

LINGUISTIC DEMOGRAPHY OF NEPAL

Harka Gurung

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is on demographic aspects rather than linguistics. However, it seems relevant to commence with semantics of some Nepali terms relating to language. The first refers to the variation between *bhāshā* in written form and *kurā* (as *boli* in Hindi) in colloquial speech for language or dialect. The second is the difference in pronunciation whereby *bhāshā* means language or dialect while its vernacular form *bhākhā* means tune or tone. Thirdly, Nepalese languages remain unclassified as to their status as language or dialect despite the use of such terms as *bhasha* for the former and *bhāshikā* for the latter. The various population censuses use the neutral term mother tongue. Normally, 'mother tongue' means one's native language, 'language' is the speech of particular community or country, and 'dialect' is a form of speech peculiar to a particular region. Drawing distinction between language and dialect is difficult for its tendency to be subjective and political. Thus, the report of the National-language Policy Advisory Committee remains non-committal by relying heavily on 36 languages reported in the census as well as making cursory references, to 70 languages/dialects reported by researchers.¹

a. Inventory

A basic problem with regard to languages and dialects of Nepal is as to their extant number. The population census of 1952/54, the first to report mother tongue data, listed 53 languages/dialects.² This census report also listed six native³ and ten foreign languages⁴ that were excluded in later censuses. If one regroups the reported tarai rural dialects as 'eastern', 'central-east' and 'far east' under Maithili, as 'central-west tarai' under Bhojpuri, and of 'far west tarai' under Awadhi (Table 2), the total number of mother tongues comes to 48. These represent four language families: 24 Indo-Aryan, 20 Tibeto-Burman, 2 Munda⁵ and 2 Dravidian.⁶

A later update on the state of Nepalese languages provides a list of 52 languages.⁷ This inventory includes 36 Tibeto-Burman, 14 Indo-Aryan, one each Munda and Dravidian languages. The list somehow excludes Bengali and Kumbhale and instead adds 18 minor ones, all from Tibeto-Burman group except Churaute. The inclusion of languages such as Dolpali, Lhomi, Surel, Manangba and Nishangba, related to place-names, are derived from anthropological sources. The report of the National-language Policy Advisory Committee (RNSA) enumerates 36 languages based on the censuses.⁸ These are classified as 19 Tibeto-Burman, 15 Indo-Aryan, one Munda and one Dravidian.

One useful inventory of unwritten languages and dialects of heterogeneous ethnic minorities has been attempted by Hansson.⁹ These are discussed by geographic areas in groups of related language as follows:

- a. Magar: (1) Chhantel-Magar, (2) Kaike, (3) Kham, (4) Kusunda, (5) Raji*, (6) Raute
- b. Bhotia: (1) Bhote, (2) Byansi*
- c. Gurung-Tamang: (1) Chhantel-Thakali, (2) Nishang, (3) Shege (Baragaon), (4) Thakali*
- d. Newari: (1) Dolkhali, (2) Pahari*
- e. Chepang-Thami: (1) Bhujel (Chepang), (2) Bramu (Thami)
- f. Danuwar: (1) Bote-Majhi*, (2) Darai*, (3) Kachhare, (4) Kuswar, (5) Rai-Danuwar.

Of the above 21 languages/dialects belonging to six groups, the censuses identify only six (*).

Hansson also provides a classification of Kiranti languages based on the Linguistic Survey of Nepal.¹⁰ Table 2 attempts a schematic presentation of their three groups (Roman numeral) and 14 sub-groups (small case letter). Thus, the western group (Wallo Kirant) has 13, central group (Majh Kirant) 12, and eastern group (Pallo Kirant) 13 languages/dialects, extinct or extant. Of the total 38, only Hayu, Limbu, Sunwar are separately listed in the censuses while others are subsumed under Rai-Kiranti. Inclusion of Hansson's additional languages/dialects of 35 from Kiranti group and 15 from other ethnic minorities above yields a total of 107 languages/dialects for the country. In other words, one might safely assume the existence of over a hundred languages/dialects in Nepal.

Table 1: Classification of Kiranti Languages

I. WESTERN	II. CENTRAL	III. EASTERN
a. Northern Marginal 1. Khaling 2. Durni 3. Koi-Koyu 4. Hamphe	a. North-West 1. Sangpang 2. Kulung 3. Nachering	a. North-West 1. N. Lohorung 2. S. Lohorung 3. Yamphu
b. Western 1. Bahing 2. Sunwar*	b. Northern Intermediate 1. Chukwa/Pohing	b. Eastern 1. Limbu* 2. Chhathare Limbu
c. Eastern 1. Thulung 2. Linkhim	c. North-East 1. Mewahang (W&E) 2. Saam (W&E)	c. South Western 1. Athapahariya 2. Belhariya 3. Chhiling (Chhuylung, Chhintang, Baybansi, Chongkha, Longabal 4. Mugali 5. Phangduwali 6. Lumba-Yakkha 7. Yakkha
d. Western Marginal 1. Hayu/Wayu*	d. Marginal 1. Dungmali 2. Waling 3. Khandung	
e. Southern 1. Umbule 2. Jerung	e. Southern 1. Bantawa 2. Puma 3. Chamling	
f. Marginal Halesi 1. Tilung 2. Choksule 3. Dorungkecha		

*Reported in censuses

Source: Hansson, 1991, Appendix A.

b. Data Problem

Population censuses form the main source for linguistic data on Nepal. However, there are some problems related to their number, classification and distribution. The 1952/54 census report gives a total population of 8,235,079 in its mother tongue tables.¹¹ However, the totals come to 8,237,539 for Table 9 and 8,232,075 for Table 10. The actual total based on regional distribution of mother tongue population comes to 8,238,339 (Appendix A). More problematic is the classification of tarai languages in

the 1952/54 census. This has implication on the magnitude of population change by languages over time. The numbers attributed to Awadhi, Bhojpuri, and Maithili are indeed on the low side, divested of those reporting five tarai regional languages/dialects. One needs to consider here a dialect continuum or languages shading into each other, so that there is a certain arbitrariness about their division into discrete categories. However, Table 2 below is an attempt at their regrouping.

Table 2: Reclassification of Major Tarai Languages, 1962/54

Language Reported	No.	Related Mother Tongue	No.	Total
1. Awadhi	27	(a) Far-west rural	69,446	69,473
2. Bhojpuri	16,335	(b) Central-west Rural	258,135	275,470
		(c) Easter rural	460,946	
3. Maithili	300,768	(d) Central-east rural	617,443	1,485,726
		(e) Far-east rural	106,569	
Total	317,130		1,512,539	1,829,669

The reclassification is only approximate since central-west region of 1952/54 census had numerous Awadhi and eastern tarai many Bhojpuri speakers.¹² The adjustment, however general, yields a significant volume in the population of the three major regional languages of the tarai.

The 1991 census data on mother tongue also have some problems. There is considerable increase in those reporting 'other local languages' which rank first in Baitadi, and second in six western mountain and hill districts. They are also reported in sizable number in the three tarai districts east of Kosi river and Kailali. Moreover, Baitadi and Doti are primarily Nepali-speaking districts but those reporting local languages constitute 93.1 percent of the former's and 45.2 percent of the latter's population.¹³ There is also widespread reporting of some mother tongues far from their native area such as Bhojpuri and Maithili in the mountain, Limbu, Rai-Kiranti, Rajbansi and Satar in western.hill, and Byansi and Thakali in eastern tarai. Such discrepancy is particularly evident in the case of Rai-Kiranti, whose number ranks second in eight highland districts mostly west of Kali-Gandaki river and ranks third in Gulmi and Palpa.

Of the 60 ethnic/caste groups listed in the census, 23 have their own mother tongue. A cross-tabulation of ethnic/caste and related language data

by district shows many cases where the population reporting mother tongue far exceeds the ethnic/caste population.¹⁴ Such occurrences are noted in 48 districts for Rai-Kiranti, 44 for Rajbansi, 33 for Bengali, 26 for Raji, and 25 for Thakali. In these districts, the mother tongue population in excess of ethnic/caste population is 675 percent for Rai-Kiranti, 125 percent for Tharu, 380 percent for Bengali and 126 percent for Rajbansi. Other 13 social groups also report larger population by mother tongue than ethnicity/caste. Thus, the 17 groups in reported districts total 186,895 by ethnicity/caste and 296,823 by mother tongue population. Mother tongue population exceeding ethnic/caste population by 58.8 percent cannot be accounted for adoption of second language alone since many of these are languages of the minority groups. The explanation must be sought in the open-ended nature of questionnaire in the census schedule and errors in reporting as well as tabulation. Since there is no way of verifying the extent of discrepancy, the foregoing analysis is based on the reported census data.

TEMPORAL CHANGE (1952/54-1991)

The 1952/54 census data have been used as the base-line to measure the change in population size by mother tongue over time. For purposes of comparison, the languages listed in 1952/54 census have been aligned to that reported in 1991 census, bringing the total to 30. These have been grouped into four language families and two geographic areas. The language families are Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Munda and Dravidian. The first two families have both highland and lowland categories. The analysis is done at two levels: macro by language family groups and micro for individual languages/dialects.

a. By Groups

Of the total population of 8.2 million in 1952/54, 70.6 percent had a mother tongue belonging to the highland group (Table 3). This group includes two Indo-Aryan and 14 Tibeto-Burman languages (Appendix A). The latter made-up 21.8 percent of the total population whereas Indo-Aryan Nepali alone was 48.7 percent. The lowland language group had a population share of 29.1 percent. Of the four language families represented in the tarai, 12 Indo-Aryan languages had a share of 28.7 percent. The two Tibeto-Burman and one each of Munda and Dravidian families were very

small in number. Their total share was only slightly above that of other local and foreign languages, and unstated.

Table 3: Population Change by Language Groups, 1952/54-1991

Language	1952/54		1991		Increase 1952/54-91	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A. Highland Group	5,816,934	70.6	12,434,219	67.2	6,617,285	113.8
1. Indo-Aryan	4,019,296	48.8	9,314,202	50.4	5,294,906	131.7
2. Tibeto-Burman	1,797,908	21.8	3,120,017	16.9	1,322,109	73.5
B. Lowland Group	2,396,938	29.1	5,540,766	30.0	3,143,828	131.2
1. Indo-Aryan	2,367,683	28.7	5,474,286	29.6	3,106,603	131.2
2. Tibeto-Burman	7,185	0.1	17,973	0.1	10,788	150.1
3. Munda	17,258	0.2	33,332	0.2	16,074	93.1
4. Dravidian	4,812	0.1	15,175	0.1	10,363	215.4
C. Others/Unstated	24,197	0.3	516,112	2.8	491,915	2,033.0
TOTAL	8,238,069	100.0	18,491,097	100.0	10,252,758	124.5
i. Indo-Aryan	6,386,979	77.5	14,788,488	80.0	8,401,509	131.5
ii. Tibeto-Burman	1,805,093	21.9	3,137,990	17.0	1,332,897	73.8

Source: Appendix C.

