Nepal Bhasa as a subject of curriculum from primary schools leading to university curriculum. Local government offices provided its service in Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley), while state media Radio Nepal used Nepal Bhasa as a language of radio broadcast. All these supports of the national policy were revoked by the Government of Nepal under Panchayat system run by King Mahendra which ruled 3 long decades of autocracy. Although hundreds of citizens that included a large number of Newar people sacrificed their invaluable lives for the Peoples' Movement in 1990 that ousted the Panchayat autocracy, and the Democracy Movement in 2006 that abolished the monarchy and finally restored democracy leading to a new federal system of governance, a major section of the Nepali populace that includes the Newar has yet to taste the democratic ideals of equality and justice.

This study unmasked the real face of Gokhali expansionism masked as Panchayat rule for three long decades and replaced by Khas/Nepali hegemony masked as the 'restored

democracy' which is controlled by the CHHE ruling class. A highlight of rectification of fundamental law during the past two decades of restored democracy rule confirmed that no government can contest the foresight of Ganesh Man Singh, the supreme commander of Peoples' Movement for the restoration of democracy in 1990 (See also Chapter Six.). Ganeshman (as he preferred to be addressed) had foreseen and implied in his statement an excerpt of which is indicated in *italics* before the beginning of this chapter that if there is no space for the mother tongues of Nepal, it meant that there is no democracy formed in Nepal yet. In short, this study found that the democracy has yet to be formed in Nepal because no government that came to power after the restoration of democracy in 1990 succeeded in implementing laws supporting mother tongues.

### ***Paradigm of Hegemony: Manipulation of Culture, Ideology and Power***

This study found the policies written by the new and democratic authorities have failed to be implemented as functioning laws for two apparent reasons: one, the hegemonic power the CHHE hold in state affairs, and the counter hegemony by the subjugated populace made up of diverse nationalities failed despite their utmost effort. Nepal Bhasa is one example. The resistance movement its speech community launched during the past decades reflects the paradigm of counter hegemony against the hegemony of the CHHE, who in turn show flexible stances in their persistent manipulation of the subjugated people, if not the subalterns, only to consolidate the Khas/Nepali hegemony at the consent of the latter.

Of several challenges faced by state and society relations in Nepal, the single language policy has stood out, affecting the national languages and their speech communities such as Nepal Bhasa and their speech community the Newar for the past 6 decades directly since Khas/Nepali was made the sole official language of public services such as education, administration and mass media among other things. The affected speech communities have resisted such an arbitrary policy. As indicated in past chapters, the democratic government of Nepal has rectified such policies and taken steps to revise policies and laws constitutionally and legally. But the challenges have remained for two major areas. According to Gramsci, one, the hegemony of ruling class, whose dominant power manipulates the subjugated peoples. Two, the subjugated peoples or the subalterns consent the ruling class to maintain its hegemony over the subjugated people. Gramsci

points out that the subalterns consent to maintain hegemony because of their lack of knowledge, unity and activism. Therefore, they fail to counter the hegemony of the ruling class. The ruling class is tactful enough to take stances to please the subjugated people to consent the manipulation by the dominant class. They make their dominance transparent and show that such dominance is common-sensical so that they can maintain their status quo. The dominant also invite some subjugated subalterns in the dominant group where the dominant still has the upper hand. The dominant group negotiates with the resisting subjugated groups giving them part of what they want so that the resistance is decreased. The dominant marginalizes the subjugated subalterns depending on their capacity to resist. This is another important stance of the dominance that Gramsci was very much concerned with. Most of the subaltern groups, or the indigenous nationalities in Nepal's case, are prone to this phenomenon, which leads the dominant to manipulate the subjugated. The Newar are a paradigm for the manipulated subalterns. We shall see some examples summed up below on how the hegemony of the CHHE has posed a challenge to state society relations since the restoration of democracy.

First, despite the articulation of improved laws in the Interim Constitution (2007) such as declarations of Nepal as 'multilingual'; 'all the languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue are national languages'; another provision, 'Nepali language in Devanagari script is the official language for government businesses,' hinders the utilization of the previous provisions for language rights. The Khas/Nepali in Devanagari script not only continues its domination but also impedes the freedom given by the previous provisions in the same constitution. This is an explicit manipulation of subalterns by the dominant CHHE. The CHHE have made their dominance of Khas/Nepali language transparent by giving it the supreme position and making it the official language for government businesses. By declaring it the official language for government businesses, the CHHE maintain their status quo that everybody will henceforth be required to use the Khas/Nepali in all the spheres where government businesses or the public services it provides are involved. All the domains of education, administration and mass media' are under control of the CHHE in the name of the 'government businesses.' If the repetition of the official position of the Khas/Nepali continues to be a language provision, whether in the Interim Constitution (2007) or in the proposed new constitution, will hardly make any sense

because it does not serve the purpose of incorporating the aspiration of people for a multilingual Nepal. Making Nepal multilingual, and all mother tongues national languages while keeping the status of Khas/Nepali prominent reminds one of Gramsci's concept of 'negotiation' stance which the dominant class uses to negotiate with resisting subalterns and give a part of their demand so that their determination to overthrow the dominant class decreases and ultimately strengthen the hegemony. The CHHE responded to the demand of linguistic right activists of the subalterns by inserting an additional clause declaring all the languages in Nepal are 'national languages' while attaching the legal condition dominated by the Khas/Nepali language as 'official.' Many subalterns are not aware of the manipulation of the CHHE except for some informed activists. The proposed new constitution had concluded the status of Khas/Nepali before the last CA was dissolved. Even when some activists raised questions on this matter they ended up being marginalized, which depicts another stance the dominant class takes according to Gramsci. The CHHE easily marginalized the minimum resistance against the supremacy of Khas/Nepali in the proposed new constitution. In addition to its dominant official status, the naming of Khas Bhasa as 'Nepali' language is a grotesque distortion of the truth. Khas Bhasa was changed to Gorkha Bhasa/Gorkhali by Prithvinarayan Shah while Gorkhali was changed to 'Nepali' by Mahendra usurping the title from Nepal Bhasa while reducing Nepal Bhasa into 'Newari.' If the case is not raised at the earliest by the people concerned before the drafting of the new constitution is complete, the dominance of Khas/Nepali is going to be an everlasting challenge for state society relations.

Second, following the language clause 2 which mentions that 'the Nepali Language in Devanagari script shall be the official language,' clause 3 articulates that '...nothing shall be deemed to prevent the using of any language spoken as the mother tongue in a local body and office. The State shall maintain records by translating the languages so used in the official language.'<sup>349</sup> But what has really been happening is in the way a legal expert translated the same clause into English. His version has translated the second line as: 'Languages used in such manner shall be translated in the official language of the state for record'<sup>350</sup> confusing who will translate it despite it is clear in the constitution written in Khas/Nepali original that it is 'the State' which will translate such

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<sup>349</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) Article: 5.3 (Makalu 2007:4).

<sup>350</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) Article: 5.3 (Pant 2007:16).



documents into official ‘Nepali.’ Although the opportunity is provided by the constitution to use the local languages in local offices, the provision is hardly used by the people concerned because the very people who seek local office’s service in their language, themselves have to attach a Khas/Nepali translation of what they wrote in their mother tongue. Several Newar who wrote applications in Nepal Bhasa were asked to attach Khas/Nepali translated version of their applications together with their applications. One of several who submitted the applications commented that ‘it is absurd that you have to attach a translation in Khas/Nepali language by yourself when you are writing an application in Nepal Bhasa to the Yen Mahanagarapalika (Kathmandu Municipality).’<sup>351</sup> The applicants have gone to the Kathmandu Municipality having heard that the local office has opened a desk that provides services in Nepal Bhasa but not many local people concerned were eager to receive the service. The applicants who were told to submit a translation in Khas/Nepali together with the applications in their mother tongue Nepal Bhasa often ended up taking the services in Khas/Nepali inevitably.

Third, with the recognition of other languages of Nepal as ‘national languages,’ the government of Nepal has also recognized the imperative need of providing education in mother tongues. The right to education in mother tongues<sup>352</sup> was clearly articulated in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) as in the following:

- a) Every community shall have the right to get basic education in its own mother tongue, as provided in law.
- b) Every citizen shall have the right to get free education up to the secondary level from the State, as provided in law.
- c) Every community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civilization and heritage.

Of these clauses, clause 2 was added in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) while the previous clauses had already been inserted in the constitution of 1990. In practice, only the second clause has been effective as it covers the education of all children given in Khas/Nepali medium, not in national languages. In short, the legal provisions and laws proposed by recommendations have hardly been effective.

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<sup>351</sup> From a personal communication with a Nepal Bhasa educationist.

<sup>352</sup> The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) Article: 17.1-3 (Makalu 2007:14).

Forth, we shall see two other examples of hegemony that have stagnated the laws authorized by the head of the Government of Nepal and his minister. Nepal Bhasa is the language spoken by the indigenous people of Nepal since ancient times; hence it is known as Nepal Bhasa (the language of Nepal), and was the state language of this country until the Rana's repressive rulers, the descendants of Gorkhali invaders, banned it. The Panchayat Autocracy further condemned reducing it to 'Newari' in 1962, a term Nepal Bhasa activists have long resisted against. They have demanded that governments that came to power after the restoration of democracy to officially correct the wrong term for Nepal Bhasa. As the statement of Ganesh Man Singh, the supreme commander of the Peoples' Movement (1990), as indicated in *italics* at the beginning of this chapter, was followed by the Newar activists, whom they had first supported to succeed the Peoples' Movement. Afterwards, the Newar groups approached the governments to draw attention to the situation of Nepal Bhasa and other languages affected by the 'Khas/Nepali only' single language policy. Of their five demands – 1) reinstate Nepal Bhasa into its past position, 2) provide education in mother tongue from primary to tertiary level, 3) replace the wrong term of Newari with the correct term of Nepal Bhasa, 4) provide administrative services in various mother tongues, 5) reinstate Nepal Samvat as the national calendar - every government that come to power has been tremendously positive for the past two decades. The governments and the leaders have been very concerned and took immediate action.

