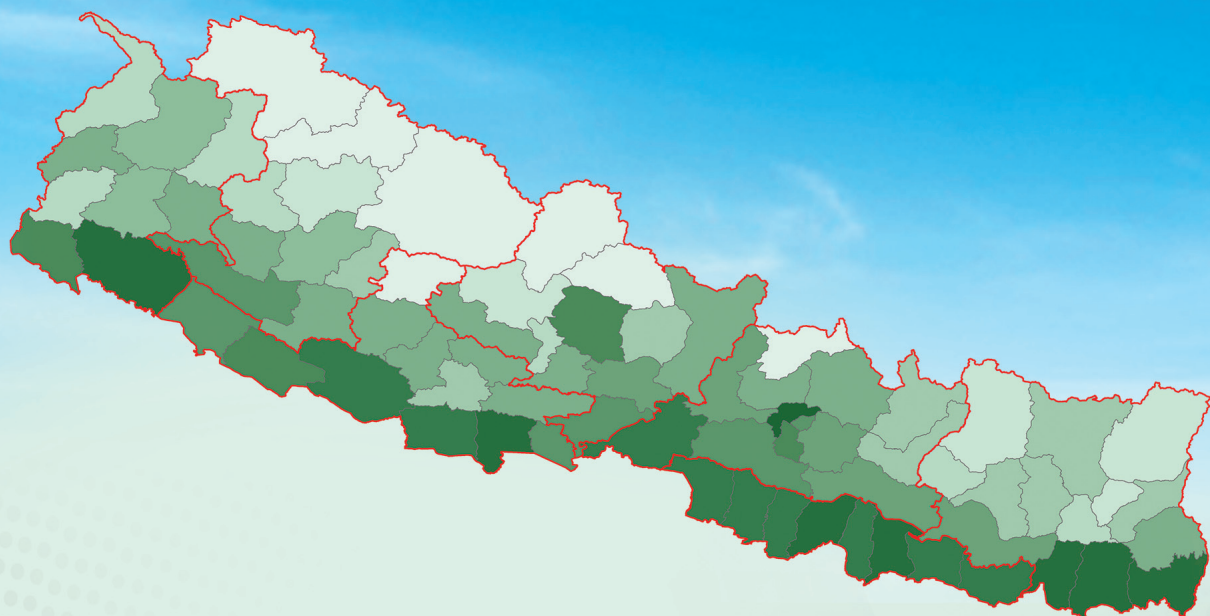
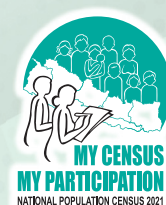


National Population and Housing Census 2021

Languages in Nepal



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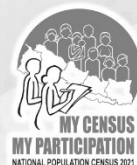
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Tel: 5365323, 5341801, 5328406, 5345946 (47, 48) Fax No.: 977-1-5327720

E-mail: info@nsonepal.gov.np, Website: www.nsonepal.gov.np

E-mail: popcen@nsonepal.gov.np, Website: www.censusnepal.cbs.gov.np

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Cover Map : Population distribution by district, NPHC 2021



Government of Nepal
Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
National Statistics Office

Phone { 5345946
5345947
5345948
5341801
5328406

Fax: 977-1-5327720
Post Box No.: 11031
Thapathali, Kathmandu

Ref. No.

Foreword

The National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) is the only source that consistently provides demographic and housing data down to the lowest administrative unit, i.e., the Ward. To meet the needs of a broad range of users, we have included brief explanations of the data in our reports. Over the years, the National Statistics Office (NSO) has focused not just on statistical reports but also on valuable analytical ones that cater to a wide audience, both within and outside the country. The production and dissemination of quality statistics are not merely public goods but national resources in the data and information age.

The NSO is committed to serving as the central provider of high-quality official statistics to support informed decision-making. In the past, the former Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) published population monographs following the release of all statistical results. This time, however, 21 thematic reports will be published, each focusing on key sectors of the national development plan.


I am pleased to present the long-awaited report *Languages in Nepal*. Language patterns are shaped by historical, cultural, educational, and technological factors. These patterns profoundly influence social dynamics, including communication practices, identity formation, and educational systems. Understanding language trends is essential for policymakers to design effective education, cultural preservation, and integration policies, supporting a cohesive and inclusive society.

I extend my appreciation to all contributors for their dedication in bringing this important analysis to light. I am confident that these findings will guide policymakers and planners in shaping development strategies for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

I would like to specifically commend the Population Section staff for their tireless efforts in generating data, providing support, and reviewing the report. The Head of the Social Statistics Division at NSO played a crucial role in coordinating all activities, and I greatly appreciate his contributions. Special thanks to language experts Prof. Dr. Dubi Nanda Dhakal and Dr. Tara Mani Rai for analyzing crucial data and presenting important findings, and to Mr. Uttam Narayan Malla, former Director General of the Central Bureau of Statistics, for reviewing the report from a government perspective. I also acknowledge the technical support provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Additionally, I extend my gratitude to the British Embassy Kathmandu and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for their financial support at various stages of this report's development.