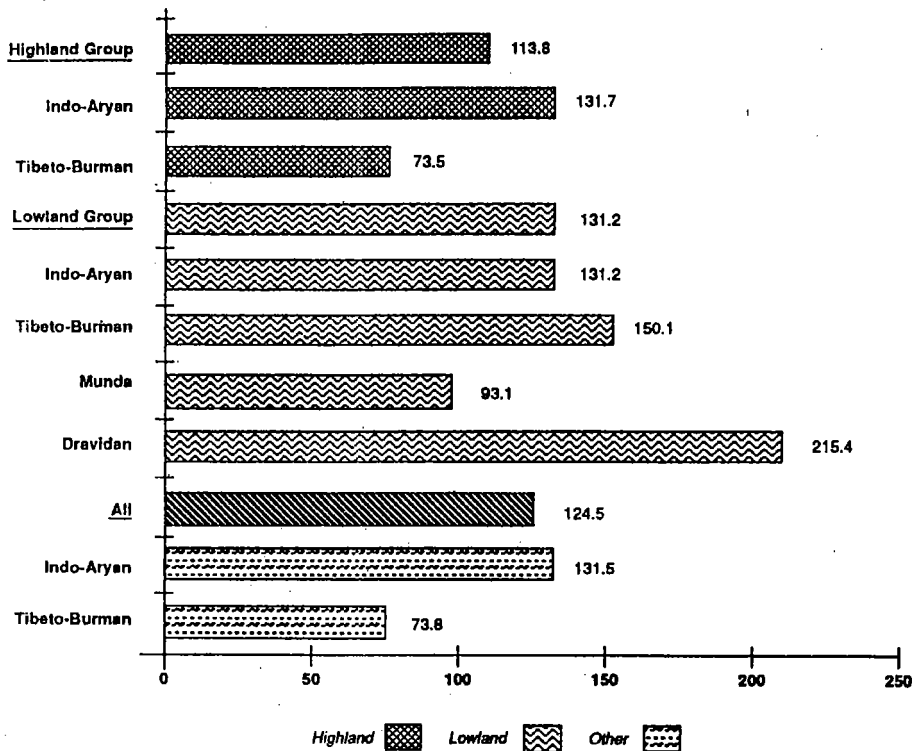
In 1991, the total population of Nepal was 18.5 million, an increase of 124.5 percent since 1952/54 (Table 3). The 14 Indo-Aryan language population increased by 131.5 percent. The increase for the 14 Tibeto-Burman language group was 73.8 percent (Fig.1). The share of the highland language group declined from 70.6 to 67.2 percent despite a population increase of 113.8 percent. The Indo-Aryan share increased from 77.5 to 80.0 percent, while the Tibeto-Burman share declined from 21.9 to 17.0 percent. The population gain of highland language families was lower than the national average of 124.5 percent.

The share of lowland language group increased only slightly, although population increase was higher than the national average. Population gain was much higher for Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman language families but their share remained the same. The only lowland group to gain in language share was the Indo-Aryan family. The share of others/unstated category increased from 0.3 percent in 1952/54 to 2.8 percent in 1991.

b. By Languages

Of the 30 languages for which comparable data both for 1952-54 and 1991 are available, a dozen record population increase exceeding the national average (Appendix C). These include nine Indo-Aryan, two Tibeto-Burman and one Dravidian language. Except Nepali and Thakali, these belong to the lowland group. The most significant increases, over three-fold, were recorded for Urdu, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Marwari, and Jhangar, all tarai languages (Fig.2).

**Fig. 1: Population Increase by Language Group
1952/54-1991
(In Percent)**



Source: Table 4

Among the nine languages that more than doubled, seven are of Indo-Aryan family and two Tibeto-Burman. Among these, five are tarai (Bengali, Tharu, Dhimal, Rajbansi, Hindi), two inner tarai (Danuwar, Darai), one hill (Nepali) and one mountain (Thakali) languages. Seven languages record a population increase of 75.9 to 97.6 percent or over three-quarter. These include five Tibeto-Burman, one Indo-Aryan and one Munda

language. By native area, six of these are hill (Majhi, Raji, Rai-Kiranti, Tamang, Newari, Chepang) and one tarai (Satar) language.

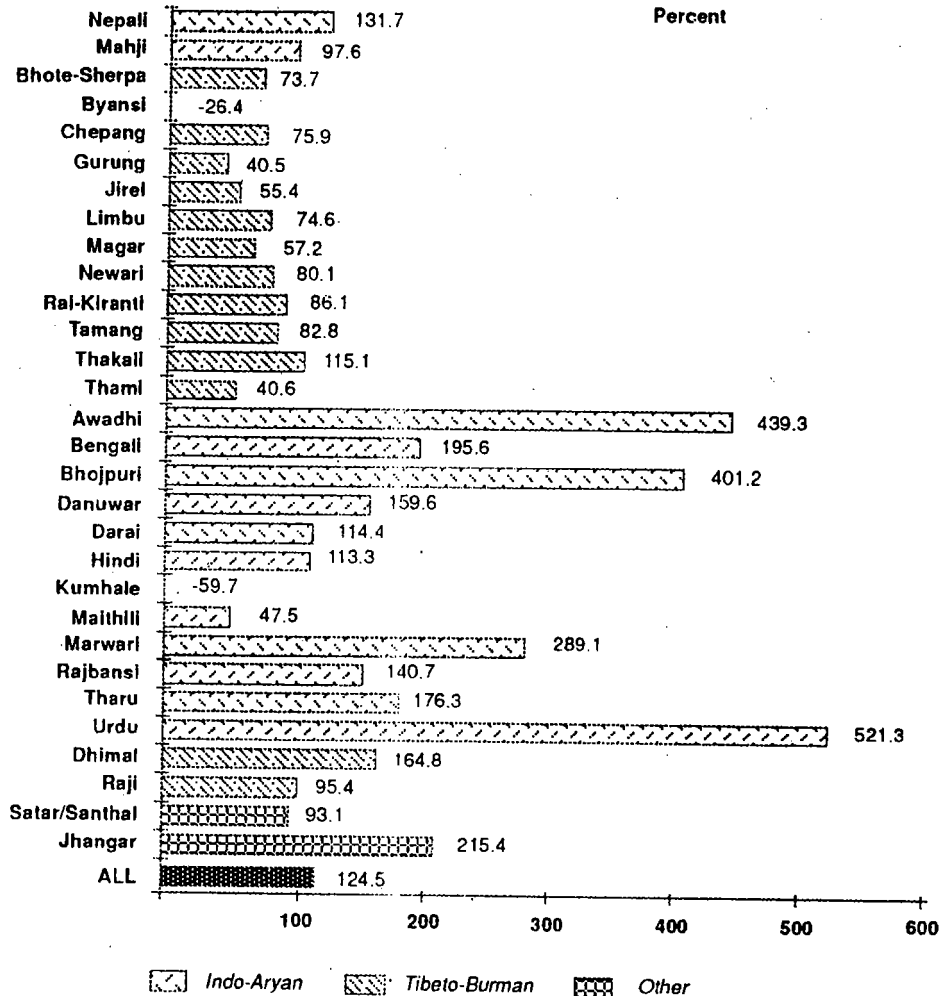
Then follow seven languages whose population increase range from 40.5 to 74.6 percent. Six of these belong to the Tibeto-Burman family. Maithili is the sole Indo-Aryan representative in this cohort, and its low increase may partly be due to the problem of classification in 1952/54 census. In terms of native area, these languages with low population increase include five hill (Limbu, Magar, Jirel, Thami, Gurung), one mountain (Bhote-Sherpa), and one tarai (Maithili) language. Two languages record absolute decline in population during 1952/54-1991. These are Kumhale that declined by 59.7 percent and Byansi by 26.4 percent. Kumhale is an Indo-Aryan language based in inner tarai while Byansi is Tibeto-Burman from the mountain. Ten Tibeto-Burman, five Indo-Aryan, and one Munda recorded increase below the national average. Of the 14 Indo-Aryan languages, nine exceed the average national population increase. Eleven Indo-Aryan, two Tibeto-Burman and one Munda family languages doubled their population in less than four decades.

There have been some changes in ranking of the languages due to differential rates of population growth and language shift. In 1952/54, eleven languages claimed at least one percent of the total population. In 1991, twelve had such population share. Of the top ten in rank in 1952/54, six were Tibeto-Burman and seven of highland origin (Appendix C). In 1991, the top ten included five Indo-Aryan and six of highland origin. Nepali remained dominant in both censuses, followed by Maithili. Bhojpuri replaced Tamang in the third place and Tharu replaced Newari in the fourth place. Bhojpuri and Awadhi had a major shift in ranking, sixth to third for the former and 13th to 9th for the latter. Limbu retained its 10th ranking while Gurung was relegated from 9th to 11th place. Among those ranked in the bottom ten, relegation for Thami (18 to 23), Majhi (21 to 24) and Kumhale (25 to 29) are noteworthy.

SPATIAL SHIFT

Change over time discussed above is one aspect of linguistic demography. Another refers to spatial change or distribution pattern. This may be assessed in terms of sectoral (east-west) and elevational (north-south) changes in population by languages. The former areal division has to do with major watersheds while the latter concerns ecological zones. However, since the areal divisions followed in the censuses of 1952/54 and 1991 are not comparable, some adjustments are necessary.¹⁵

Fig. 2: Population Increase by Language Group, 1952/54-1991



Source: Appendix C

a. Sectoral

Table 4 shows population distribution of language groups by sectors for 1952/54 and 1991. In 1952/54, highland language group population was 55.3 percent in the west, 34 percent in the east and 10.7 percent in central sector (Table 4). Over 80 percent of them were in western and eastern hills. Over two of third of highland Indo-Aryan group were in the west and a fifth in the east. They were only a few in western inner tarai, western and central tarai. Highland Tibeto-Burmans were 34.1 percent in the east, 29.0 percent in the west and a fifth in central sector. They were very few in central and western tarai, and western inner tarai.

Population with lowland or tarai languages were mostly in the east (Table 4). Their share in central and western sectors was 15.7 percent and 13.4 percent respectively. Eastern tarai had an overwhelming share of the lowland languages. It claimed 69.8 percent of Indo-Aryan, 78.9 percent of Tibeto-Burman and most of Munda and Dravidian language groups. The Munda were represented in eastern inner tarai and tarai, and the Dravidian only in eastern tarai.

Table 4: Sectoral Distribution of Language Group, 1952/54 and 1991

Sector Region	Highland Group						Lowland Group							
	Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Total		Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Munc a & Dravidian		Total	
	52/54	1991	52/54	1991	52/54	1991	52/54	1991	52/54	1991	52/54	1991	52/54	1991
A. West	67.0	56.1	29.0	23.1	55.3	47.8	13.5	14.1	21.1	11.6		2.0	13.4	14.0
1. Hill	66.0	47.8	29.0	22.4	54.6	41.4	1.6	0.5	4.6	5.9	1.3	1.5	0.5	
2. Inner Tarai	0.8	2.5	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.9	2.5	2.1		0.2		0.1	2.4	2.1
3. Tarai	0.2	5.7	0.1	0.5	0.2	4.4	9.5	11.6	16.4	5.6		0.6	9.4	11.4
B. Central	6.5	14.7	20.2	28.0	10.7	18.0	15.9	15.5		2.8		1.1	15.7	15.3
4. Kathmandu Valley	4.0	5.6	13.7	17.8	7.0	8.6	0.1	0.4		1.4		0.2	0.1	0.4
5. Inner Tarai	2.3	4.0	6.3	7.4	3.5	4.9	1.5	1.1		0.2		0.2	1.4	1.1
6. Tarai	0.2	5.1	0.1	2.8	0.2	4.5	14.3	14.0		1.2		0.7	14.1	13.8
C. East	26.5	29.3	34.1	48.9	34.0	34.2	70.7	70.4	789.9	85.6	100.0	97.1	71.0	70.6
7. Hill	21.9	15.1	44.9	33.4	29.0	19.7	0.2	0.2		1.3		0.3	0.2	0.3
8. Inner Tarai	2.6	2.7	3.6	4.9	2.9	3.2	0.7	0.7		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.7
9. Tarai	2.0	11.5	2.3	10.6	2.1	11.3	69.8	69.4	78.9	84.3	99.9	96.7	70.1	69.7
ALL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Appendices A and B.