However, the action they could take was to give directives to the concerned government agencies to follow and enforce into functioning laws. But except for the Department of Education, which has taken some basic initiatives to implement government directives implementing some programs related to education in mother tongue, other government agencies have willfully ignored the government's orders. The Department of Education is run by an informed official who is an informed official and advocate for bilingual education, and he has shown worthy interest in implementing the government directives on education in mother tongue. But other directives given by the head of the government and his cabinet minister have gone unheeded for the past 19 years.

With regard to the third demand above, and in response to a delegation of the Newar leaders that met the head of the government, Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari

passed a cabinet decision to officially correct the wrong term 'Newari' into Nepal Bhasa and gave a directive to the government agencies on September 9, 1995. The news of the directive was published in the government newspaper the *Gorkhapatra*. But the two most important government agencies, the Department of Communication (under which Radio Nepal operates) and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of the National Planning Commission have yet to implement the law passed by cabinet decision. As the directive of the prime minister was not heeded by the Radio Nepal, which continued announcing Nepal Bhasa as 'Newari' in its daily broadcast, another Newar delegation met the minister in charge of the communication on November 14, 1998. Having met the delegation, the Minister of Communication C.P. Mainali directed his Permanent Secretary to order the Radio Nepal to terminate the term 'Newari' and use Nepal Bhasa instead in its radio broadcasts. Despite all these efforts and directives, Radio Nepal continued calling Nepal Bhasa 'Newari' until the last morning news broadcast I monitored on November 18, 2013, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> CA election was due next day. The CBS changed the term from 'Newari' to 'Newar' but not to 'Nepal Bhasa' in its latest Census Report (2011). These cases witness how constitutional provisions, recommendations and directives of the head of the government and his ministers are stagnated without being implemented into enforceable laws in Nepal.

Thus, whatever laws are written or passed with authority, the implementation of those laws, left at the discretion of the bureaucracy dominated by the CHHE, the ruling class Gramsci has pointed out to be one of the two major factors that maintain the hegemony, remains a challenge to state society relations. However, Gramsci also reiterates that the dominant ruling class alone is not responsible for the maintenance of hegemony that hinders state society relations, but the subjugated subaltern classes themselves. I shall summarize this factor, next.

### ***Paradigm of Counter Hegemony: Knowledge, Unity and Activism for Resistance***

Counter hegemony may sound an alternative to the hegemony and the term may refer to people who are interested in gaining dominant power by countering, co-opting and compromising dominant culture. But what Gramsci advocates by counter hegemony has a somewhat different nuance. He wants to develop knowledge, unity and activism among the

subjugated group or ‘subaltern social group’ to resist against the culture, power and ideology the dominant group creates, manipulates and imposes (See also 5.1.2.). Gramsci doesn’t want to recreate another hegemony which will dominate, manipulate, and impose upon others. Instead, he advocates the creation of proletarian culture which will provide knowledge, unity and activism among the subaltern group to build up an organization that will attend by themselves to the needs of subaltern social groups. He proposes building this social organization among the peasants of the country and the proletarians from the town together.

In this study, the term ‘subaltern’ refers to the Newar and several indigenous peoples in Nepal in terms of the meaning found in Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony. Gramsci refers the subaltern to a group of those who have no dominant power but are subjugated to the dominant. They are ineffectual in their political activity. They are incapable of achieving permanent victory or maintaining a level of political power. The spatial state of the Newar reflects this situation to a greater extent. Since the Newar lost their country Nepal Mandala to Gorkha army, their religion to Hinduism, their language to Khas Bhasa and their national calendar to the imposed Indian calendar after 1769, the Newar did resist. But they have since been subjugated to the dominant Gorkhali, who have usurped even the name of their language. Today Nepali refers to the language of Khas turned Gorkhali. Nepal Bhasa, the language of the native Newar, is less known even to those experts of the Newar and Nepal. Some individuals of scholarship and media, and government agencies such as CBS, international organizations such as UNESCO, pretend not to know. Others willfully negate the use of Nepal Bhasa for fear or blissful ignorance, while others have willingly adjusted to the correct term when they discovered it.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, the Newar resistance started in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century against the offensive military attacks by the Gorkhali which continued until the Newar lost to the invading army. The resistance then shifted to the powerless type, some of which was woven into poems and peaceful protest through literary conventions, probably reflecting the dictum of ‘the pen is mightier than the sword.’<sup>353</sup>

The first such resistance was meant against the enemy, who invaded the Khopa (Bhaktapura) city-state of King Ranajit Malla. The invader happened to be no one but one

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<sup>353</sup> Tanaka (2002:100).

whom the Khopa king had treated as equal to his own son when he came to live in the Khopa palace as a guest for a period between 12 months to 5 years. During this time, Ranajit trained young Prithvinarayan with the skills of a warrior prince.<sup>354</sup> Historians agree that Prithvinarayan had intimate friendship with Ranajit and his family before he attacked the latter. Ranajit's poem, the words of repentance, reflect the relations between the two as follows:

The one I showed my affection, the same one turned a conspirator!  
Alas! What sort of heart can one have to cause this harm? Oh God!! (5)

Ranjit, the last king of Nepal Mandala decides to leave his country rather than living subjugated to the conspirator when he was asked whether he wanted to stay under Prithvinarayan or leave the country. Prithvinarayan's attack on the Khopa palace killed kings of both Yen and Yala city-states who had taken refuge in Khopa. But Ranajit's life was spared for his previous relations with Prithvinarayan. Ranajit chose to leave his country.

The next resistance was against the looting of natives' lands by the invaders. People of Chopu (Chitrapura) resisted the seizure of lands by the Gorkhali army, who conquered Nepal Mandala. The resistance against the looting of lands was expressed in another poem by the Newar parents of the banished children infected by smallpox during the reign of king Rana Bhadur Shah.<sup>355</sup> The ruling monarch ordered all the children infected with smallpox out of the country for fear of his son getting infected. There could have been many such cases, but unless we have some genuine support for research and study of thousands of manuscripts that either lie unattended inside the national archives or destroyed or burnt, or others not yet read, the truth will not come to light.

Next, when it comes to the Rana Regime, we came across an earlier resistance staged by a military officer against his Rana master, who betrayed his own royal master to take control of the country. The military officer is identified as Lakhan Thapa, a Magar by ethnicity. During an interlude of 239 years from the last Newar king to last Gorkhali Shah

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<sup>354</sup> Historian Regmi rejects that Prithvinarayan ever lived in Khopa palace, while a German scholar Hans-George Behr cites in his *Nepal Geschenk der Götter* (Nepal, Gift from Gods, pp. 56-63) related sources that supported Prithvinarayan lived five years in the Khopa palace as a guest, where he was given training of a warrior by King Ranajit Malla.

<sup>355</sup> A grandson of Prithvinarayan (Reign: 1777-99).

king, there were several resistance events and movements staged against the rulers. Among them, several resistance movements have played key roles in bringing out changes in the society that was kept under strict control by the Rana Oligarchy and later Gorkhali Shah kings returning to power from titular status.

Rana Oligarchy's suppression was directed at both the king and ordinary citizenry, regardless of status. Both were controlled under harsh rule. However, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Rana oppression was directed upon Newar citizenry and against the public use of their language Nepal Bhasa and Nepal Samvat. The violators of these arbitrary rules were reprimanded, imprisoned and tortured. The Newar resisted peacefully as much as possible throughout their two well known resistances staged between 1906 and 1965. Other resistance movements that took a political tone successfully overthrew: First, the 104-year-long repressive rule of the Rana Oligarchy in 1950; second the 30-year-long Panchayat autocracy in 1990, and the last attempt of King Gyanendra to return to Panchayat Autocracy in 2006, for which the Newar provided formidable support. However, the Newar had to fight on their own when it comes to the question of their language.

Since the time Nepal Bhasa was banned by Rana hereditary ruler Chandra Shumsher in 1906, the Newar played an impressive role one would compare to what Gramsci had advocated. Gramsci was a Marxist journalist turned revolutionist. But what he deferred from other revolutionists was that he advocated the passive revolution – a war of position which preaches knowledge about revolutionary theory, class consciousness, historical analysis and expansion of social organization, and a 'war of maneuver' which teach unity and activism – not by a 'war of attrition' that destroys enemy forces. In a similar manner, Newar literati of Nepal Bhasa engaged in writing books first by hand and later by making history of printing their books in their own presses. First, a group of four literati - Nisthananda Vajracharya, Siddhidasa Mahaju, Jagatasundara Malla and Yogaveerasimha Kansakar, later joined by two other language activists Shukraraja Shastri and Dharmaditya Dharmacharya – made the history of Nepal Bhasa's renaissance by their contributions to Nepal Bhasa. They wrote, recited, published themselves and taught others how to write prose and verse and express their views and share knowledge. The work of these literati stimulated men and organizations to resist the Rana's open repression. All this work can be attributed to a situation explained in a poem below:

थौं मीगु रासयागु सम्मान दसँ ह्या ब्रन  
उकीयाग जवनजकिँ दव याना गल  
ह्लाह्लियँ जीविग जया ब्रकँनँ अमिगु रासयाग  
थथे मृगरासया नामँ सख्खिन जया ब्रन

Respect for our language today is being erased  
It is high handedly being oppressed  
The speakers are still alive  
But their language is considered dead<sup>356</sup>

Not only was their living language considered dead, but the Rana rulers killed patriots in open spaces. Three of four men hung and shot to death were Newar literati, who advocated the right to education in mother tongue. Most of these writers were punished, penalized, imprisoned, tortured and killed simply for writing in Nepal Bhasa and speaking in the defense of their mother tongue. Their contributions have been accumulated into a large number of publications in Nepal Bhasa, today.