Lastly, I encourage constructive feedback from our users to improve future editions of this report.

April 2025


Maddhu Sudan Burlakoti
Chief Statistician

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

S.N.	Name and Designation	Organization	Role
1.	Mr. Maddhu Sudan Burlakoti, <i>Chief Statistician</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali Kathmandu	Overall supervision
2.	Mr. Dhundiraj Lamichhane, <i>Deputy Chief Statistician</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali Kathmandu	Quality assurance and data processing/Reviewer
3.	Dr. Hem Raj Regmi, <i>Former Deputy Chief Statistician</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali Kathmandu	Reviewer
4.	Prof. Dr. Dubi Nanda Dhakal, <i>Professor</i>	Central Department of Linguistics, TU	Analyst
5.	Dr. Tara Mani Rai, <i>Asst. Professor</i>	Central Department of Linguistics, TU	Analyst
6.	Mr. Uttam Narayan Malla, <i>Former Director General, CBS</i>	Freelance Statistician	Reviewer
7.	Mr. Rajan Silwal, <i>Director</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Reviewer
8.	Mr. Binod Sharan Acharya, <i>Director</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Reviewer
9.	Mr. Deenanath Lamsal, <i>Statistics Officer</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Data management
10.	Mr. Dol Narayan Shreshtha, <i>Computer Officer</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Data and statistical table generation
11.	Mr. Kapil Dhital, <i>Statistics Officer</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Support
12.	Mr. Ashok Neupane, <i>Statistics Assistant</i>	National Statistics Office, Thapathali, Kathmandu	Support

Additional Support

1.	Mr. Atul Joshi	Map Designer	Map generation
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कार्यकारी सारांश

यस प्रतिवेदनमा जनगणना २०७८ बाट प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कको विश्लेषण गरी नेपालमा बोलिने भाषाहरूको तथ्याङ्कलाई तालिका, नक्सा, आकृति, र लजिस्टिक रिग्रेसन प्रयोग गरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। देशको भाषिक संरचनालाई चित्रित गर्न जनगणना २०७८ मा तीनओटा प्रश्नहरू सोधिएका थिए। तिनमा मातृभाषा, दोस्रो भाषा र पुर्खाहरूको भाषा पर्दछन्। जनगणनाबाट प्राप्त नतिजामा १२४ ओटा मातृभाषा, ११७ ओटा दोस्रो भाषा र १२४ ओटा पुर्खाको भाषा पहिचान गरिएको छ।

नेपालमा बोलिने भाषाहरू मुख्य रूपमा चार प्रमुख भाषा परिवारअन्तर्गत पर्छन्: इन्डो-युरोपेली, सिनो-तिब्बती, अस्ट्रो-एसियाटिक, र द्रविड भाषा। साथै, एक अलग भाषा कुसुन्डा र इन्डो-पाकिस्तानी साङ्केतिक भाषा परिवारअन्तर्गत पर्ने साङ्केतिक भाषा पनि नेपालमा प्रचलनमा रहेको पाइएको छ। नेपालमा मुख्य रूपमा सिनो-तिब्बती र इन्डो-युरोपेली भाषा परिवारका भाषाहरू बोलिन्छन् जसले कुल जनसङ्ख्याको ९९.७ प्रतिशत ओगट्छ। मातृभाषाका रूपमा बोलिने भाषाहरूमा नेपाली सबैभन्दा ठुलो भाषा हो, यद्यपि यसको जनसाङ्ख्यिक अनुपात कुल जनसङ्ख्याको आधाभन्दा कम (४४.९ प्रतिशत) मात्र छ। अन्य भाषा परिवारका भाषाहरूको हिस्सा तुलनात्मक रूपमा ठुलो छैन। भाषा र उपभाषाका अन्योलहरू समाधान गर्न कुनै प्रश्न समावेश नगरिएकाले यो जनगणनामा यी अन्योलहरू यथावत् रहेका छन्।

कम्तीमा १ लाख वक्ता भएका भाषा नेपालमा कुल २१ ओटा छन्। यी भाषाले कुल जनसङ्ख्याको ९५ प्रतिशत अंश ओगटेका छन्। यसको विपरीत, बोल्ने व्यक्तिहरूको सङ्ख्याका आधारमा सूचीको तल्लो खण्डमा रहेका भाषाको सङ्ख्या १०३ ओटा छन् जसले कुल जनसङ्ख्याको करिब ५ प्रतिशत हिस्सा ओगटेका छन्। त्यसैले, मातृभाषाहरूको सङ्ख्यामा विविधता भए पनि तिनको जनसाङ्ख्यिक हिस्सा असमान रूपमा वितरित देखिन्छ।