During the period 1952/54-1991, the total population of 30 languages with comparable data more than doubled (Appendix C). Sectoral share of language groups changed due to the differential increase in population during the 37/39 years interval. Sectoral distribution of population in 1991 by language groups is shown in Table 4. Two language groups recorded a decline at the regional level. One was a 30.4 percent decline of lowland Indo-Aryan group in western hill and another a 15.1 percent decline of lowland Tibeto-Burman, group in western tarai (Appendix D). All other language groups increased in population in other regions. Another notable

feature was the reporting in 1991 of lowland Tibeto-Burman group in central sector, and Munda and Dravidian groups in western and central sectors (Table 4).

Those with largest absolute increase were highland Indo-Aryan in western hill, highland Tibeto-Burman in Kathmandu Valley, and all lowland groups in eastern tarai. In terms of percentage increase, the highest recorded were highland IndoAryan in western tarai, highland Tibeto-Burman in western inner tarai, lowland Indo-Aryan in Kathmandu Valley, lowland Tibeto-Burman in western hill, and Munda and Dravidian in eastern inner tarai (Appendix D).

As a consequence, there was marked change in the sectoral distribution of population of different language groups. The west's share of highland Indo-Aryan speakers declined but the east's increased slightly and the central sector's doubled (Table 4). The percentage of highland Tibeto-Burman speakers also declined in the west but increased in central and eastern sectors. The proportion of lowland Indo-Aryan speakers declined in central and eastern sectors while that of lowland Tibeto-Burman group declined in the west. Central and western sectors gained in Munda and Dravidian speakers where there were none in 1952/54.

Overall, the 30 comparable languages had a population increase of 118.8 percent during 1952/54-1991. The highest absolute increase was in eastern sector but the highest percent increase was in central sector. Population share by linguistic groups was higher in the west for the highland group and the reverse for the lowland group. However, there was variation between censuses as to their respective share within each sector. In the west, the highland group's share declined and that of the lowland group increased. In central sector, the highland group gained and the lowland group lost. In the east, there was marginal gain for highland group and marginal loss for lowland group.

b. Elevational

In 1952/54, the 8.2 million population of Nepal was distributed as 64.7 percent in the hill, 29.0 percent in the tarai, and 6.3 percent in inner tarai (Table 5). Over ninety percent of highland language group was in the hill. Similarly, 93.7 percent of lowland language group was concentrated in the tarai. Conversely, only 1.8 percent of the lowland group was in the lowland and 2.4 percent of the highland group in the tarai. Among the highland group, 91.9 percent of IndoAryan and 87.6 percent of Tibeto-Burman were reported in the hill. Their share in the tarai was only 2.4 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. Similarly, the lowland group of Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman were mostly in the tarai: 93.6 percent former and

95.4 percent latter. Munda and Dravidian speakers were confined to the tarai, mainly in eastern tarai.

Table 5: Regional Population by Language Group, 1952/54 & 1991

Region	Highland Group						Lowland Group						Others/Unstated		TOTAL				
	Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Highland Total		Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Munda		Dravidian		Lowland Total		52/54	91	
	52/54	1991	52/54	91	52/54	91	52/54	91	52/54	91	52/54	91	52/54	91	52/54	91			
A. Mountain/Hill	91.9	68.5	87.6	73.6	90.6	69.7	1.8	1.1	4.6	8.5		2.6	0.2	1.8	1.2	77.7	70.8	64.7	49.2
1. West/Central	66.0	47.8	29.0	22.4	54.6	41.4	1.6	0.5	4.6	5.9		1.9	0.1	1.5	0.5	0.2	58.7	39.0	29.7
2. Kathmandu Valley	4.0	5.6	13.7	17.8	7.0	8.6	0.1	0.4		1.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	5.0	6.0
3. East	21.9	1.1	44.9	33.4	29.0	19.7	0.1	0.2		1.3	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.3	75.9	10.5	20.8	13.6
B. Inner Tarai	5.7	9.2	9.9	12.4	7.0	10.0	4.5	3.9		0.4	0.0	0.4	0.1	4.5	3.9	10.8	1.4	6.3	7.9
4. West	0.8	2.5	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.9	2.4	2.1		0.2		0.1		2.4	2.1		0.1	1.1	1.9
5. Central	2.3	4.0	6.3	7.4	3.5	4.9	1.5	1.1		0.2		0.2	0.1	2.4	1.1	5.3	0.7	2.9	3.6
6. East	2.6	2.7	3.6	4.9	2.9	3.2	0.7	0.7		0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.7	5.4	0.6	2.3	2.4
C. Tarai	2.4	22.3	2.5	14.0	2.4	20.2	93.6	94.9	95.4	91.1	100.0	97.0	100.0	99.7	95.0	11.5	27.8	29.0	42.8
7. West	0.2	5.7	0.1	0.5	0.2	4.4	9.5	11.6	16.4	5.6		0.8	0.0	9.4	11.4	0.1	12.8	2.9	6.8
8. Central	0.2	5.1	0.1	2.8	0.2	4.5	14.3	14.0		1.2		0.9	0.0	14.1	33.8	1.2	1.0	4.2	7.2
9. East	2.0	11.5	2.3	10.6	2.0	11.3	69.8	69.4	78.9	84.3	100.0	95.3	100.0	99.7	70.1	10.3	14.0	21.9	28.9
ALL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

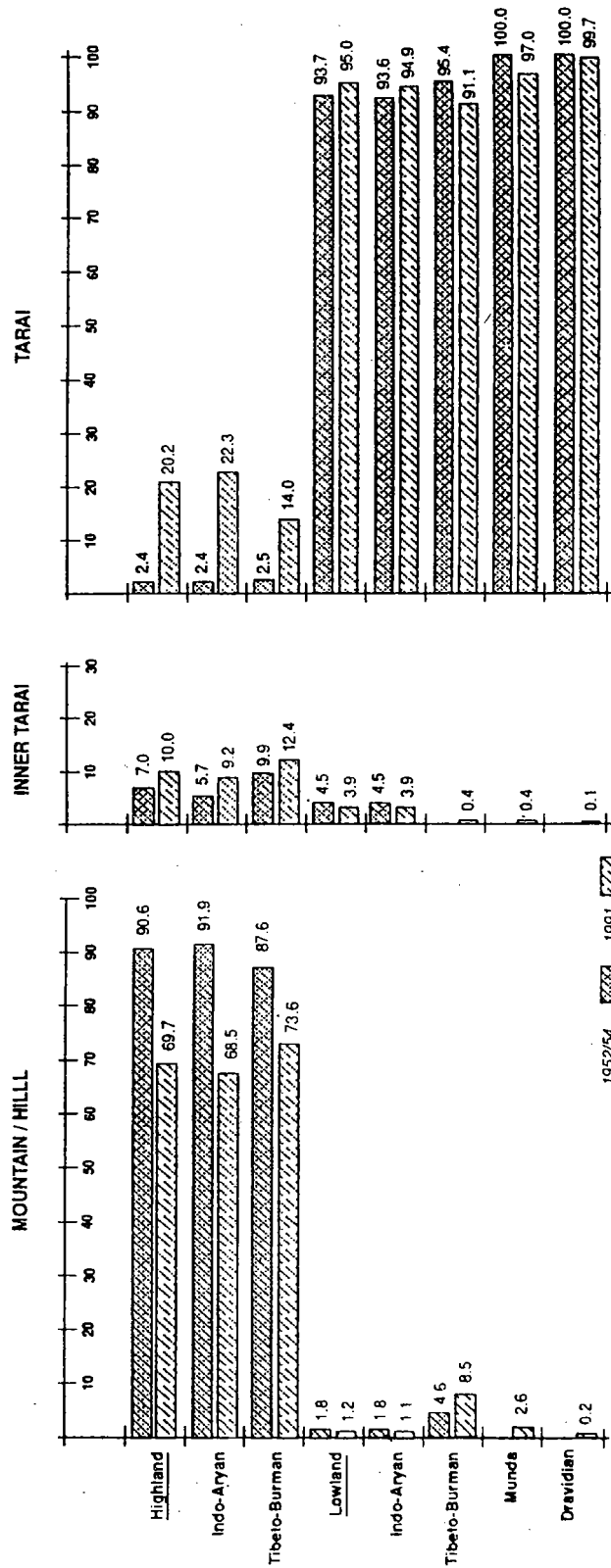
Source: Appendices B & I.

The census of 1991 shows considerable shift in population by elevation zones with consequent change in linguistic share. The most significant was the large increase of highland language group in the lowlands. Highland Indo-Aryan speakers increased by 2.7 million or 72.6 percent in the mountain/hill (Appendix E). They increased by 2.6 million in the lowlands which was 2.8 times in inner tarai and 20.8 times in tarai since 1952/54. Increase of highland Tibeto-Burman speakers was similarly progressively higher at lower elevations: 45.8 percent in mountain/hill, 117.0 percent in inner tarai and 878.5 percent in the tarai.

Highland language group increased 17-fold in the tarai with addition of 2.4 million of their population since 1952/54. The lowland Indo-Aryan group increased by nearly 3 million in the tarai compared to less than 20,000 in the highlands. The tarai language groups had a divergent pattern in percent increase. It was highest in the tarai for Indo-Aryan, in highlands for Tibeto-Burman, and in inner tarai for Munda and Dravidian. Overall, the lowland language group increased by 50.1 percent in the highlands, 98.8 percent in inner tarai, and 134.3 percent in the tarai.

In 1991, nearly 70 percent of highland language group were reported in the highlands and 98.9 percent of lowland language group were confined to inner tarai and the tarai (Table 5). Highland language groups constituted one-fifth of the tarai and one-tenth of inner tarai population in 1991. In the mountain/hill, the share of highland Indo-Aryan, highland Tibeto-Burman and lowland Indo-Aryan speakers declined (Fig.3). In inner tarai, all but lowland Indo-Aryan speakers gained in share. In the tarai, highland Indo-Aryan as well as Tibeto-Burman speakers gained. The share of lowland Tibeto-Burman, Munda and Dravidian speakers declined in the tarai more in 1991 than in 1952/54. A notable change was the reporting of lowland languages in regions where there were none in 1952/54.

Fig. 3: Regional Population by Language Group 1952/54 and 1991
(In Percent)



Source: Table 5

The proportion of highland Indo-Aryan group in the tarai increased from 2.4 percent to 22.3 percent and that of Tibeto-Burman from 2.5 percent to 14.0 percent (Table 5). Much of this major shift in population by language group was due to inter-regional migration directed from the highlands to the lowlands. In 1952/54, nearly two-third of the population involving the 30 languages analysed were in the highlands. The rest were distributed as 29.0 percent in the tarai and 6.3 percent in inner tarai. By 1991, the highland share had declined to 49.2 percent while that of the tarai increased to 42.8 percent. All tarai and inner tarai regions had a higher share of population in 1991 than in 1952/54.

LINGUISTIC DYNAMICS

The preceding sections dealt with changes in population size by languages in terms of time and space. Some of the census data can be used to assess the relative position of the languages as an expression of their dynamics. These relate to mother tongue retention, bilingualism, and spread of the Nepali language.

a. Mother Tongue Retention

The 1991 census provides data on 32 languages and 60 ethnic/caste groups. A cross-tabulation of these data for comparable groups provides some measure of mother tongue retention. The number of ethnic/caste groups exceeds that of languages for two reasons. First, some social groups, particularly caste people, share the same language. This is the case for Nepali, the mother tongue of nine hill castes. Similarly, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Maithili and Urdu are spoken by various tarai castes and Muslims. Secondly, some ethnic/caste groups are not listed in the language data of 1991. These are Bote, Dhanukh, Gangai, Jhangar, Lepcha, Raute, Satar, Sikh and Sunuwar.¹⁶ Conversely, Byansi, Jhangar, and Satar are reported as language groups but not as ethnics. The relationship of Urdu language is unclear with regard to the Churaute (hill Muslims). Thus, the number of social groups with related languages comes to 20 ethnics, and one each of caste (Marwari), and language (Bengali) groups (Appendix F). Since the languages of the Bhotia and Sherpa are reported singly as Bhot-Sherpa, the number of ethnics comes to 21 and their languages 20.