The second resistance was directed against the arbitrary termination of the one and only radio program in Nepal Bhasa. King Mahendra, having staged a royal coup d'état against the people-elected government, locking up the prime minister and his ministers in a jail, imposing Hinduism as state religion and Khas/Nepali as the state language in 1962, he also eyed against a 5 minute daily 'news' and a 15 minute weekly culture program known as *Jeewan Daboo* on Radio Nepal. These two time spaces were the only programs broadcast in Nepal Bhasa while the rest of daily and weekly programs were broadcast in Khas/Nepali. King Mahendra ordered the termination of both Nepal Bhasa programs. The order was issued openly in a hegemonic manner with a notice placed by Radio Nepal informing the public of its decision to terminate the programs from April 13, 1965. It is said that the Newar community, the leaders and the students, were so shocked to read the notice in the Khas/Nepali newspaper *Gorkhapatra* that they could not utter a word for a while.<sup>357</sup> As detailed in Chapter Eight, several leaders made an attempt to approach and appeal to King Mahendra to change his decision to terminate of the one and only radio program that had been on the air since the dawn of democracy on February 18, 1951. Though the radio aired just 5-minute news daily, and a 15-minute cultural program weekly, they meant a lot for the Newar. They were the wealth of the Newar. There were no other programs for Nepal Bhasa speakers as all other programs in the Radio Nepal were aired in Khas/Nepali from morning till night. It was not so simple to part from them. The Newar

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<sup>356</sup> The Nepal Bhasa original editorial by Fatte Bahadur Singh in the *Nepali Vihara* cited in Tuladhar (2000:330). The English translation is mine.

<sup>357</sup> From interview with Dr. Tuladhar.

took their cancellation very seriously. But as the Panchayat Government did not tolerate any kind of public gathering without permission, so it was out of the question to stage any public protest or resistance against the government run by a king. But the Newar did stage the protest against the arbitrary decision of a royal government. They launched a resistance movement known since then as the Nepal Bhasa movement. To everyone's surprise the resistance program started on April 27, 1965 went on till the end of June 1966, fourteen months resisting against the decision of King Mahendra's government, which did not tolerate even a 5 minute Nepal Bhasa news program in its own land. The resistance programs were carried out by the Nepal Bhasa Literary Convention, a pseudonym for the resistance movement. The literary programs were organized from one locality to another all over Swanigah (Kathmandu Valley). There were so many poems recited, and speeches made against the arbitrary decision. But nothing moved King Mahendra. Instead, he was successful in using the 'divide and rule' strategy to disperse the resisters. The Nepal Bhasa literary convention known as Nepal Bhasa *Andolan* (Nepal Bhasa Movement) that made a history with a 14-month-long resistance deserves sooner or later to be recorded in the Guinness Book, and receive a Nobel Prize for peaceful resistance sustained for such a long span of time. Two excerpts of songs which are still hits reflect the agony of the Newar people for losing the Nepal Bhasa radio program:

घाः ज्ञयाः जक ख्वळ्ळु खः मी  
 आःगुलिं सः गळ्ळु खः  
 मी मसीनि ! मी मसीनि !  
 धळ्ळु चिं जक ब्वेगु खः

We cry only because we are hurt  
 We voice only because of the pain  
 Lo and behold, no we are  
 Not dead yet, no, not dead yet

मीगु रगसा मन् धाःसा  
 गय् ध्व नयाः मीगु जळ्ळु?

When our language ceases to exist  
 How will Nepal remain our country?

Although what they expected to achieve – resumption of the terminated Nepal Bhasa program – did not materialize, it appears that the resistance programs stimulated unprecedented awakening among the Newar towards their mother language. Looking at these songs and poems published, people who were not aware of the resistance movement simply admire the spirit of Nepal Bhasa song writers. But for others, they were the wealth of knowledge for 'unity as one Newar' and 'orientation for activism.' The Newar resistance's failure to achieve its goals no doubt can be attributed to a major factor that



Gramsci referred to as a lack of knowledge, unity and activism to resist. But conversely, the failures continued to pose a challenge to state society relations. However, in considering the revolution Gramsci advocated the passive revolution – the ‘war of position’ and the ‘war of maneuver,’ instead of the ‘war of aggression,’ – the failures have strengthened the resistance movement of the Newar, they have come so far.

### ***A Policy Choice for Viable State Society Relations***

This study found the aim and the target of the framers of the single language policy in Nepal were motivated to wipe out all other languages in Nepal, other than Khas/Nepali. The Wood Commission, published as the NNEPC report in 1956, made it clear. An excerpt below summarizes the whole purpose of this government-appointed commission and their motives against the children of this multilingual nation:

If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language then other languages will gradually disappear, the greater the national strength and unity will result ... Local dialects and [mother] tongues other than Nepali should be banished from the playground as early as possible in the life of the child.<sup>358</sup>

Another report (ONEC) that guided overall national education in 1961 summarizes the double standard of the motive of the CHHE below:

Students learning Sanskrit must not be charged, instead they must be supported with scholarships; Sanskrit schools must be opened wherever people show their interests in doing so.<sup>359</sup>

As can be expected after the first recommendation (Wood Commission) above, local dialects and mother tongues other than Khas/Nepali have disappeared to a great extent. One may wonder how many of those single language policy framers live today to witness their desire of banishing local dialects and mother tongues other than Khas/Nepali nearly achieved. We noticed how the language is endangered in Chapter Three in detail. The loss of language is a loss of nation, and a loss of culture. We witnessed in our investigation how Newar literati such as Siddhadasa Mahaju were alarmed at the situation of Nepal Bhasa under Rana rule. He foresaw ‘a nation will survive only if the language of that nation survives,’ witnessing the way the Ranas oppressed Nepal Bhasa openly. It appears what the

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<sup>358</sup> NNEPC (1956), Gurung (2002); Maddox (2003) as cited in Kansakar (2007:10).

<sup>359</sup> ONEC (1961) cited in Rai (2011:3).

government-appointed education commission has done is not different from what the Ranas did in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is important that we understand the values of not only Khas/Nepali but also of other languages. Many have come to understand that the irrecoverable loss of language will affect the loss of valuable culture, history and knowledge. These values can be traced in a report presented in the UNESCO document about language endangerment as in the following:

The extinction of any language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical and ecological knowledge. Each language is a unique expression of the human experience of the world. Thus, the knowledge of any single language may be the key to answering fundamental questions in the future. Every time a language dies, we have less evidence for understanding patterns in the structure and function of human language, human prehistory and the maintenance of the world's diverse ecosystems. Above all, speakers of these languages may experience the loss of their language as a loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity (Bernard 1992; Hale 1998 cited in UNESCO 2003).

Many languages in Nepal have fallen into endangered state lacking a comprehensive state language policy, and the resources. The aforementioned recommendations of the education commissions and its protracted adoptions attest that the Government of Nepal has been deliberately exploiting other languages by declaring them 'national languages.' In addition to Khas/Nepali, the extraordinary status and facilities provided to Sanskrit and its students make the imbalanced treatment given to languages in Nepal even more obvious. Whereas there is no specific funding support for the promotion of any national languages that are already endangered, the Government of Nepal spends NRs. 173,000 per student per annum for Nepal Sanskrit University established in 1986 compared to NRs. 23,000 per student per annum for the country's main university, the Tribhuvan University, established in 1959.<sup>360</sup> Sanskrit advocates stated the reason for this was that Sanskrit has a historical relation with Nepal. It is true that Sanskrit is related to the history of Nepal as it has been in use in the inscriptions from the Licchavi Period to the early Malla Period. But it is not the mother tongue of any citizen of Nepal. On the contrary, Nepal Bhasa has been the mother tongue of the people since ancient times and was the state language of Nepal until it was first displaced by Gorkhali rule, and then oppressed by both the Rana and Panchayat autocratic regimes. These are the history of the regimes that ran

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<sup>360</sup> Annual Report (2010-11). University Grants Commission, Kathmandu

the country on coercion of the citizens. But today, democracy has been restored by the sacrifices of the people of Nepal regardless of ethnic, religious or linguistic differences for the past 7 decades since 1950.

Moreover, the political changes have revised and improved laws and guaranteed them in the constitution. However, the indifferent attitude government agencies have been showing towards the plight of a major section of people in Nepal, one would still wonder whether the peoples' movements have been a success or whether democracy has been restored in this country or whether the foresight of Ganesh Man Singh above will still be relevant for decades to come. This study was an effort to find answers to such reflections from a Newar perspective. In short, the study described how the coercive and repressive regimes oppressed Nepal Bhasa, the predominant identity of the Newar people and how the democratic governments carried over the 'Khas/Nepali only' state policy imposed during the Panchayat autocracy has reduced it to a 'definitively endangered language' in its own place of origin. The situation of Nepal Bhasa reflects that of several other languages of Nepal despite the restoration of democracy. What if the same ill fell on the Khas/Nepali? The answer lies in the policy choice: Single language favoritism or bilingualism.