Table 6 summarizes the retention level of the various languages grouped by geographic areas. The highest retention level is recorded for the mountain group. It is followed by those of the tarai and eastern hill groups.

The central hill group has a retention level of less than half and inner tarai group only one-third.

Fig. 4: Linguistic Map

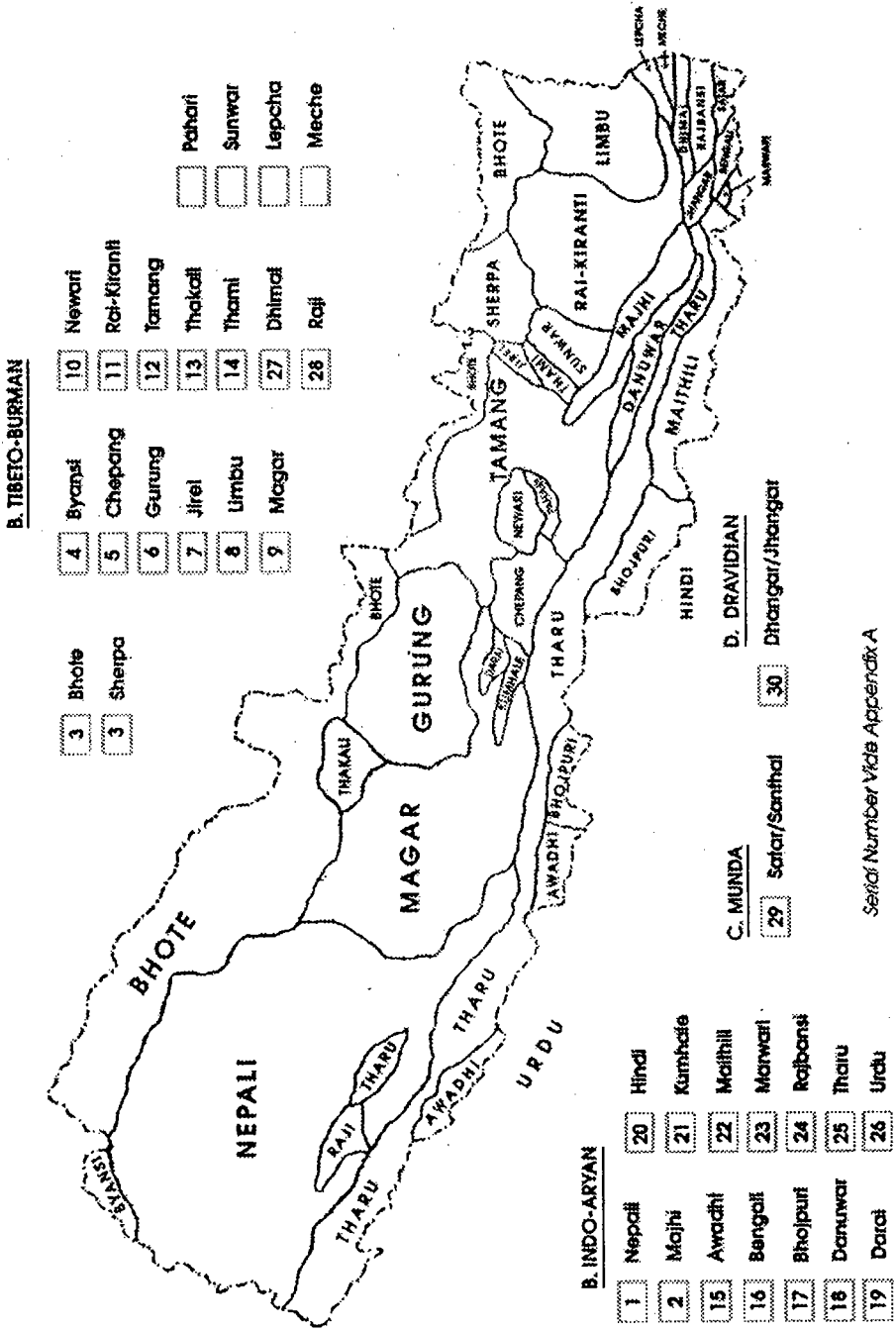


Table 6: Retention of Mother Tongue, 1991

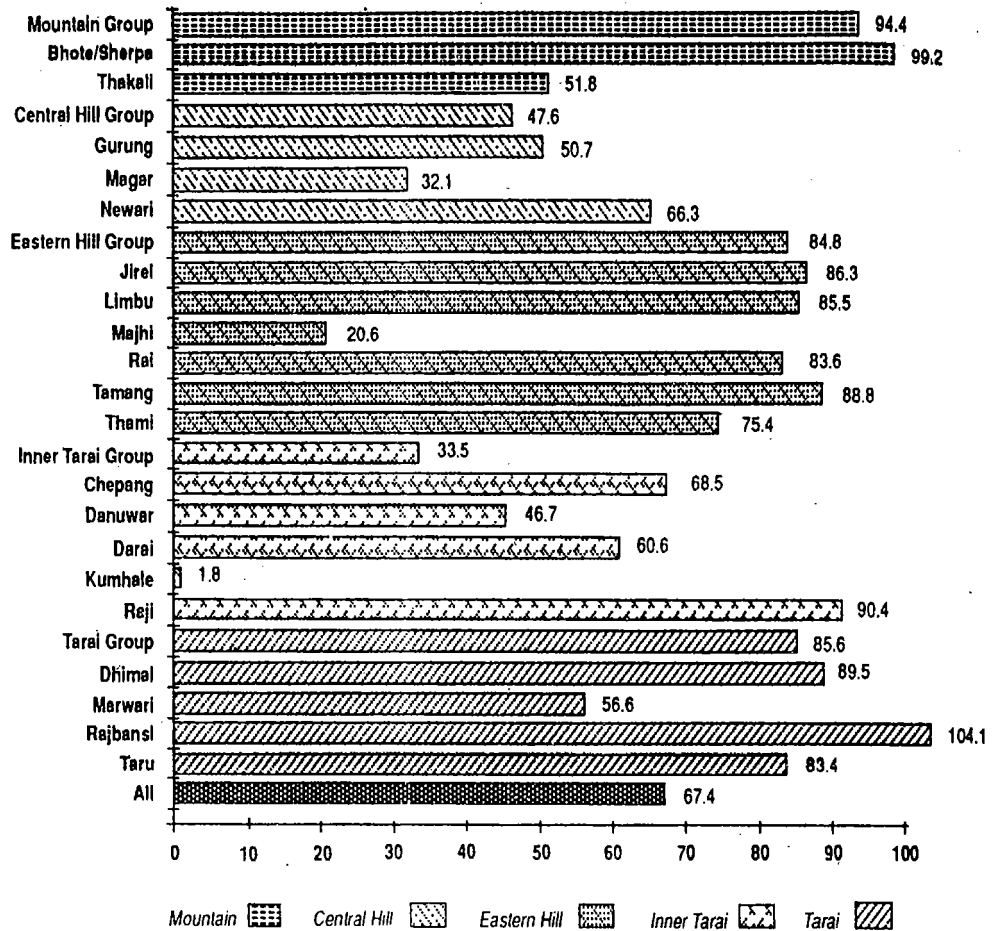
Regional Group	No. of Languages	Ethnic Population (%)	Mother Tongue Population (%)	Retention Rate (%)
1. Mountain	2	21	30	94.4
2. Central Hill	3	44.3	31.3	47.6
3. Eastern Hill	6	30.0	37.8	84.8
4. Inner Tarai	5	28	1.4	33.5
5. Tarai	6	20.8	26.4	85.6
Total	22	100.0	100.0	67.4

Source: Appendix F.

Languages vary widely in their level of retention. Bengali and Rajbanshi report more speakers than the population of their social group (Appendix F). In the case of Bengali, speakers exceed ethnic/caste population by three times. Rajbansi speakers are 104.1 percent of their reported ethnic population.¹⁷ Bhote-Sherpa and Raji rank high with over 90 percent retention of their mother tongue (Fig. 5). Those retaining over 80 percent include four Tibeto-Burman (Tamang, Jirel, Limbu, Rai) and one Indo-Aryan (Tharu). Thami retain three-quarter and Chepang, Newari and Darai over 60 percent. Marwari, Thakali and Gurung retain more than half. Those with low retention level are Danuwar less than half, Magar about one-third, Majhi one-fifth and Kumhal less than two percent.

Retention level of mother tongue among ethnics may be compared to their relative ranking in order of population magnitude by ethnicity and language. Thus, the Magar with the largest ethnic population rank fifth in mother tongue speakers. The Tharu rank first in language and second in ethnic population. The Newar come third both in ethnicity and language. The Tamang rank fourth in ethnicity but second in language. The next four in ethnic population rank within the first eight in language ranking. The Rajbansi rank ninth both in ethnicity and language. The Chepang rank 10th in language and 12th in ethnic population. The Kumhal rank 10th in ethnicity but last, 21st, in population of mother tongue speakers.

Fig. 5: Retention of Mother Tongue, 1991
(In Percent)



Source: Appendix F

Differences in retention level by individual languages is also reflected in the relative share of the groups in ethnic and language population. Thus, the mountain group with the highest retention level has 2.1 percent share of total ethnic population but 3.0 percent of the population speaking minority languages (Appendix F). On the contrary, inner tarai group with one-third retention level has 2.8 percent ethnic and 1.4 percent language share. Central and eastern hill groups present a contrast: higher population share for the former and higher language share for the latter. The tarai group has a share of a quarter in language population and one-fifth of ethnicity/caste population.

The reverse of retention is the loss of mother tongue indicated by attrition of population speaking one's language. Ethnic groups have been losing

their mother tongue mainly due to their adoption of prominent Indo-Aryan languages. This tendency is quite pronounced among some languages of inner tarai and central hill. The languages to gain from such shift in mother tongue are Nepali and tarai regional languages. Census 1991 reported a population of 7.5 million for hill castes, associated with Nepali, but 9.3 million reporting Nepali as their mother tongue. Obviously, the excess of 1.8 million Nepali speakers exceeding the caste population represents the extent of adoption of Nepali by other language groups.

Similar is the case regarding Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Hindi, and Maithili of the tarai. In 1991, the population with these languages as mother tongue totalled 4.1 million while the population of associated tarai castes was 2.9 million. This excess of 1.2 million speakers over the caste population implies gain at the cost of other ethnic languages. Another ethnic/linguistic equation of the tarai concerns the Muslim population versus Urdu language. Although the relationship between the two is not unequivocal, one may conjecture that 69.1 percent attrition in Urdu language among Muslims as their shift to other tarai languages. Overall, one-third of ethnic population have lost their mother tongue through attrition. On the other hand, population with Indo-Aryan mother tongue exceeds their associated caste population by 28.8 percent.

b. Second Language

Knowledge of another language may be taken as one marker of linguistic dynamics. Bilingualism is necessitated by the need for inter-ethnic and interregional communication. Data on second language speakers, available only for censuses of 1952/54 and 1991, provide information on the extent and trend of bilingualism. According to the 1952/54 census, about 1.3 million or 15.6 percent of the total population was bilingual or had knowledge of a second language. The reported second languages were 16, shared equally between Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman (Table 7). However, an overwhelming proportion reported speaking Indo-Aryan as the second language. Nepali alone claimed 86.6 percent of all with second language. The next in order were Hindi (5.3%) and tarai rural (4.7%). Newari with 0.7 percent led among the Tibeto-Burman group.

Table 7: Population Speaking Second Language, 1952/54

Language	Speakers		Mother Tongue Source					
	No.	%	Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Others	
			No.	Row %	No.	Row %	No.	Row %
Indo-Aryan	1,255,962	97.9	185,152	14.7	1,045,078	83.2	25,732	2.0
1. English	7,032	0.5	4,417	62.9	2,419	34.4	187	2.7
2. Hindi	67,932	5.3	56,694	83.4	7,472	11.0	3,766	5.5
3. Maithili	3,321	0.3	2,977	89.6	275	8.3	69	2.0
4. Nepali	1,111,517	86.6	60,667	5.5	1,030,468	92.7	20,382	1.8
5. Tharu	3,139	0.2	2,619	83.4	154	4.9	366	11.7
6. Urdu	597	0.0	407	68.2	163	27.3	27	4.5
7. Sanskrit	1,529	0.1	1,369	89.5	151	9.9	9	0.6
8. Tarai Rural	60,904	4.7	86,002	92.0	3,976	6.5	926	1.5
Tibeto-Burman	23,277	1.8	18,778	80.7	2,725	11.7	1,774	7.6
9. Bhote-Sherpa	2,345	0.2	1,795	76.5	155	6.6	395	16.8
10. Gurung	1,997	0.2	1,470	73.6	462	23.1	65	3.3
11. Limbu	392	0.0	235	59.9	157	40.1	-	-
12. Magar	3,964	0.3	3,535	89.2	419	10.6	10	0.3
13. Newari	9,205	0.7	8,156	88.6	875	9.5	174	1.9
14. Rai-Kiranti	1,302	0.1	1,151	87.6	161	12.4	-	-
15. Tamang	2,910	0.2	2,420	83.2	487	16.7	3	0.1
16. Tibetan/Chinese	1,162	0.1	26	2.2	9	0.8	1,127	97.0
Others	3,494	0.3	2,433	58.3	205	17.2	867	24.5
Total	1,282,733	100.0	206,363	16.0	1,048,008	81.7	28,362	2.2

Source: Statistics Department, 1957, Vol.1, Part 11, Table 10.

The 1952/54 census also provides information on the mother tongue of those using each second language. The mother tongue source of the bilinguals was 81.7 percent Tibeto-Burman, 16.0 percent Indo-Aryan, and 2.2 percent others (Table 7). This is apparent from the need for ethnics to learn dominant Indo-Aryan languages. Another notable aspect is the strong tendency to turn to another language family for the second language. Thus, despite the lopsided ratio of 56 Tibeto-Burman speakers to every Indo-Aryan speaker, 80.7 percent of the latter had Tibeto-Burman and 83.2 percent of the former had Indo-Aryan as second language. Over 90 percent of those speaking Nepali as second language had Tibeto-Burman mother tongue.

The 1991 census provides data on second language use for all reported languages but not as to the mother tongue of the speakers (Appendix G). Those with second language in 1991 was 4.5 million or 24.5 percent of the total population as compared to 1.3 million or 15.6 percent in 1952/54.

Thus, the second language population increased by 3.2 million or 3.5 times in less than four decades. Of the total bilinguals reported, 92.3 percent had learnt one of the 15 Indo-Aryan languages. The share of 14 Tibeto-Burman languages among bilinguals was only 3.8 percent. The remaining 3.4 percent reported other local languages. Compared to 1952/54, the share of Indo-Aryan language speakers declined by 5.6 percent while that of Tibeto-Burman doubled.

In terms of individual languages, Nepali claimed three-quarter of all bilinguals (Appendix G). Hindi came second with 11.0 percent. Of the other four languages (over one percent), three were tarai Indo-Aryan (Bhojpuri, Maithili, Tharu) and one hill Tibeto-Burman (Rai-Kiranti). Other 25 languages had only a minor share among bilinguals. A comparison of second languages as percent of their mother tongue population indicates a marked significance of English and Hindi. Population of those with English as second language exceeds those with it as mother tongue by 15 times and Hindi as second language exceeds its mother tongue population by 2.9 times. In the case of Nepali, second language speakers constitute 36.0 percent of the mother tongue population. Small ethnic groups such as the Raji, Thakali, and Byansi also show high proportion of second-language in ratio to mother tongue speakers.

Of the data set on the second language available in the two censuses, only 13 languages are comparable, as Sanskrit, Tarai Rural and Tibetan/Chinese listed in 1952/54 census are excluded in 1991 report. The total bilinguals for the six Indo-Aryan languages and seven Tibetan languages comes to 1.2 million for 1952/54 (Table 8). They increased by 2.4 times to 4.2 million in 1991. The share of Indo-Aryan languages among bilinguals declined slightly while that of Tibeto-Burman languages gained. During 1952/54-91, bilinguals in Indo-Aryan languages increased by 2.4 times from 1.2 million to 4 million. Increase of bilinguals in Tibeto-Burman was much less despite a gain of 7.2 times due to their low base in 1952/54. Of the total 3 million increase in bilinguals, three-quarter were Nepali bilinguals. The second largest increase in bilinguals was for Hindi. Maithili, Rai-Kiranti, Tharu and Magar also gained considerably. In terms of relative increase, Limbu, Urdu and Rai-Kiranti gained most. Bhote-Sherpa recorded the least increase both in absolute and percent terms.

**Table 8: Population Speaking a Second Language,
1952/54-1991**

Language	1952/54		1991		Increase	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Times
<u>Indo-Aryan</u>	1,193,429	98.3	4,021,621	96.1	2,828,192	2.4
1. English	7,023	0.6	42,021	1.0	34,998	5.0
2. Hindi	67,932	5.6	489,578	11.7	421,646	6.2
3. Maithili	3,221	0.3	71,226	1.7	68,005	21.1
4. Nepali	1,111,517	91.6	3,347,261	80.0	2,235,744	2.0
5. Tharu	3,139	0.3	48,603	1.2	45,464	14.5
6. Urdu	597	0.0	22,932	0.5	22,335	37.4
<u>Tibeto-Burman</u>	20,192	1.7	164,982	3.9	144,790	7.2
7. Bhote-Sherpa	2,345	0.2	4,635	0.1	2,638	1.1
8. Gurung	1,997	0.2	18,918	0.5	16,921	8.5
9. Limbu	217	0.0	10,203	0.2	9,986	46.0
10. Magar	3,964	0.3	37,118	0.9	33,154	8.4
11. Newari	9,205	0.8	22,129	0.5	12,924	1.4
12. Rai-Kiranti	1,302	0.1	48,334	1.2	47,032	36.1
13. Tamang	1,162	0.1	23,645	0.6	22,483	19.3
TOTAL	1,213,621	100.0	4,186,603	100.0	2,972,982	2.4

Source: Statistics Department, 1957, Vol.1, Part 11, Table 10.
CBS, 1993, Vol.7, Part VI, Table 23.

c. Spread of Nepali

Nepali language has become pre-eminent both as the *lingua franca* of the country and State language. In 1952/54, those reporting Nepali as mother tongue was 48.7 percent of the total population. Its share in subsequent censuses was 51.0 percent in 1961, 52.4 percent in 1971 and 58.4 percent in 1981. However, it came down to 50.3 percent in 1991. In 1952/54, over ninety percent of the population claiming Nepali mother tongue was concentrated in the highlands (Table 9). Of this, two-third was in west/central and a fifth in the eastern highlands. The rest were distributed as 5.7 percent in inner tarai and 2.3 percent in the tarai.

Table 9: Increase of Nepali Mother Tongue Population, 1952/54-1991

Region	1952/54		1991		Increase	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Times
A. <u>Mountain/Hill</u>	<u>3,691,370</u>	<u>92.0</u>	<u>6,371,022</u>	<u>68.5</u>	<u>2,679,652</u>	<u>1.7</u>
1. West/Central	2,653,546	66.1	4,454,445.+	47.8	1,800,899	1.7
2. Kathmandu Valley	161,330	4.0	517,732	5.6	356,402	3.2
3. East	876,494	21.8	1,398,845	15.0	522,351	1.6
B. <u>Inner Tarai</u>	<u>228,558</u>	<u>5.7</u>	<u>857,850</u>	<u>9.2</u>	<u>629,292</u>	<u>3.8</u>
4. West	32,579	0.8	233,708*	2.5	201,129	7.2
5. Central	90,873	2.3	375,747	4.0	284,874	4.1
6. East	105,106	2.6	248,396	2.7	143,290	2.4
C. <u>Tarai</u>	<u>93,639</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>2,074,008</u>	<u>22.3</u>	<u>1,980,369</u>	<u>22.1</u>
7. West	7,735	0.2	534,904	5.7	527,169	69.2
8. Central	6,953	0.2	471,493	5.1	464,540	67.8
9. East	78,951	2.0	1,067,611	11.5	988,660	13.5
Total	4,013,567	100.0	9,302,880	1100.0	15,289,313	2.3

+Including Surkhet

* Excluding Surkhet

Source: Appendices B & C.

During 1952/54-1991, the population reporting Nepali as mother tongue more than doubled from 4.0 million to 9.3 million (Table 9). Its increase (131.8%) exceeded the country's average population increase (124.5%). Increase in Nepali language population was progressively higher at lower elevation zones: by 22.1 times in the tarai, 3.8 times in inner tarai and 1.7 times in the highlands. As a consequence, there was significant shift in Nepali mother tongue population by elevation zones and regions. Its highlands share declined from 92.0 percent to 68.5 percent while the tarai share increased from 2.3 percent to 22.3 percent. Highland regions except Kathmandu Valley lost in the share of such population while all lowland regions gained. The increase was particularly high in all tarai regions.

The large base as well as widespread growth of Nepali language has meant its increasing dominance. Nepali as a mother tongue now ranks first in 54 out of 75 districts in the country. Other languages with numerical dominance at district level are Maithili in six; Bhojpuri in four; Awadhi, Tharu, Newari and Tamang in two each, and Gurung, Bhote-Sherpa and 'other local language' in one each. These eight languages supersede Nepali in 21 districts. Again, Nepali ranks second in 18 districts. Rai-Kiranti is reported second ranked in 16 districts but those in eight western districts are