The best solution would be for the power such as CHHE to transform their apathy to empathy towards the difficulty of the fellow citizens. But the universal truth is that it is the weak that surrenders to the power, which applies to the Nepali subalterns such as the Newar and the powerful CHHE of Nepal. Having agreed with the concept of passive revolution of Gramsci as a solution to counter hegemony, I realized that there is no guarantee of preventing from emerging another hegemony when the shift of British imperialism to Empire of globalism is considered. Similarly, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and symbolic power provided me important guidance to understand how habitus can implant power. But my quest of this study was how to use power for the benefit of the concerned. I started this study with basic views on language as a fundamental right on one hand and power (not simply tool for communication) on the other hand. But my investigation enlightened me to conclude that language as an economic product and a business enterprise anyone can venture.

In answering my research questions, I conclude that a) language identity sustains group, nationality and nation more than any other factors of identity. This truth is reflected in Nepalese language politics; b) the power of language can be best used for the benefit of

many if the concerned people notice the economic value the language has. Language is invaluable merchandise. Given it a quality, it can return high profit. Therefore, language is an economic enterprise if one knows how to venture on it, anyone can benefit from it. If language is a business, it is then a war that one must win.

In the Nepali context, Prithvinarayan Shah and his descendents discovered that value in Khas Bhasa, turned it to 'Gorkha Bhasa' then to 'Nepali' even by usurping it from Nepal Bhasa. The Newar own the Nepal Bhasa but only a few have noticed the value in it. Unlike them, the CHHE possess the power of Khas/Nepali but yet to notice the virtue of empathy.

Apathy begets no empathy, but empathy will.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back.

- Charlie Brown

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## APPENDIX-1

Table-1: Indigenous Nationalities of Nepal Recognized by the Government.

MOUNTAIN	HILL		TARAI
1. Barah Gaunle	1. Brahm/Baramo	21. Tamang	Inner Tarai area
2. Bhote (Bhutia)	2. Bhujel/Gharti	22. Thami	1. Bankariya
3. Byansi	3. Chepang	23. Yakkha	2. Bote
4. Chhaintan	4. Chhantyal		3. Danuwar
5. Dolpo	5. Dura		4. Darai
6. Larke	6. Fri (Free)		5. Majhi
7. Lhomi (Shingsawa)	7. Gurung		6. Raji
8. Lhopa	8. Hayu		7. Raute
9. Marphali (Thakali)	9. Hyolmo		Tarai area
10. Mugali	10. Jirel		1. Dhanuk (Rajbanshi)
11. Siyar	11. Kumal		2. Dhimal
12. Sherpa	12. Kusunda		3. Gangai
13. Tangbe	13. Lepcha		4. Jhangad
14. Thakali	14. Limbu		5. Kisan
15. Thudam	15. Magar		6. Kushbadia
16. Tingaule Thakali	16. Newar		7. Meche
17. Topkegola	17. Pahari		8. Rajbanshi (Koch)
18. Walung	18. Rai		9. Satar/Santhal
	19. Sunuwar		10. Tajpuria
	20. Surel		11. Tharu

Source: NFDIN <http://nfdin.gov.np/secured/about-us/> Accessed May 16, 2014; Bhattachan (2008:35).

Table-2: Language by Status and language lost (2011) (MOUNTAIN)

Languages spoken in the MOUNTAIN ecological belt.	UNESCO Grading; Ethnologue Grading	Percentage of Language lost (Ethnic population – speakers = lost by number and (%))
<b>Byansi:</b> Also known as Byasi/Sauka (See detail on p. 19).	3 (Definitely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	3,895 – 480 = 3415 (87%).
<b>Dolpali:</b> Spoken by Dolpo in Dolpa district in the Mid-Western region.	N.A.; 5 (Developing)	4,107 – 1,667 = 2,440 (59%)
<b>Lhomi</b> (also known as Shingsawa or Shingsaba): Spoken in Sankhuwasabha district, Eastern region.	N.A.; 5 (Developing)	1,614 – 808 = 806 (50%)
<b>Lhopa</b> (also Loke): Spoken in Mustang district, Western region.	N.A.; 6a (Vigorous)	2,624 – 3,029 = +405 (154%)
<b>Thakali:</b> (See detail on p. 19).	3 (Definitely endangered); 7 (Shifting)	13,215 – 5242 = 7,973 (60%)
<b>Walungge:</b> Shared by two smaller ethnic groups such as Walung and Topkegola, who live in the Eastern region of the mountain belt.	N.A.; 6b (Threatened)	2,350 – 1,169 = 1,180 (50%)

Adapted from UNESCO Atlas of World Languages (2014), Lewis et al. (2016) and CBS (2012).  
Note: N.A. (Not Available).

Table-3: Language by Status and language lost (2011) (HILL)

Languages spoken in the HILL ecological belt.	UNESCO Grading; Ethnologue Grading	Percentage of Language lost (Ethnic population – speakers = lost by number and (%))
<b>Baram:</b> (Also known as Baraamu, Baramu) Spoken in Central Hill (Gorkha district, Dandagaun and Mailung and around) by Brahmu/Baramo ethnic group.	1 (Critically endangered); 8b (Nearly extinct)	8,140 - 155 = 7985 (98%)
<b>Bujhel:</b> Spoken in the Central Hill (Tanahun, Gorkha in Gandaki Zone; Nawalaparasi in Lumbini Zone; Chitawan in Narayani Zone) by Bhujel/Gharti people.	N.A.; 7 (Shifting)	11,865 – 21,715 = 96,935 (82%)
<b>Chepang:</b> Spoken Central Hill (Makwanpur, Chitwan districts, Narayani Zone, Dhading, Bagmati Zone, Gorkha district, Gandaki Zone) Western and Central regions by ‘Chepang Praja (people).’	4 (Vulnerable); 6b (Threatening)	68,399 – 48,476 = 19,935 (29%)
<b>Chhantyal:</b> Spoken in the Western region (Myagdi district, Dhawalagiri Zone).	3 (Definitely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	11,810 – 6,439 = 5371 (45%)
<b>Dura:</b> Spoken in the Dura Danda, Lamjung district, Gandaki Zone. Gurung is spoken in the Western region (Kaski, Syngja districts, Gandaki Zone, Parbat district, Dhawalagiri Zone).	0 (Extinct); 9 (Dormant)	5,394 – 2,156 = 3,238 (60%)
<b>Gurung:</b> Spoken in the Western region (Kaski, Syangja in Gandaki Zone; Parbat in Dhawalagiri Zone)	3 (Definitely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	522,641 – 325,622 = 197,019 (38%)
<b>Hayu/ Vayu:</b> Spoken in Ramechhap district, Janakpur Zone	1 (Critically endangered); 7 (Shifting)	2,925 – 1,520 = 1,405 (48%)
<b>Hyolmo/ Yholmo:</b> Spoken in Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, Bagmati Zone.	N.A.; 6a (Vigorous)	10,752 – 10,176 = 576 (5.4%)
<b>Jirel:</b> Spoken by Jiri ethnic group living in the Central region (Dolakha, Janakpur Zone, Nawalparasi, Bagmati, and Sindhupalchok in Narayani Zone).	3 (Definitely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	5,774 – 4,829 = 945 (16%)
<b>Kusunda</b>	1 (Critically endangered); 8b (Nearly extinct)	273 – 28 = 245 (90%)
<b>Lepcha:</b> Spoken by its ethnic population in Ilam district, Mechi Zone.	3 (Definitely endangered); 7 (Shifting)	3,445 – 7,499 = 4054 (118%)
<b>Limbu:</b> Spoken in Dhankuta, Sankhuwasabha, Terhathum, Morang district in Kosi Zone; Taplejung, Panchthar in Mechi Zone.	3 (Definitely endangered); 5 (Developing)	387,300 – 343,603 = 43,697 (11%)

<b>Magar:</b> Spoken in an area spread out Far-Western to Eastern area on an upward scale by Magar people.	3 (Definitely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	1,887,733 – 758,530 = 1,129,203 (60%)
<b>Nepal Bhasa:</b> Spoken primarily in the Central Hill inside Kathmandu Valley and around by the Newar people. The speakers both Newar and non-Newar are scattered in 75 districts in the country.	3 (Definitely endangered); 4 (Educational)	1,321,933 – 846,557 = 475,376 (40%)
Adapted from UNESCO Atlas of World Languages (2014), Lewis et al. (2016) and CBS (2012). Note: N.A. (Not Available).		