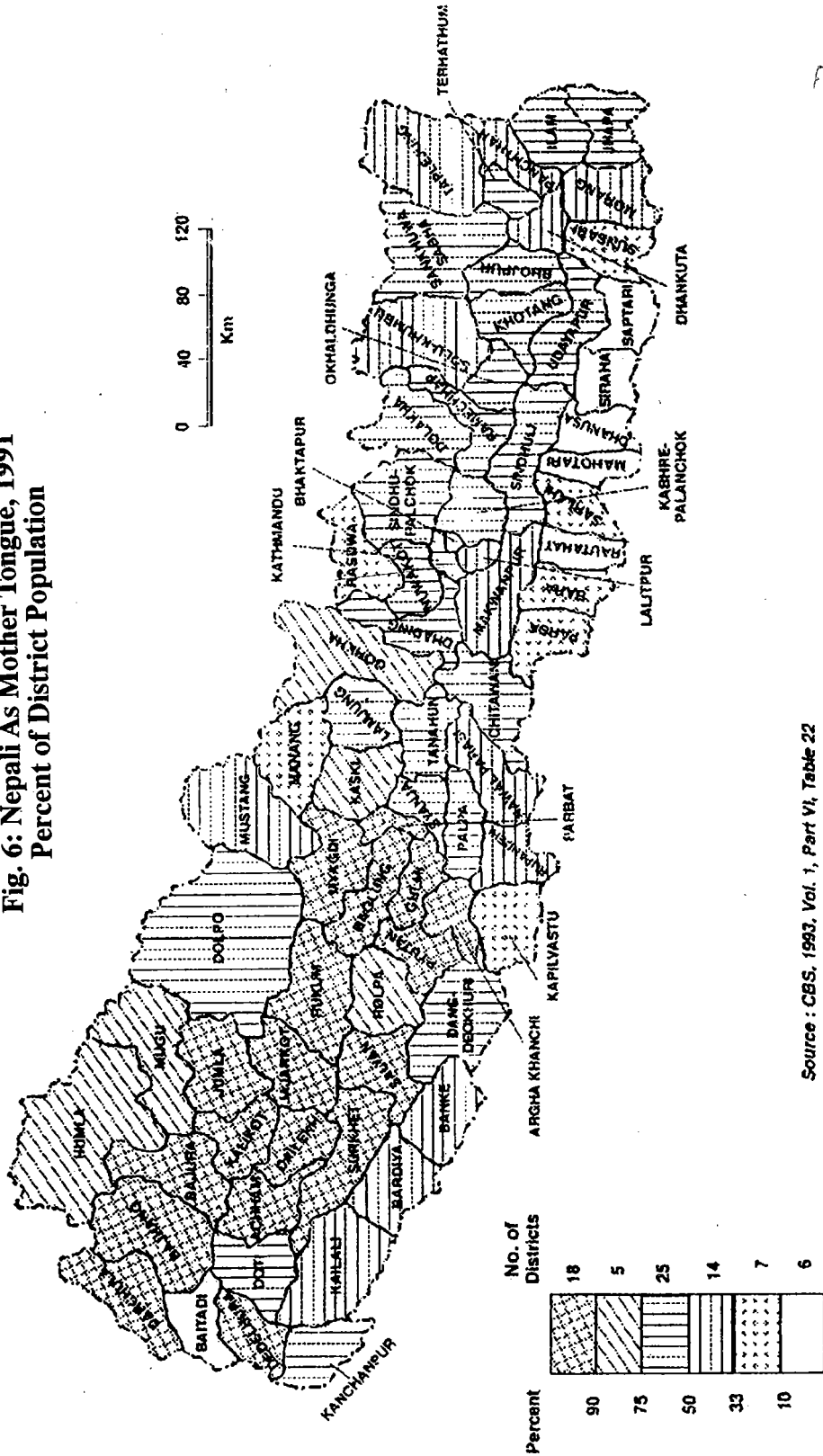
problematic. Similarly doubtful are the second ranking of 'other local languages' in five districts, mostly in the west. Other languages that rank second at district level are Tamang in 8, Magar in 7, Bhote-Sherpa, Gurung and Tharu in 4 each, Limbu in 3, Newari in 2, and Bhojpuri, Maithili, Rajbanshi and Urdu in one each.

Nepali is the mother tongue of majority population in 48 out of the 75 districts. Most districts that have over 90 percent Nepali mother tongue population are from the western sector (Fig. 6). Seven of these districts have 99 percent as Nepali speakers. Districts with 75 to 90 percent Nepali language population include 2 mountain and 3 hill districts. None of these are from eastern sector. Districts with 50 to 75 percent population with Nepali mother tongue include 3 mountain, 16 hill, 4 inner tarai, and 2 tarai districts. Of these, only two are from the tarai.

Nepali language population is in minority in 27 out of 75 districts (Fig.5). Fourteen districts with 33 to 49 percent Nepali mother tongue population include 3 mountain, 4 hill, one inner tarai, and 6 tarai districts. All districts in the western sector have over one-third of its population with Nepali language. Seven districts have 10-33 percent with Nepali language population. Of these, 2 are mountain and 5 tarai districts. Six districts have less than ten percent of their population with Nepali mother tongue. Five of these are in eastern tarai and one in western hill (Baitadi). Low percent of Nepali for Baitadi and Doti is due to unusual high reporting of 'other local languages'. The 13 districts with less than one-third of Nepali language population, include 10 tarai, 2 mountain and one hill district. In terms of the majority language in these districts, six are Maithili, three Bhojpuri and one each Awadhi, Gurung, Tamang and 'other local languages'.

The regional distribution of population with Nepali as mother tongue and as second language is shown in Table 10. Accordingly, 56.8 percent of those with Nepali mother tongue and 47.3 percent as second language are in the hills. Central hill leads with a quarter of the total population with Nepali mother tongue followed by western hill (Table 10). The region with the least share of Nepali as mother tongue is central mountain, and Nepali as second language western mountain. The tarai has a higher share in Nepali as second language than those with Nepali mother tongue. Nepali language as proportion of the regional population increases progressively towards higher elevation zones. It ranges from a quarter in the tarai to nearly three-quarter in the mountain.

**Fig. 6: Nepali As Mother Tongue, 1991
Percent of District Population**



Source : CBS, 1993, Vol. 1, Part VI, Table 22

Table 10: Population of Nepali Speakers, 1991

Region	As Mother Tongue	%	Percent of Regional Population	As Second Language	%	Percent of Regional Population
A. Mountain	878,552	9.4	74.3	223,283	6.7	18.9
1. West	564,836	6.1	95.2	13,171	0.4	2.2
2. Central	17,146	0.2	30.4	19,205	0.6	34.1
3. East	296,570	3.2	55.7	190,907	5.7	35.6
B. Hill	5,281,054	56.8	68.6	1,584,451	47.3	20.6
4. West	1,343,035	14.4	80.7	139,861	4.2	8.4
5. Central	2,318,012	24.9	78.7	401,783	12.0	13.6
6. Kathmand Valley	517,732	5.6	46.8	367,870	11.0	33.3
7. East	1,102,275	11.8	55.6	674,937	20.2	34.1
C. Inner Tarai	1,069,266	11.5	63.1	674,937	20.2	34.1
8. West	445,123	4.8	76.7	49,737	1.5	8.6
9. Central	375,747	4.0	56.2	188,667	5.6	28.2
10. East	248,396	2.7	55.8	121,147	3.6	27.2
D. Tarai	2,074,008	22.3	26.2	1,179,976	35.3	14.9
11. West	534,904	5.7	42.7	150,154	4.5	12.0
12. Central	471,493	5.1	35.4	155,947	4.7	11.7
13. East	1,067,611	11.5	20.0	873,875	26.1	16.4
Total	9,302,880	100.0	50.31	3,347,261	1100.01	18.11

Source: CBS, 1993, Vol. 1, Part VI, Tables 22 & 23.

Generally, districts with high percent of population with Nepali as mother tongue have lower share of those speaking Nepali as second language. Thus, a group of seven districts in the west with less than one percent of population speaking Nepali as second language (Fig. 7), happen to be among those having over 90 percent population with Nepali as mother tongue (Fig. 5). Conversely, all five districts with over 40 percent population having Nepali as second language are those with less than half the population with Nepali mother tongue. Three mountain and two hill districts have the highest, 40-49 percent, proportion of district population with Nepali as second language. The next group, ranging 30-40 percent, are mostly from eastern hill. Of the dozen districts in the 20-30 percent range, half are from the hill. Majority of 17 districts with 10-12 percent population speaking Nepali as second language are from the tarai. Those in the 1-10 percent range are mostly mountain-hill districts and majority from the west. The group of seven districts with the least proportion of population with Nepali as second language are from the western sector. Speakers of Nepali as second language in terms of percent of regional population varies between a low 14.9 percent for the tarai to high 34.1 percent for inner tarai. It is about the same proportion for the mountain and hill. The regions with over one-third of its population with Nepali as second language are eastern

SUMMARY

Nepal is home to numerous languages and dialects due to various factors. One is its location at the convergence area of different linguistic groups from diverse sources. These are represented by hill Indo-Aryan from the west, tarai Indo-Aryan, Munda, and Dravidian from the south, and hill Tibeto-Burman from the east and north. They still retain their core areas according to the above coordinates despite significant population migration. Another factor is the diversity and ruggedness of topography that confine languages into discrete areas as well as induce regional variation into dialects.

Despite data limitations, one can discern some broad processes and patterns in linguistic demography. The process refers to temporal change while pattern concerns spatial change. In less than four decades, Nepal's total population more than doubled (124.5%). Compared to this, the increase was 131.5 percent for Indo-Aryan languages and 73.5 percent for Tibeto-Burman languages. Increase for Munda language was 98.1 percent and that of Dravidian a high 215.4 percent. Highland languages increased by 113.8 percent and lowland languages by 131.2 percent. Increase of Indo-Aryan language population was 131.2 percent for lowland and 131.8 percent for highland group. That of Tibeto-Burman languages ranged between 73.5 percent for the highlands and 150.1 percent for the lowlands. The highland Tibeto-Burman group recorded the least growth.

Of the 30 languages with comparable data for 1952/54 and 1991, 14 doubled in population. These included eleven Indo-Aryan, two Tibeto-Burman and one Dravidian. Five Tibeto-Burman, one Indo-Aryan, and one Munda language increased by three-quarter or more. Those increasing by less than three-quarter included six Tibeto-Burman and one Indo-Aryan. One Tibeto-Burman of the mountain and one Indo-Aryan of inner tarai recorded an absolute decline.

The share of highland language speakers declined in the west, increased in the central, and remained the same in eastern sector. The lowland language group had a slight gain in the central sector. The proportion of highland Indo-Aryan speakers declined in the west, gained slightly in the east, and more than doubled in central sector. Highland Tibeto-Burman speakers declined in the west but increased substantially in central and eastern sectors. The four lowland language groups show a divergent pattern. Indo-Aryan group increased marginally in all sectors, Tibeto-Burman group declined in the west and gained in central and eastern sectors while Munda and Dravidian groups made their inroads in central and western sectors.

The most significant trend was in the shift of highland language groups to lower elevations. Their share in the mountain/hill zone declined but

increased ten times in the tarai. Highland Indo-Aryan group (mainly Nepali) increased significantly in the tarai, particularly in eastern tarai. The increase of Tibeto-Burman share was also most notable in eastern tarai. Lowland Indo-Aryan group gained marginally while that of lowland Tibeto-Burman group declined in the tarai. Munda and Dravidian groups gained in inner tarai and mountain/hill.

Languages of the mountain group recorded a high level of mother tongue retention exceeding 90 percent. Those of the tarai and eastern hills came next with over 80 percent retention. Central hill languages retained less than half and those of inner tarai only one-third. The attrition of ethnic languages was obviously due to adoption of dominant Indo-Aryan languages by their people. Therefore, while ethnic languages had an attrition by one-third, Indo-Aryan languages of caste groups gained by 28.8 percent.

The total population reporting a second language was 1.3 million in 1952/54. Nearly 98 percent of these spoke Indo-Aryan languages with Nepali alone accounting for 86.6 percent. Another notable tendency was adoption of a language from another family, e.g. 83.2 percent with Indo-Aryan second language was from Tibeto-Burman mother tongue group and 80.7 percent with Tibeto-Burman second language was of Indo-Aryan mother tongue. The number of second language speakers increased by 3.5 times during 1952/54-1991. Over ninety percent of these spoke Indo-Aryan languages. Nepali claimed three-quarter of all bilinguals.

Nepali language dominates all other languages with a 50.3 percent share, the second ranked (Maithili) being only 11.9 percent. The increase of population with Nepali as mother tongue and as second language was 131.8 percent and 245.0 percent respectively during 1952/54-91. Its diffusion was most marked in the tarai. Nepali language has become pronounced for its pervasive presence. It is the mother tongue of majority population in 48 districts out of 75. Nepali as mother tongue ranks first in 54 and second in 18 districts. Nepali language is derived from *Khasa-kurā*, language of Khasa, with transitional apparitions as Parbate and *Gorkhāli*. It has since established itself as the *khaās-kurā* or the principal speech of Nepal.