Table-4: Language by Status and language lost (2011) (HILL AND TARAI)

Indic languages spoken in Nepal.	UNESCO Grading; Ethnologue Grading	Percentage of Language lost (Ethnic population – speakers = lost by number and (%))
HILL ecological belt.		
<b>Kumhale</b> (also Kumal, Kumhali): Spoken in an area overlapping Hill and Tarai belt inside Mid-Western and Western regions. They are Hindu by religious faith.		121,196 – 12,222 = 108,974 (90%)
<b>Pahari (Pahadi):</b> Spoken in and beyond Karnali Zone upto Nepal's western boarder.		13,615 – 3458 = 10,157 (75%)
TARAI (Inner Tarai) ecological belt.		
<b>Khariya:</b> Spoken in Morang and Jhapa districts in the Eastern region of the Tarai belt by Bankhaariya people.	N.A.; 6b (Threatened) [Although Khariya is graded 5 (Developing) in its kin-state India, it is threatened in Nepal].	238 – 69 = 169 (71%). [Ethnologue records of 1,580 speakers in 2001.]
<b>Bote:</b> Spoken in Tanahun (Gandaki Zone), Nawalparasi (Lumbini Zone); and Chitawan (Narayanni Zone). There are two groups Bote people, who are Hindu by religion: Pani (water) and Pakhe (land) (Lewis et al. 2014).	N.A. ; 6b (Threatened)	10,397 – 8766 = 1,631 (16%)
<b>Danuwar:</b> Spoken in Makawanpur, Sindhuli, Kabhrepalanchok and Lalitpur districts in the Central region.	2 (Severely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	84,115 - 45,821 = 38,294 (46%)
<b>Darai:</b> Spoken in Tarai belt through out Narayani and Gandaki zones. Lexically similar to Bote (85-90%).	2 (Severely endangered); 7 (Shifting)	16,789 - 11,677 = 5,112 (30%)
<b>Majhi:</b> Spoken in area in between Dhanusa and Ramechap districts in Janakpur Zone.	2 (Severely endangered); 6b (Threatened)	83,727 - 24,422 = 59,305 (71%)



TARAI ecological belt.		
<b>Rajbansi:</b> Spoken in Siraha, Saptari, Sunsari, Morang and Jhapa districts in the Eastern region. It is shared by three different ethnic groups of Dhanuk, Rajbansi (Koch) and Tajpuria.	N.A.; 5 (Developing)	219,808 - 122,214 = 97,594 (44%)
<b>Gangai:</b> Spoken in the Tarai belt of Eastern region. The language is very close to Rajbanshi.	N.A.	36,988 - 3,612 = 33,376 (90%)
TARAI ecological belt.		
<b>Janhgad/Dhangad:</b> Spoken in Sunsari, Kosi Zone in Eastern region.	4 (Vulnerable); 6b (Threatened)	41,800 - 28,600 = 13,200 (32%) (Ethnologue 2001); 37,424 – N.A. (Census 2011)
<b>Kisan:</b> Spoken in Jhapa district in Mechi Zone.	N.A.; 6a(Vigourous)	1,739 – 1,178 = 561 (32%)
<b>Satar/Santhali:</b> (See the detail about the Austro-Asia language family.).	4 Vulnerable; 5 (Developing)	51,735 - 49,858 = 1,877 (4%)
<b>Tharu:</b> Spoken by people primarily concentrated in Tarai belt of Far-Western and Mid-Western regions but spread through out the Tarai belt in other regions except Bagmati (Vākamati), Janakpur and Mechi zones.	N.A.; 5 (Developing) [Ethnologue assess the status of Tharu dividing into five dialects and grades 5 (Developing) all except 6a (Vigorous) for one speech group. It should be safe enough to grade 5 for the Tharu language in all.]	1,737,470 - 1,529,875 = 207,595 (12%)

Adapted from UNESCO Atlas of World Languages (2014), Lewis et al. (2016) and CBS (2012).  
Note: N.A. (Not Available).

Tables 5 – 16 are available inside the chapters (See the List of Maps and Tables on p. xiv).

Table-17: Population by Caste/Ethnicity

	1991	%	2001	%	2011	%	Remark
All castes/ ethnicity	18,491,097	100	22,736,934	100	26,494,504	100	
Chhetree	2,968,082	16	3,593,496	15.8	4,398,053	16.5	1991 - Chhetri
Brahman – Hill	2,388,455	13	2,896,477	12.7	3,226,903	12.1	1991 - Brahman (Hill)
Magar	1,339,308	7	1,622,421	7.1	1,887,733	7.1	
Tharu	1,194,224	6	1,533,879	6.7	1,737,470	6.5	
Tamang	1,018,252	6	1,282,304	5.6	1,539,830	5.8	
Newar	1,041,090	6	1,245,232	5.4	1,321,933	4.9	
Musalman	653,055	4	971,056	4.2	1,164,255	4.3	1991 - Muslim
Kami	963,655	5	895,954	3.9	1,258,554	4.7	
Yadav	765,137	4	895,423	3.9	1,054,458	3.9	1991 - Yadav, Ahir
Other	6,159,839	34	7,800,692	34.7	8,905,315	34.2	

Source: Census of Nepal (1991); (2001); (2011).

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Table-18: Population by Mother tongue

	1991	%	2001	%	2011	%	Remarks
All mother tongues	18,491,097	100	22,736,934	100	26,494,504	100	
Khas/Nepali	9,302,880	50.3	11,053,255	49.2	11,826,953	44.6	
Maithil	2,191,900	11.8	2,797,582	12.3	3,092,530	11.6	
Bhojpuri	1,379,717	7.4	1,712,536	7.5	1,584,958	5.9	
Tharu	993,388	5.3	1,331,546	5.8	1,529,875	5.7	2001 - Tharu (Dagaura/Rana)
Tamang	904,456	4.8	1,179,145	5.1	1,353,311	5.1	
Nepal Bhasa/ Newar	690,007	3.7	825,458	3.6	846,557	3.1	1991 - Newari
Magar	430,264	2.3	770,116	3.3	788,530	2.9	
Avadhi	374,638	2	560,744	2.4	501,752	1.8	1991 – Abadhi
Bajjika	0	0	237,947	1	793,416	2.9	1991 - not available
Urdu	202,208	1	174,840	0.7	691,546	2.6	
Hindi	170,997	0.9	105,765	0.3	77,569	0.2	
Sanskrit					1,669	0	
Other					3,405,838	12.8	

Source: Census of Nepal (1991); (2001); (2011).

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Table-19: Population by Religion

	1991	%	2001	%	2011	%	Remark
Total population	18,491,097	100	22,736,934	100	26,494,504	100	
Hindu	15,996,953	86.5	18,330,121	80.6	21,551,492	81.3	
Buddhism	1,439,142	7.7	2,442,520	10.7	2,396,099	9.0	1991; 2001 Bouddha
Islam	653,218	3.5	954,023	4.1	1,162,370	4.3	
Kirat	318,389	1.72	818,106	3.59	807,169	3.04	1991 Kiranti
Christianity	31,280	0.1	101,976	0.4	375,699	1.4	2001 Christian
Prakriti					121,982	0.4	
Bon					13,006	0.04	
Jainism	7,561	0.04	4,108	0.01	3,214	0.01	2001 Jain
Bahai			1,211	0.005	1,283	0.004	
Sikhism			5,890	0.02	609	0.002	2001 Sikha
Undefined	18,138	0.1	78,979	0.34	61,581	0.23	2001 Not Stated
Others	26416	0.14	0		0	0	

Source: Census of Nepal (1991); (2001); (2011).

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## नवाः यहिचानयाग नयाल रासया यागदान - अन्तर्वागी

### Interview: Contribution of Nepal Bhasa to Newar Identity

(English Translation at the end of the Nepal Bhasa original)

नेवाः पहिचानयात नेपाल भासँ गुज्वःगुकथँ योगदान बिल धैगु इतिहास, वर्तमानय् गुज्वःगुकथँ नेवाः पहिचानयात कःघाना च्वन, अले भविश्यय् गुज्वःगु भलसा जुयेफु धैगु न्हयसःया लिसः लुङ्केगु सन्दर्भय् नेवाः जाति, राष्ट्र व भास साहित्यया उत्थान, प्रवर्धन व संरक्षणया लागी योगदान यानाबियादीपिँ हनेबहपिँ लिसे कायेगु अन्तर्वाती।

झी नेवाःतय् दथुइ माँभासकथँ व नेपाल भास सःपिँ मेपिसँ (गैहनेवाः) छयेलावयाच्वंगु नेपाल भासया बारे याना च्वनागु अध्ययनया छव्वकथँ छिगु/छःपिनिगु मूवंगु ई बिया अन्तर्वाती बिया गुहालि यानादियेत ईनाप याना च्वना।

- सुभाय्  
सुवन् वज्राचार्य  
(त्सुकुबा विश्व विद्यालय,  
जपान)

### छत्वाः म्हसीका (परिचय)

नाँ:- .....बुन्हिल्याः/बूगुथाय् :-.....  
स्वापू संघ संस्थाया नाँ :-.....  
थाय् :-.....  
कार्यभारपद :-.....  
अन्तर्वातीकाम्ह :-.....न्हिल्या :-.....

- १) नेपाल मण्डलया आदिवासित नापँ उत्तर दक्षिण पूर्व पश्चिम पाखें नेपाल मण्डलय् दुहाँवःपिँ थीथी जाति, धर्मया मनूतेत नेवाःकथँ छवाः यानातेतः नेपाल भासँ यानातःगु योगदान, “आपालँ लुँया चक्कितेत छपु लुँसिखःले क्वातुक्क हनातःगु” धाय बहजूथँ च्वँ। थुकी छिगु/छःपिनिगु छु बिचाः दु?
- २) “भासा म्वासा जाति म्वाइ” धका सिद्धिदास महाजुँ धयाथकूगु वाणि, थउँया नेवाः जातिया सन्दर्भय् गुकथँ पायछि तायेका दिया/बिज्याना?
- ३) पौरानिक काल (किरातकाल नापँ), लिच्छवि काल, मल्लकालया दथुई छगु वा मेगु इले, दवलद्वः पुलाँगु महत्वदूगु जक मखुसे, नेपाल देसया राष्ट्र भासजुया च्वंगु नेपाल भासया प्रगति गुकथँ जुल गुकथँ थुइका काःसा ज्यू थें?
- ४) न्हूगु ई (आधुनिक काल-पृथ्वीनाराँ शाहया आगन्तुक शासन निसें पंचायतया अन्त्य तकक) या दुने नेवाः राष्ट्र/जातिया माँभास नेपाल भासया प्रगति वा अवनति (डिक्लाइन) गुकथँ जुल?