Appendix A. Mother Tongue by Region, 1952/54

Mother Tongue	Western Hill	Ktm. Valley	Eastern Hill	Hill Total	West Inner Tarai	Central Inner Tarai	East Inner Tarai	Inner Tarai Total	West Tarai	Central Tarai	East Tarai	Tarai Total	TOTAL
I. HIGHLAND GROUP													
A. Indo-Aryan													
1. Nepali	2,653,646	161,330	980,054	3,695,030	32,579	91,142	105,388	229,109	7,735	6,953	80,469	95,157	4,019,296
2. Majhi	2,653,546	161,330	876,494	3,691,370	32,579	90,873	105,106	228,558	7,735	6,953	78,951	93,639	4,013,567
B. Tibeto-Burman													
1. Rai-Kiranti	520,586	246,708	3,560	3,660	269	282	551	178,490	1,131	1,518	1,518	5,729	1,797,908
2. Thakali	17,588	289	807,551	1,574,845	151	113,281	65,058	178,490	1,131	2,501	40,941	44,573	1,797,908
3. Bhothe-Sherpa	1,786		52,255	70,132									70,132
4. Byansi	367	1	1,786	368				13,893					1,786
5. Chepang	149,554	505	9,147	159,206	30	2,511	13	2,554	10	189	233	432	14,261
6. Gurung			2,721	2,721									2,721
7. Jirel			144,933	145,004				5					5
8. Limbu	181,611	810	50,848	233,269	80	4,823	22,039	26,942	35	578	502	502	145,511
9. Magar	53,976	225,819	76,514	356,309	38	12,568	3,518	16,124	1,044	1,618	12,956	13,569	273,780
10. Newari	12	52	221,089	221,153	3	34	12,043	12,077	20	65	2,734	2,819	383,184
11. Rai-Kiranti	112,414	19,169	239,971	371,554	3	79,442	27,283	106,728	22	14	16,427	16,463	236,049
12. Tamang	3,270		10,073	3,270				167				37	3,307
13. Thakali			10,073	10,073									10,240
14. Thami	37,126	2,451	3,800	43,377	56,585	34,529	16,609	107,723	226,316	338,593	1,680,929	2,245,838	2,396,938
II. LOWLAND GROUP													
A. Indo-Aryan													
15. Awadhi	36,792	2,451	3,800	43,043	56,585	34,529	16,601	107,715	225,136	338,593	1,653,196	2,216,925	2,367,683
16. Bengali	4	82	15	101	4,255	1	3	4,255	65,191	27	9,148	65,218	69,473
17. Bhojpuri	249	318		249		518		518	35	87	16,335	16,335	9,375
18. Danuwar			3,200	3,518		1,723	3,652	5,375		258,168	245	274,503	275,270
												245	9,138

19. Darai	1,165	958	178	1,165	1,919	1,919	5,326	6,781	62,982	75,089	3,084
20. Hindi	2,749			3,885	35	35	1,207				80,181
21. Kurnhale	947		71	1,018	2,265		30	3		33	3,510
22. Maitthili		22	17	39	103	2,416	4	46	1,483,111	1,483,161	1,485,726
23. Marwari		72	306	378			10	530	3,326	3,866	4,244
24. Rajbansi							9		35,534	35,543	35,543
25. Tharu	27,558	3		27,561	89,183	10,474	149,899	68,465	24,486	242,850	359,594
26. Urdu	4,120	996	13	5,129	269	21	4,632	4,486	18,029	27,147	32,545
B. Tibeto-Burman	334			334			1,180		5,671	6,851	7,185
27. Dhimal									5,671	5,671	5,671
28. Raji	334			334			1,180		17,250	1,180	1,514
C. Munda	0	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	17,250	17,250	17,258
29. Satar-Santhal					8	8			4,812	4,812	4,812
D. Dravidian	0	0	0	0	0	0			4,812	4,812	4,812
30. Jhangar-Dhangar											
III. OTHERS/ UNSTATED	50	395	18,358	18,803	1,290	1,317	14	286	2,487	2,787	24,197
Other Local	25	14	18,148	18,187	1,289	1,317	7	159	1,977	2,143	22,936
Other Foreign	25	13	1	39	1		7	122	340	469	509
	Not Stated		368	209					5	170	175
Total	3,211,408	410,883	1,709,763	5,337,055	89,315	240,242	235,196	348,333	1,804,826	2,388,355	8,238,339
%	39.0	5.0	20.8	64.7	1.1	2.9	2.9	4.2	21.9	29.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Department, 1957, Vol.1, Part 11, Table 9.

19. Dari	268	12	7	7	1	2,251	21	560	2,273	1	3,739	1	3,741	11	307	181	499	6,520
20. Hindi			404		518	2,132	8,362	37	11,592	4,515	3,927	336	8,778	53,261	13,139	83,823	150,223	170,987
21. Kurbale	397	219	1,135	1,751	1,266	2,164	5,290	3,089	11,829	591	2,302	6,087	8,980	3,215	2,754	2,163,371	2,186,340	2,191,900
22. Mathih			15	15		7	1,351	257	1,615	5	154	33	192	118	497	14,077	14,692	16,514
23. Marwari	12	5	19	36	38	197	200	145	580	34	32	18	84	52	83	84,723	84,858	85,558
24. Rajpansi	126	13	54	193	462	957	1,478	428	3,325	109,516	44,774	19,561	173,851	452,354	89,225	274,440	816,019	983,388
25. Tharu	8	8	41	57	62	4,344	2,901	117	7,424	1,018	1,001	503	2,522	9,204	6,987	176,014	192,205	202,208
26. Urdu	125	2	35	162	280	205	256	190	941	40	30	8	501	1,002		15,151	16,369	17,873
B. Tibeto-Burman																		
27. Dhimal	-125	2	7	9	290	186	201	66	284	10	6	2	15	1,002	12	14,691	14,703	15,014
28. Reji			28	153		55	124	124	657	453	24	6	483		204	460	1,866	2,959
C. Munda	25	14	53	92	31	543	106	95	775	30	55	32	124	285	309	31,767	32,341	33,332
29. Satar-Santih	25	14	53	92	31	543	106	95	775	30	55	39	124	285	309	31,767	32,341	33,332
D. Dravidian																		
30. Jhangari			2	3		2	11		20		15	4	19	3	5	15,125	15,133	15,175
Dhangar			3	3		9	11		20		15	4	19	3	5	15,125	15,133	15,175
III. OTHERS/UNSTATED	7,759	1,244	19,447	28,450	281,803	10,373	8,127	34,743	335,046	2,271	3,483	3,345	9,099	66,079	5,229	72,209	143,517	516,112
Other Local	7,844	489	7,7492	280,734	6,952	4,766	32,155	324,827	1,971	3,142	2,968	8,081	65,414	4,299	67,559	137,272	495,862	
Other Foreign	61	754	5,882	1,367	444	2,817	2,434	250	5,945	44	231	27	302	445	541	2,493	3,479	11,093
Not Stated	54	1	1,146	1,201	625	604	907	2,338	4,474	256	110	50	716	220	389	2,157	2,766	9,157
TOTAL	593,314	56,399	532,392	1,182,105	1,864,506	2,944,206	1,105,379	1,981,300	7,695,391	580,181	669,087	445,156	1,694,064	1,251,714	1,330,145	5,337,318	7,919,177	18,491,097

Source: CBS, 1993, Vol. 1, Part VI, Table 22.

Appendix C: Population Change by Mother Tongue, 1952/54-1991

Mother Tongue	1952/54		1991		Change	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I. HIGHLAND GROUP	5,816,934	70.6	12,434,219	67.2	6,617,285	113.8
A. <u>Indo-Aryan</u>	4,019,296	48.8	9,314,202	50.4	5,294,906	131.7
1. Nepali	4,013,567	48.7	9,302,880	50.3	5,289,313	131.8
2. Majhi	5,729	0.1	11,322	0.1	5,593	97.6
B. <u>Tibeto-Burman</u>	1,797,908	21.8	3,120,017	16.9	1,322,109	73.5
3. Bhote-Sherpa	70,132	0.9	121,819	0.7	51,687	73.7
4. Byansi	1,786	0.0	1,314	0.0	-472	-26.4
5. Chepang	14,261	0.2	25,097	0.1	10,836	75.9
6. Gurung	162,192	2.0	227,918	1.2	65,726	40.5
7. Jirel	2,721	0.0	4,229	0.0	1,508	55.4
8. Limbu	145,511	1.8	254,088	1.4	108,577	74.6
9. Magar	273,780	3.3	430,264	2.3	156,484	57.2
10. Newari	383,184	4.7	690,007	3.7	306,823	80.1
11. Rai-Kiranti	236,049	2.9	439,312	2.4	203,263	86.1
12. Tamang	494,745	6.0	904,456	4.9	409,711	82.8
13. Thakali	3,307	0.0	7,113	0.0	3,806	115.1
14. Thami	10,240	0.1	14,400	0.1	4,160	40.6
II. LOWLAND GROUP	2,396,938	29.1	5,540,766	30.0	3,143,828	131.2
A. <u>Indo-Aryan</u>	2,367,683	28.7	5,474,286	29.6	3,106,603	131.2
15. Awadhi	69,473	0.8	374,638	2.0	305,165	439.3
16. Bengali	9,375	0.1	27,712	0.1	18,337	195.6
17. Bhojpuri	275,270	3.3	1,379,717	7.5	1,104,447	401.2
18. Danuwar	9,138	0.1	23,721	0.1	14,583	159.6
19. Darai	3,084	0.0	6,520	0.0	3,436	114.4
20. Hindi	80,181	1.0	170,997	0.9	90,816	113.3
21. Kumhale	3,510	0.0	1,413	0.0	-2,097	-59.7
22. Maithili	1,485,726	18.0	2,191,900	11.9	706,174	47.5
23. Marwari	4,244	0.1	16,514	0.1	12,270	289.1
24. Rajbansi	35,543	0.4	85,558	0.5	50,015	140.7
25. Tharu	359,594	4.4	993,388	5.4	633,794	176.3
26. Urdu	32,545	0.4	202,208	1.1	169,663	521.3
B. <u>Tibeto-Burman</u>	7,185	0.1	17,973	0.1	10,788	150.1
27. Dhimai	5,671	0.1	15,014	0.0	9,343	164.8
28. Raji	1,514	0.0	2,959	0.0	1,445	95.4
C. <u>Munda</u>	17,258	0.2	33,332	0.2	16,074	93.1
29. Satar/Santhal	17,258	0.2	33,332	5-2	16,074	93.1
D. <u>Dravidian</u>	4,812	0.1	15,175	0.1	10,363	215.4
30. Jhangar	4,812	0.1	15,175	0.1	10,363	215.4
III. OTHERS/UNSTATED	24,197	0.3	516,112	2.8	491,915	2,033.0
Other Local	22,936	0.3	495,862	2.7	472,926	2,061.9
Other Foreign	509	0.0	11,093	0.1	10,584	2,079.4
Not Stated	752	0.0	9,157	0.0	8,405	1,117.7
Total	8,238,069	100.0	18,491,097	100.0	10,252,758	124.5

Source: Appendices A & B.

Appendix D: Population Increase by Sector, 1952/54-1991

Sector	Highland Group				Lowland Group									
	Indo-Aryan No.	%	Tibeto-Burman No.	%	Total No.	%	Indo-Aryan No.	%	Tibeto-Burman No.	%	Munda & Dravidian No.	%	Total No.	%
A. West	<u>2,529,490</u>	<u>93.9</u>	<u>198,096</u>	<u>38.0</u>	<u>2,727,586</u>	<u>84.8</u>	<u>455,857</u>	<u>143.1</u>	<u>573</u>	<u>37.8</u>	<u>920</u>		<u>457,350</u>	<u>142.9</u>
1. Hill	1,801,171	-67.9	178,513	34.3	1,979,684	62.4	-11,171	-30.4	721	215.9	626		-9,824	-26.5
2. Inner Tarai	201,129	617.4	3,900	2,582.8	205,029	626.4	57,538	98.2	30	26	26		59,594	105.3
3. Tarai	527,190	6,815.6	15,683	1,386.6	542,873	6,123.1	407,490	181.0	-178	-15.1	268		407,580	180.1
B. Central	<u>1,106,278</u>	<u>426.4</u>	<u>510,607</u>	<u>196.8</u>	<u>1,616,885</u>	<u>260.0</u>	<u>472,396</u>	<u>125.8</u>	<u>502</u>		<u>501</u>		<u>473,399</u>	<u>126.1</u>
4. Kathmandu Valley	356,453	220.9	308,852	191.4	665,305	763.0	21,085	860.3	256		117		21,458	875.5
5. Inner Tarai	284,886	312.6	116,838	103.1	401,724	196.5	24,828	71.9	30		70		24,928	72.2
6. Tarai	464,939	6,686.9	84,917	339.5	549,856	5,816.1	426,483	126.0	216		314		427,013	126.1
C. East	<u>1,659,138</u>	<u>155.7</u>	<u>613,406</u>	<u>67.1</u>	<u>2,272,544</u>	<u>114.8</u>	<u>2,178,350</u>	<u>130.2</u>	<u>9,713</u>	<u>171.3</u>	<u>25,016</u>		<u>2,213,079</u>	<u>130.1</u>
7. Hill	523,624	59.5	234,367	29.0	757,991	44.9	9,730	256.1	225		151		10,106	265.9
8. Inner Tarai	144,732	137.3	88,076	135.4	232,808	136.6	21,905	131.9	8		35		21,948	132.1
9. Tarai	990,782	1,231.3	290,963	710.7	1,281,745	1,055.7	2,146,715	129.9	9,480	167.2	24,830		2,181,025	129.8
TOTAL	5,294,906	131.7	1,322,109	73.5	6,617,015	113.7	3,10,603	131.2	10,788	150.1	26,427		3,143,828	131.2

Source: Appendices A & B.

Appendix E: Population Increase by Region, 1952/54-1991

Region	Highland Group						Lowland Group							
	Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Highland Total		Indo-Aryan		Tibeto-Burman		Munda & Dravidian		Lowland Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A. Mountain/Hill	2,681,268	72.6	721,732	45.8	3,403,000	64.6	19,644	45.6	1,202	359.9	894		21,740	50.1
1. West/Central	1,801,191	67.8	178,513	34.3	1,979,704	62.4	-11,171	-30.4	721	215.9	626		-9,824	-26.5
2. Kathmandu Valley	356,453	220.9	308,852	125.2	665,305	163.0	21,085	860.3	256		117		21,458	875.5
3. East	523,624	59.5	234,367	29.0	757,991	44.9	9,730	256.1	225		151		10,106	265.9
B. Inner Tarai	630,747	275.3	208,814	117.0	839,561	206.0	106,271	98.7	68		131		106,470	98.8
4. West	201,129	617.4	3,900	2,582.3	205,029	626.4	59,538	105.2	30		26		59,594	105.3
5. Central	284,886	312.6	116,838	103.1	401,724	196.5	24,828	71.9	30		70		24,928	72.2
6. East	144,732	137.3	88,036	135.4	232,808	136.6	21,905	131.9	8		35		21,948	132.1
C. Tarai	1,982,911	2,083.8	391,563	878.5	2,374,474	1,699.3	2,980,688	134.5	9,518	138.9	25,412		3,015,618	134.3
7. West	527,190	8,165.6	15,683	1,386.6	542,873	6,123.1	407,490	181.0	-178	-15.1	268		407,580	180.1
8. Central	464,939	6,886.9	84,917	3,395.3	549,856	5,816.1	426,483	126.0	216		314		427,013	126.1
9. East	990,782	1,231.3	290,963	710.7	1,281,745	1,055.7	2,146,715	129.9	9,480	167.2	24,830		2,181,025	129.8
TOTAL	5,294,906	131.7	11,322,109	73.51	6,617,036	113.7	3,106,603	131.2	110,788	150.1	26,437		3,143,828	131.2

Source: Appendices A & B.

Appendix F: Retention of Mother Tongue, 1991

Ethnic Group	Ethnic/Caste Population (A)		Mother Tongue Population (B)		Rate of Retention (A÷B)
	No.	%	No.	%	
A. <u>Mountain Group</u>	<u>136,552</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>128,932</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>94.4</u>
1. Bhote)	122,821		121,819		99.2
2. Sherpa)					
3. Thakali	13,731		7,113		51.8
B. <u>Central Hill</u>	<u>2,829,587</u>	<u>44.3</u>	<u>1,348,189</u>	<u>31.3</u>	<u>47.6</u>
4. Gurung	449,189		227,918		50.7
5. Magar	1,339,308		430,264		32.1
6. Newari	1,041,090		690,007		66.3
C. <u>Eastern Hill</u>	<u>1,920,031</u>	<u>30.0</u>	<u>1,627,807</u>	<u>37.8</u>	<u>84.8</u>
7. Jirel	4,889		4,229		86.5
8. Limbu	297,186		254,088		85.5
9. Majhi	55,050		11,322		20.6
10. Rai	525,551		439,312		83.6
11. Tamang	1,018,252		904,456		88.8
12. Thami	19,103		14,400		75.4
D. <u>Inner Tarai</u>	<u>178,078</u>	<u>2.8</u>	<u>59,710</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>33.5</u>
13. Chepang	36,656		25,097		68.5
14. Danuwar	50,754		23,721		46.7
15. Darai	10,759		6,520		60.6
16. Kumhale	76,635		1,413		1.8
17. Raj'l	3,274		2,959		90.4
E. <u>Tarai</u>	<u>1,330,264</u>	<u>20.8</u>	<u>1,138,186</u>	<u>26.4</u>	<u>85.6</u>
18. Bengali	7,909		27,712		350.4
19. Dhimal	16,781		15,014		89.5
20. Marwari	29,173		16,514		56.6
21. Rajbansi	82,177		85,558		104.1
22. Tharu	1,194,224		993,388		83.4
TOTAL	6,394,512	100.0	4,306,824	100.0	67.4

Source: A. CBS, 1993. Vol. 1, Part VI 1, Table 25.

B. CBS, 1993. Vol. 1, Part VI, Table 22.

Appendix G: Population by Second Language, 1991

Language	Speakers		As Percent of Mother Tongue Speakers
	No.	%	
A. <u>Indo-Aryan</u>	<u>4,124,666</u>	<u>92.3</u>	<u>27.9</u>
1. Awadhi	19,966	0.4	5.3
2. Bengali	2,505	0.1	9.0
3. Bhojpuri	74,148	1.7	5.3
4. Danuwar	467	0.0	2.0
5. Darai	900	0.0	13.8
6. English	42,021	0.9	1,509.4
7. Hindi	489,578	11.0	286.3
8. Kumhale	100	0.0	7.0
9. Maithili	71,226	1.6	3.2
10. Majhi	779	0.0	6.8
11. Marwari	933	0.0	5.6
12. Nepali	3,347,261	75.2	36.0
13. Rajbansi	3,217	0.0	3.8
14. Tharu	48,603	1.1	4.7
15. Urdu	22,932	0.5	11.3
B. <u>Tibeto-Burman</u>	<u>170,190</u>	<u>3.8</u>	<u>5.4</u>
16. Bhote Sherpa	4,635	0.1	3.8
17. Byansi	161	0.0	12.3
18. Chepang	1,449	0.0	5.7
19. Dhimal	405	0.0	2.7
20. Gurung	18,918	0.4	8.3
21. Jirel	105	0.0	2.5
22. Limbu	10,203	0.2	4.0
23. Magar	37,118	0.8	8.6
24. Newari	22,129	0.5	3.2
25. Rai-Kiranti	48,334	1.1	11.0
26. Raji	1,210	0.0	40.9
27. Tamang	23,645	0.5	2.6
28. Thakali	1,056	0.0	14.8
29. Thami	822	0.0	5.7
C. <u>Munda</u>	<u>1,898</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>5.7</u>
30. Satar-Santhal	1,898	0.0	5.7
D. <u>Dravidian</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1.3</u>
31. Jhangar	192	0.0	1.3
E. <u>Other Local</u>	<u>151,150</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>30.5</u>
F. <u>Other Foreign</u>	<u>3,261</u>	<u>0.1</u>	<u>29.4</u>
TOTAL	<u>4,451,357</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>24.1</u>

Source: CBS, 1993, Vol. 1, Part VI, Table 23.

Notes

1. Rastriya-bhasa Niti Sujhav Ayog (RNSA), 1993, pp.5-6.
2. Statistics, Dept., 1957, Vol. 1, Part II, Table 9.
3. Bote, Hayu, Khambu, Meche, Pahari, and Danuwar.
4. Arabic, Gujerati, Kashmiri, Madrasi, Marathi, Punjabi, Sorath, Tamil, Tibetan, and Uriya.
5. Santhal and Satar are listed separately.
6. Jhanar and Tamil.
7. Malla, 1989, pp.449-451. The text, on the other hand, makes reference to 70 mutually unintelligible languages spoken in Nepal.
8. RNSA, 1993, Appendix One.
9. Hansson, 1994.
10. Hansson, 1991.
11. Statistics Dept., 1957, Vol. I, Part II, Tables 9 & 10. In Table 9, Rural dialect of west-central tarai should be 258, 135, and not 259, 015, based on the regional population reported.
12. According to the 1991 census, two-third of Awadhi mother tongue population is concentrated in Kapilvastu district (central-west of 1952/54 census definition). Bagmati river seems to mark the boundary between Bhojpuri and Maithili mother tongues. In Rautahat, west of Bagmati, 69.6 percent is Bhojpuri and 3.2 percent Maithili as mother tongue of the district population of 1991. In Sarlahi, east of Bagmati, 57.1 percent is Maithili and 10.2 percent Bhojpuri of the district population.
13. Therefore, note the low percentage of Nepali speakers in these districts in Fig. 5.
14. CBS, 1993, Vol. 1, Part VII, Table 25 for ethnic/caste and Vol. 1, Part VI, Table 22 for mother tongue.
15. In terms of sectors, 1952/54 census aggregated central and western hills. In terms of elevation zones, 1952/54 census recognized inner tarai but no mountain zone while the case was reverse for 1991 census. Appendix A follows the regional division of 1952/54.
16. Speakers reported in earlier censuses were: Bote - 649 (1952/54), Lepcha - 1,272 (1961), and Sunuwar - 17,299 (1952/54), 13,362 (1961), 20,280 (1971) and 10,650 (1981). Censuses report no language data for the tarai ethnics Dhanukh and Gangai, inner tarai ethnic Raute, and Punjabi Sikh.

17. Rajbansi group includes Koch as tribal, Rajbanshi as Hindu, and Tajpuriyas as Muslim. The 1952/54 census termed their language as Rajbanshi/Tajpuri but there is no ethnic data on the Koch and Tajpuriya in 1991 census.

References

- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 1993. *Nepal: Population Census-1991* Vol. 1, Part VI, Kathmandu.
- Hanßon, Gerd. 1991. *The Rai of Eastern Nepal: Ethnic and Linguistic Grouping: Findings of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Linguistic Survey of Nepal and CNAS/TU.
- _____. 1994. "Lesser-known Languages of Nepal: A Brief State-of-art Report." *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. No. 7, pp. 8-17.
- Malla, K.P. 1989. "Language and Society in Nepal." In K.P. Malla (ed.), *Nepal: Perspectives on Continuity and Change*. Kathmandu: CNAS/TU, pp. 445-466.
- Rastriya-bhasa Niti Sujhav Ayog. 1993. *Report of the National-Language Policy Advisory Committee* (in Nepali). Kathmandu.
- Statistics Department. 1957. *Nepal: Census of Population - 1952/54*, Vol. 11, Part 11 (in Nepali), Kathmandu.