शाह, राणा व पञ्चायत काले नेपाल भास प्रति, नेपाल भासिक जन प्रति गुकथँया नीति कायेम जुल? गुकथँ थुइका काःसा ज्युथँ?

- ५) थउँया नेपाले, निसलँ मयाःगु ताःईतक्क क्वतेलातःगु पूर्व नेपाल देसभास नेपाल भासयातः हानं राष्ट्रिय/राष्ट्र भासकथँ नेपाल सरकार पुनपलिस्था यात (मान्यता बिल)। थथे नेपाल भासयात हानं देसभासकथँ मान्यता बियकेत छि/छःपि नापँ मेपि सुसुयागु योग दान दुथे? छिगु/छःपिनिगु योगदान व छिगु छःपिनिगु विचारय् च्वछायबहगु योगदान बारे छत्वाः छत्वाचा याना खँ ध्वाथुइका बियादीला थँ?
- ६) थउँया नेपालवासी नेवाः जनत, युवा वर्ग (विशेषयाना स्वनिगले, नेपाल मण्डले, अनँ नेपाले) पिसँ नेपाल भास प्रति गुलि सदभाव तथा च्वंगु खना? सदभाव मदुथँ च्वँसा छु जुया अथे जुल थे?
- ७) थउँया नेपाल सरकारया भासा नीतिँ नेपाल भास प्रति गुलितक्क च्वछाये बहजू? नेवाःतेगु पहिचानया लागी गुलितक्क फलदायी जुइथँ च्वँ?
- ८) न्हूँ नेपालया समावेसी लोकतान्त्रिक, जातीय स्वशासित संघीय गणतन्त्रया दुने ऐतिहासिक नेपाल मण्डल वा मेगुकथँया जूसँ नेवाः राज्य पलिस्था जुइगु इले नेपाल भास स्वायत्त राज्य भास जुइमा धैगु खँ न्यनेदु। राज्य स्तरीय भासकथँ छयेलेत थउँकन्हेया प्रवृत्तिँ (नेपाल भास ब्वने, च्वयेगु अभ्यास; नेपाल सरकारया भासा नीति) गुलितक्क बहबीथँ च्वँ?
- ९) भविश्य् नेवाः पहिचान (नेवाः जाति, राष्ट्र व भास साहित्यया) उत्थान, प्रवर्धन व संरक्षणया लागी नेपाल भासँ गुज्वःगुकथँ योगदान बिमा? आवँनिसे छुयायेमाथँ च्वँ? छिसँ छःपिसँ व्यक्तिकथँ वा संस्थाकथँ यानावया च्वनागु ज्याखँ या बारे छुँखँ कनादीला?
- १०) थथे नेवाः पहिचानयात नेपाल भासया योगदान विषयले (नेपाल भासया अस्तित्व, इतिहास, साहित्य, नेपाल सरकारया भासनीति) बारे छिसँ छःपिसँ च्वयातयागु, छुँ सफू, च्वसू, अनुसन्धान रिपोर्ट इत्यादि जिगु अध्ययनया लागी गुहालि जुइकथँ फूगु सरसल्लाह बियादियेत बिज्यायेत दुनुगलँनिसँ इनाप यासे लुमुगु सुभाय् देछाना च्वना।

- सुवन् वज्राचार्य  
- (दल्लु छँ - [Tel: 430-1988](tel:430-1988) वा  
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## Interview: Contribution of Nepal Bhasa to Newar Identity

(English translation of नन्दाः यद्विचानयाग नयाल रासया यागदान – अन्वर्णा)

This is an interview to be taken with respected contributors for the revival, promotion and preservation of Nepal Bhasa and Newar nationality in reference to answers for questions related to the history of Nepal Bhasa's contributions to Newar identity, its present sustenance and its future support.

We shall appreciate the opportunity to talk with you, and your invaluable time given for this interview, which is a part of our study on the use of Nepal Bhasa among the Newar who use it as their mother tongue and others who use it as an extra language.

- Subhay (Thank you)!

Suwarn Vajracharya

(University of Tsukuba, Japan)

### A Short Profile:

Name: .....Date, and place of Birth: .....

Name of the Association: .....

Address: .....

Position: .....Date:.....

- 1) It is said that Nepal Bhasa has contributed to integrate people of diverse communities and religions who entered Nepal Mandala from North, South, East and West, together with the indigenous people of Nepal Mandala into a united Newar nationality. This is compared with a gold chain that is made up of many gold ringlets. How would you comment on this?
- 2) How do you think of the statement “if the language survives, its nationality survives” left by Siddhidasa Mahaju is fitting in the present context of Newar nationality?
- 3) How would you recommend us to understand how Nepal Bhasa - which was not only an important language with a history of thousand years in one time or in between the ancient (including Kirat), Licchavi, and Malla periods but also as the state language of Nepal - progressed so far?
- 4) What caused both development and decline of Nepal Bhasa, the national and state language of Nepal, during the modern period (From outsider rule of Prithvi Narayan Shah to the end of Panchayat time)? What policies were adopted on Nepal Bhasa and its speech community during Shah and Rana periods? How should we understand it?

- 5) Today we see that Nepal Bhasa the former state language which had been oppressed for more than two hundred years in the past has sometime ago been reinstalled (re-recognized) as a national language by the government of Nepal. We wonder whether you had made any contribution towards it. If so, what kind contribution was it? Or if you are aware of anybody or any party's contributions towards it, how would you evaluate them?
- 6) Do you witness whether today's Newar people including the youth (specifically from Kathmandu valley, Nepal Mandala and outside of it) have respectable attitude towards Nepal Bhasa? If not, what would you attribute to it?
- 7) How much do you appreciate the present language policy of the government towards Nepal Bhasa? How much will it benefit the Newar identity?
- 8) It is learnt that Nepal Bhasa must be the state language of the historical Nepal Mandala in the event of formation of such or any other type of Newar autonomy under the new inclusive democratic ethnic federal republic. How far do you think today's trend (reading, writing practical knowledge of Nepal Bhasa and state language policy) will sustain Nepal Bhasa as the state language of the autonomy.
- 9) What kind of contributions will be necessary to revive, promote and preserve the Newar identity (community, nation, language and literature) in the future? What must be planned from right now? Would you share with us if there are any personal or associational activities you have initiated or participated?
- 10) We wonder whether you have contributed to literatures related to our study titled "Contribution of Nepal to Newar Identity" (Values of Nepal Bhasa, history, literature, state language policy). If so, what are they?

Thank you indeed for your precious time and valuable thoughts.

Suwarn Vajracharya  
Doctoral Program in International Public Policy  
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
**University of Tsukuba, Japan**



## नेपाल भास छयेला - छगु अध्ययन

(Questionnaire in Nepal Bhasa, the original version. English translation follows.)

झी नेवाःतय् दथुइ माँभासकथँ व नेपाल भास सःपिँ मेपिसँ छयेलावयाच्वंगु नेपाल भासया बारे याना च्वनागुअध्ययनया छब्वकथँ थनक्वसँ दूगु न्हसःयात लिसःबिया गुहालि यानादियेत ईनाप याना च्वना।

छिगु/छःपनिगु नाँ - .....

स्वापू (मोबाइल/ईमेल) - ..... - सुभाय्

सुवन् वज्राचार्य

(त्सुकुबा विश्व विद्यालय, जपान)

### १) नेपाल भास नाप थःगु पहिचान

१.१) नेपाल भास नाप छःपनिगु/छिगु पहिचान  
छु खः?

लिसः (पायछिगु लिसःयात चेक यायेगु)

अ) जिगु माँभास

आ) जिँ सयेकागु छगु अतिरिक्त भास

१.२) नेपाल भास गन छयला थें?

अ) छेंजःपिँ

(माँअबु/कायम्हयाय/आजाअजि[बाज्याबज्ये])

नापँ

आ) जलःखलःपिँ नापँ

इ) पासापिँ नापँ

ई) ज्याकुथी (अफिसय), ज्यासलय्

उ) ब्वनेकुथी (स्कूलय्)

ऊ) विहार, मन्दिरे

१.३) न्हिथँ स्वयेगु पौ (अखबार) छुथें?

अ) गोरखापत्र, कान्तिपुर ईत्यादि

(.....) खसभासया पौ

आ) The Rising Nepal, Kathmandu Post

वा

मेगु

(.....)

इ) नेपाल भासया न्हिपौ सन्ध्या टाइम्स

(वाःपौ)

लायकू, नःलि, धर्मकीर्ति, आनन्दभूमि लय्  
पौ,

मेगु (.....)

ई) नेपाल भासया अनलाइन पौ

(नेपाल लिपि अनलाइन पौ; नेपाल मण्डल कम् ;

नेपाल मण्डल org, नेपाःनेवाःकम् )

१.४) बेला बखतय् स्वयेगु सफू च्वसू/चिनाखँ  
इत्यादिया विषय छुथें?

अ) आर्थिक आ) राजनैतिक

इ) सामाजिक

ई) भास/साहित्य/संस्कृति उ) धार्मिक

ऊ) ईतिहास ए) स्वास्थ्य उपचार ऐ) व्यापार

ओ) मेगु

(.....)

१.५) थःम्हँ ब्वनागु/स्वयागु नेपाल भासया सफू

(थीथी विषययाखँ) दथुइ सिफारिस याये

यःगु छगु वा निगु सफू छुथें?

अ) .....

आ) .....

१.६) नेपाल भासँ च्वयेगु यानालाथें? पौ (न्हिपौ,

वाःपौ,

मेमेगु) अखबार, पत्रिकाया नाँ छुथें?

अ) गबले गबलें आ) बरोबर इ) च्वसू

ई) चिनाखँ

उ)मेगु (.....)

ऊ) पौयानाँ .....

१.७) नेपाल भास च्वये ब्वनेत छु लिपि छयेला थें?

अ) नेपाल लिपि आ)

देवनागरि लिपि

१.८) थउँकन्हे गोदँ दत (उमेर) ? .....

१.९) विहा यायेधुन/ मधुनि

१.१०) छिगु/छःपिनि जहान श्रीमान/श्रीमतिया थर

१.११) थःगु थर.....

१.१२) थः (नापँ दुसा जहान ) नेपाल भास ब्वने च्वय गथेयाना सयेकार्थें?

२) नेपाल भासया पहिचान व उकीया भविश्य

२.१) नेपाल भास नेपाल देसया राष्ट्रीय भासकथँ पुनपलिस्था जूगु याद दुलाथें?

अ) दू (आ) मदू

२.२) नेपाल भासयात व्यवहारकथँ राष्ट्रीय स्तरया भासकथँ उत्थान यायेत छु याये माथें च्वँ?

अ) भासिक जनताँ माःगु योजना दयेका नीति दयेकेगु ज्याय् न्हयचिलेगु।

आ) सरकारया पाखें माःगु नीति, योजना दयेकेगु।

इ) मेगु बिचा .....

२.३) व्यक्ति, प्चः, खलः, ब्वनेकृथि, विश्वविद्यालय स्वापुदुपिनि पाखें नेपाल भासयात गुज्वःगु योगदान जुयेमा?

२.४) थःम्हसिनँ गुज्वःगु योगदान बियेफुथें?

२.४.१) थउँ कन्हे, नेपाल भास वा नेवाः सम्बन्धी छुनँ संघ संस्थाया दुजः (का.का.सदस्य) वा जः(सदस्य) खःसा संस्था छुथें? छिगु/छःपिनिगु पद छू थें ?

२.४.२) व संस्थाया लक्ष छुथें?

२.४.३) व संस्थाया मीटिङ, माइनिटिङ छुभासँ जुया च्वन थें?

३) नेपाल भास व नेवाः लागा

३.१) नेवाःतेगु आदिवासी भूमिकथँ भविश्यया नेवाः राज्यया लागा छु जुइमा थें?

अ) यें, यल व ख्वप

आ) बाँड फाँट समितिँ नेपाल देसयात १४ प्रदेसे बाँड फाँटयासे नेवाः प्रदेस धका सिफारिस यागु दकले चीधंगु लागा

इ) नेवाः आदिभूमिकथँ मध्यमाँचलयादुने १२ जिल्ला दुथ्यागु ऐतिहासिक नेपाल मण्डल

३.२) थ्व नेवाःराज्यया सरकारी भास छु जुइमा?

अ) न्हापाथेंतुँ खस “नेपाली” भास

आ) नेवाः जातिया माँ भास नेपाल भास

इ) नेपाल भास, खस “नेपाली” भास व अंग्रेज भास

ई) मेग (.....)

३.३) नेपाल भास तःदँ निसँ नेपाल लिपि मखुसे, हिन्दुस्तान लिपि देवनागरि छयेला हया च्वंगु दु। थुकीयात भविश्यय् छु यासा बेस जुइ?

अ) देवनागरि हे छयेलेगु  
आ) नेपाल लिपि छयलेगु

३.४) छिगु आयागु वा मूलवासभूमि गन, छु  
जिल्लाया लाः?

#### ४) नेपाल भास व धर्मया सम्बन्ध

४.१) छि/छःपिनि धर्म प्रति आस्था दुला? दुसा,  
छु धर्मप्रति?

अ) हिन्दुधर्म आ) बुद्ध धर्म  
इ) वज्रयान धर्म (बुद्धधर्म व हिन्दुधर्म  
सम्मिश्रण जूगु नेपाःया धार्मिक  
पहिचान)

ई) इस्लाम उ) इसाई

४.२) ब्वने नँगु धर्म शास्त्र सफू

अ) पालिभासँ च्वयातःगु त्रिपिटक  
आ) संस्कृत भासँ च्वयातःगु त्रिआगम/त्रिवेद  
इ) नेपाल लिपिँ च्वयातःगु नवगुण धर्म  
ई) अंग्रेजभासँ च्वयातःगु बाइबल/त्रिपिटक  
त्रिआगम/त्रिवेद

उ) मेगु (.....)

४.३) धर्म परिवर्तन यानागु

अ) दु आ) मदु

४.४) दुसा परिवर्तन यानागु न्हूगु धर्म, गबलेँ  
निसेँ?

#### ५) पेशा व शिक्षा

५.१) अफिस गन? (वैतनिक/अवैतनिक सेवा)

अ) सरकार आ) प्राईवेट

इ) ब्वनामि

ई) कानुन वा सैनिक, पुलिस

ओ) अवैतनिक सेवा (भिक्षु/गुरु/लामा)

५.२) पद, कार्यभार (ज्या, व्यापार) गुज्वःगु?

व्यवस्थापन/अधिकृत/अध्यापन/प्राध्यापन/क  
र्मचारि/.....

५.३) शिक्षा गोगू तह?

अ) प्राथमिक (I-V)

आ) माध्यमिक (VI-X)

इ) उच्चमाध्यमिक (XI-XII)

ई) उच्च तह (B.A./M.A./Ph.D)

including science, medicine etc

५.४) शिक्षा ख्यः (क्षेत्र)

अ) मानवशास्त्र

(भास/साहित्य/संस्कृति/इतिहास

/भुगोल/राजनीति/अर्थशास्त्र इत्यादि)

आ) विज्ञान (इ) मानेजमेन्ट/प्रशासन

(ई) मेगु .....

५.५) ब्वनागु देस

अ) नेपाल

(नेपाले गन?.....)

आ) विदेसे

(विदेसे गन?.....)

#### ६) मेमेगु

६.१) फुर्सद दइबले छु याना थै?

६.२) गुज्वःगु मनोरञ्जन याये यः?

अ) म्ये जनेगु/हालेगु/च्वयेगु

आ) संगित जनेगु/थायेगु

इ) प्याखँ स्वयेगु/हूलेगु

६.३) नेपालँ पिहाँ वनेनँ?

गन?.....

गुलि ईया लागी? .....

६.४) यःगु म्ये?

अ) नेपाल भासया म्ये

आ) खस “नेपालि” म्ये इ) हिन्दि म्ये

ई) पोप/रोक/म्यूजिक/ज्याज

६.५) यःगु प्याखँ (movie)

अ) नेपाल

भासया .....  
आ) खस'नेपालि'या .....  
इ)हिन्दिया .....  
ई) अंग्रेजया .....  
६.६) न्हिथँ स्वयेगु टेलिविषन प्रोग्राम छुथँ?

नेपालभास/खसनेपालि/हिन्दि/अंग्रेज/मेगु(.....  
६.७) गुज्वःगु लँःवसः यः (clothing)?  
अ) पुलाँ वसः (नेपाःया संस्कृतिया पहिचान  
जूगु)  
आ) न्हूँ वसः  
(जीन्स/सुरुवा/कमिज/कुर्ता/सारि/तपुलि/  
क्याप)

### लुमुगु सुभाय् -

नेपाल भास छयेला - छगु अध्ययनया थ्व न्हयसःपौ (प्रश्नावलि) लिमला फमला लिस च्वया बियादिल/ बिज्यात दुनुगलँ निसँ यक्व सुभाय्। थुकिया अलावा नेपाल भासया पहिचान, नेपाल भासया अस्तित्व, इतिहास, साहित्य, नेपाःया भासनीतिया बारे फूगु सरसल्ला बियादियेत बिज्यायेत दुनुगलँनिसँ कृतज्ञजुसे, लुमुगु सुभाय् देछाना च्वना।

झीगु स्वापू:- [suwan\\_vj@hotmail.com](mailto:suwan_vj@hotmail.com)

**Use of Nepal Bhasa: A Survey Questionnaire**  
(English Translation)

This questionnaire is a part of a study about the use of Nepal Bhasa as mother tongue by Newars and as an extra language by others. We shall highly appreciate if you would be kind enough to complete it.

Thank you,

Suwarn Vajracharya,  
University of Tsukuba, Japan)

Your Name:.....Contact:.....

1) Your identity with Nepal Bhasa

What is your identity with Nepal Bhasa? (Please check the applicable below)

- a) My mother tongue
- b) An additional language I know

With whom or where do you speak Nepal Bhasa?

- a) My family (parents/children/grand parents)
- b) Neighbors      c) Friends
- d) Work/office (Government/private)      e) School      e) Temples

Which newspaper do you often read?

- a) Khas/Nepali newspaper such as Gorkhapatra, Kantipur or .....
- b) English newspapers such as The Rising Nepal, Kathmandu Post or .....
- c) Nepal Bhasa newspaper/magazine such as Sandhya Times, Laykoo, Dharmakeerti, Anandabhoomi or.....
- d) Nepal Bhasa online news portals such as Nepal Lipi Online; Nepalmandal.com; Nepal Mandal.org; Nepanewa.com or .....

What types of books, articles, poems do you read?

- a) Economics      b) Political science      c) Social sciences
- d) Language/literature/culture      e) Religion      f) History
- g) Health and treatment      h) Business      i) .....

If you would like to recommend any books in Nepal Bhasa books you have read, please

write up to two titles below.

a) .....

b) .....

Do you contribute to newspapers or magazines? If so, how often and what are they?

a) Sometime    b) often    c) article    d) poem    e) other

Which newspaper or magazine?

a) .....

b) .....

What script do you use to read and write Nepal Bhasa?

a) Nepal Lipi (script)

b) Devanagari Lipi (script)

Your age? .....

Are you single or married?.....

1.10) Family name of your spouse (Wife or husband) .....

1.11) Your family name: .....

1.12) How did you learn (reading and writing of) Nepal Bhasa? .....

And how did your spouse learn it? .....

2) Identity of Nepal Bhasa and its future

2.1) Are you aware that Nepal Bhasa has been reinstated as a national language?

a) Yes            b) No

2.2) In your opinion what needs to be done to promote Nepal Bhasa as a national standard language?

a) Speech community must come forward to make necessary projects.

b) The state must make a sound language policy

c) Other: .....

2.3) In your opinion what contribution must be made by those individuals, groups, community, schools, and universities to Nepal Bhasa?

.....

2.4) What contribution can you make or already making?

.....  
.....

2.5) Are you affiliated to any associations related to Nepal Bhasa and/or Newar community? And do you hold any position therein?

.....

2.6) What are the aims of the association?

.....

2.7) Which language is used to write the minutes of the meetings?

.....

3) Nepal Bhasa and Newar territory

Which of the following should be the territory of future Newar state?

- a) Yen (Kathmandu), Yala (Patan), Khopa (Bhaktapur)
- b) The smallest among the 14 territories allocated by the Territory Allocating Committee
- c) Historical Nepal Mandala that covers 12 districts of the present Central Zone (province).

3.2) What must be the official language of the future Newar state?

- a) Khas/Nepali language as before
- b) Nepal Bhasa, the mother tongue of the Newar community
- c) Nepal Bhasa, Khas/Nepali and English
- d) Other.....

3.3) Nepal Bhasa has been written in Indian Devanagari script for some time. Which script should be used in the future?

- a) Devanagari
- b) Nepal Lipi

3.4) Where do you live now? .....

Where is your original home town/village, which district?

.....

4) Nepal Bhasa and Religion

4.1) Do you adhere to any religion? If yes, which one?

- a) Hinduism
- b) Buddhism

- c) Vajrayana (Nepal's distinct religion integrated with Buddhism and Hinduism)
- d) Islam                      e) Christianity

4.2) Which of the following have you read?

- a) Tipitaka Pali    b) Triagama/Triveda in Sanskrit
- c) Navagunadharm in Nepal Bhasa
- d) Bible/Tipitaka/Triagama/Triveda in English
- e) Other.....

4.3) Have you converted from one to another religion)

- a) Yes                      b) No

4.4) If yes, which religion and since when?

.....

5) Profession and Education

5.1) Where do you work (paid or unpaid service)

- a) Government    b) private
- c) Student
- d) Law or military/police
- e) Unpaid service (Bhikkhu/Vajrayana-Guru/Lama

5.2) Type of Work/business (position)

- a) Management/officer/school teacher/university teacher or
- Other.....

5.3) Education level completed

- a) Primary (I-V)    b) Middle (VI-X)
- c) Higher secondary (XI-XII)
- d) Tertiary (B.A./M.A./PhD.) including science, medicine etc.

5.4) Educational field/expertise

- a) Humanities (Language/literature/culture/ history/geography/political science/economics etc.)
- b) Sciences



- c) management/administration
- d) Other.....

5.5) In which country did you receive your education?

- a) Where in Nepal?.....
- b) If abroad, which country? .....

6) Miscellany

6.1) How do you spend your free time?

.....

6.2) Which of the following, do you enjoy?

- a) listening/singing/writing
- b) listening to and playing music
- c) dancing/watching dance

6.3) Have you been abroad?

If yes, where?.....

For how long?.....

6.4) Your favorite song?

- a) Nepal Bhasa song                      b) Khas/Nepali song                      c) Hindi song
- d) English/pop/rock/jazz    e) Other

6.5) Your favorite movie?

- a) Nepal Bhasa movie.....
- b) Khas/Nepali movie .....
- c) Hindi.....
- d) English .....

6.6) Which TV program do you often watch?

- a) Nepal Bhasa    b) Khas-Nepali    c) Hindi    d) English    e) Other

6.7) Which clothing do you prefer?

- a) Traditional clothing (with cultural value)

b) Modern clothing (Jeans, trousers shirt/Kurta/sari/cap/Nepali cap)

Thank you for kindly completing this questionnaire. I shall appreciate your advice and suggestions to further the scope of this study.

My contact: suwan\_vj@hotmail.com

## APPENDIX – 4

News published in the Government owned daily newspapers: Gorkhapatra (Khas/Nepali) and The Rising Nepal (English) about the cabinet directives for replacing Newari with its original name Nepal Bhasa.

1) Abadekhi “Nepal Bhasa” (Nepal Bhasa henceforth), a news clip of Gorkhapatra dated September 9, 1995. See 2.6. for my translation of this news report and a Japanese version on the next page (367).

**अबदेखि “नेपाल भाषा”**  
काठमाडौं, भदौ २३ गते । श्री ५  
को सरकारले सरकारी सञ्चार  
माध्यमद्वारा प्रसारण गर्ने गरिएको  
“नेवारी भाषा” लाई अबदेखि “नेपाल  
भाषा” भनी प्रसारित गरिनुपर्ने  
निर्णय गरेको छ ।  
प्रधानमन्त्री मनमोहन  
अधिकारीको अध्यक्षतामा त्रि.वि.वि.  
शिक्षण अस्पताल महाराजगंजमा  
हिजो बसेको मन्त्रिपरिषद्को बैठकले  
सो निर्णय गरेको कुरा मन्त्रिपरिषद्  
सचिवालयले जनाएको छ ।  
नेवारी भाषालाई “नेपाल भाषा”  
भनियोस् भन्ने माग नेवारहरूले  
पहिलेदेखिनै गरिरहेका थिए । रासस

**It's Nepal Bhasa**  
Kathmandu, Sept. 8  
(RSS):  
His Majesty's  
Government has decided  
to name “Nepal Bhasa”  
instead of Newari  
language which is being  
broadcast in the  
government media.  
This decision was  
taken at a meeting of the  
Council of Ministers  
held yesterday under the  
chairmanship of Prime  
Minister Manmohan  
Adhikari at the  
Tribhuvan University  
Teaching Hospital,  
Maharajgunj, the  
Council of Ministers  
Secretariat has  
disclosed.

2) “Mass media directed to use ‘Nepal Bhasa,’ ” another news clip of The Rising Nepal dated November 14, 1998, together with a Khas/Nepali version on the Gorkhapatra of the same date.

**‘नेपाल भाषा’ शब्दको  
प्रयोग गर्न निर्देशन**  
काठमाडौं, कात्तिक २७ गते ।  
सूचना तथा सञ्चारमन्त्री राधाकृष्ण  
मैनालीले सबै सरकारी  
सञ्चारमाध्यममा ‘आयन्दा नेवार  
भाषा’ को सट्टा ‘नेपाल भाषा’  
शब्दको प्रयोग गर्न निर्देशन  
दिनुभएको छ ।  
स्मरणीय छ- ०५२ भदौमा  
तत्कालीन प्रधानमन्त्री मनमोहन  
अधिकारीको अध्यक्षतामा बसेको  
मन्त्रिपरिषद्को बैठकद्वारा सरकारी  
सञ्चारमाध्यममा नेवारहरूको  
मौलिक भाषा नेपाल भाषा नै प्रयोग  
गर्ने गराउने निर्णय भएपनि  
हालसम्म पनि त्यसको कार्यान्वयन  
हन सकिरहेको थिएन ।

**Mass media directed  
to use "Nepal Bhasa"**  
Kathmandu, Nov. 13 (RSS):  
Minister for Information and Communications Radha  
Krishna Mainali has directed all public mass media to use the  
name “Nepal Bhasa” instead of “Newari Language”.  
Minister Mainali gave the directive during a meeting today  
with a delegation including MP Padma Ratna Tuladhar which  
has been demanding a respectable position for Nepal Sambat  
(or era) and Nepal Bhasa in the public communications media.

News in Japanese about the cabinet directives for replacing Newari with its original name Nepal Bhasa.

Message # 24 is from: JNS0023 Hajur

Time: 95/09/18 14:02:09 Section 27: ネパールの言語・文学

Subj: <ネパール・バーサ>

(Mahanagar Daily 95/9/8 より)

ハパー・グティに嬉しい知らせ

カトマンズ〔Mahanagar〕／ネパール王国政府が政府の報道機関でネワール語のことを“ネパール・バーサ (Nepal Bhasha)”と呼ぶことにした決定を、ハパー・グティは歓迎している。

これまで政府報道機関では、ネワール語のことを“ネワリ・バーサ (Newari Bhasha)”と呼びならわしていた。

因みに、昨日マハラジガンジのトリブバン大学教育病院内で、マンモハン・アディカリ首相を委員長として開かれた閣議で、ネパール王国政府が、これまで政府報道機関で使用していた“ネワリ・バーサ”という呼称を、今後“ネパール・バーサ”として報道しなければならない、ということが決定された。以上、内閣官房が伝えている。

ネワール語のことを“ネパール・バーサ”と呼ぶようネワールの人々は以前から要求していた。

以上

JNS0032 Hajur

(From The Japan Nepal Society Home Page)

Source: JNS0032 Hajur and The Japan Nepal Society.