नेपालमा मातृभाषाका साथसाथै दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा नेपाली भाषाको वितरण उच्च छ। मातृभाषाका रूपमा नेपाली भाषा बोल्नेहरूको घनत्व विशेष गरी गण्डकी प्रदेशको पश्चिमी भाग (लुम्बिनी प्रदेशसँग जोडिएको क्षेत्र) र कर्णाली प्रदेशका सबै जिल्लाहरूमा अधिकतम देखिएको छ। मातृभाषा संरक्षणदर (Mother Tongue Retention Rate) अनुमान गर्दा कुनै जातीय समूहको जनसङ्ख्या र तिनीहरूले बोल्ने मातृभाषाविचको सम्बन्धद्वारा गणना गरिन्छ। मातृभाषा संरक्षणदर केही मातृभाषा बोल्ने जातीय समूहहरूमा कमजोर देखिएको छ। पुर्खाको भाषाको उल्लेख मातृभाषाको तुलनामा विशेष गरी जातीय समूहहरूमा बढी देखिएको छ। यसको सम्भावित कारण भनेको जनसङ्ख्याले आफ्नो पुर्खाको भाषाप्रति सम्मान र आत्मीयता राखे तापनि प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा ती भाषा व्यवहारमा नरहेको हुनसक्छ।

मधेस प्रदेशका सबै जिल्लाहरूमा द्विभाषिकता (Bilingualism) को दर उच्च देखिएको छ जहाँ मैथिली, भोजपुरी र बज्जिका प्रमुख भाषाहरू हुन्। यी भाषाहरू बोल्ने बहुसङ्ख्यक व्यक्तिहरू अन्य मातृभाषा बाहेकका वक्ताहरूसँग सञ्चार गर्न नेपाली भाषा प्रयोग गर्दछन्। द्विभाषिकताको उच्च दर गण्डकी प्रदेशको मनाङ जिल्लामा पनि पाइएको छ। यसबाहेक, लुम्बिनी प्रदेशका पश्चिमी तराईका जिल्लाहरूमा द्विभाषिकताको दर

उच्च रहेको पाइन्छ जुन प्रवृत्ति अझै पश्चिमतर्फका अर्थात् सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशका जिल्लाहरूमा अधिकतर रहेको छ । वि.सं. २०६८ को जनगणनाअनुसार द्विभाषिक कुल जनसङ्ख्यामध्ये ७९.५ प्रतिशतले नेपाली भाषालाई दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा बोल्दथे । यो हिस्सा वि.सं. २०७८ मा बढेर ८९.० प्रतिशत पुगेको छ । त्यसैले, वि.सं. २०७८ मा नेपाली भाषालाई दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा बोल्ने दर ९.५ प्रतिशतले विन्दुले वृद्धि भएको देखिन्छ ।

नेपालमा दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग विगत तीनओटा जनगणनामा क्रमशः वृद्धि हुँदै आएको छ । वि.सं. २०५८ को जनगणनामा दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा नेपाली बोल्ने दर २५.२ प्रतिशत थियो जुन वि.सं. २०६८ मा ३२.८ प्रतिशत र वि.सं. २०७८ मा ४६.२ प्रतिशत पुगेको छ । दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा नेपाली बोल्नेहरूको सङ्ख्या सबैभन्दा बढी मधेस प्रदेशमा देखिएको छ भने सबैभन्दा कम कर्णाली प्रदेशमा रहेको छ । धेरै जनसङ्ख्याले नेपाली भाषालाई कि मातृभाषाका रूपमा कि त दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा बोल्ने गरेका छन् । मातृभाषा र दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा बोलिने नेपाली भाषालाई समग्रतामा हेर्ने हो भने मधेस प्रदेशबाहेक (जहाँ यसको अंश ७६.५% छ) सबै प्रदेशमा यसको हिस्सा ९० प्रतिशतभन्दा माथि छ । जनगणनाको तथ्याङ्कअनुसार जहाँ मातृभाषाको रूपमा नेपाली कम बोलिन्छ त्यहाँ दोस्रो भाषाको रूपमा यसको प्रयोग अधिकतम रहेको छ ।

पुर्खाको भाषा प्रयोगसम्बन्धी प्रश्न पहिलोपटक वि.सं. २०७८ को जनगणनामा समावेश गरिएको थियो । यो प्रश्न भाषाको प्रवीणता मापन गर्नका लागि नभएर व्यक्तिहरूको पूर्वजले बोल्ने भाषाको पहिचानलक्षित थियो । मातृभाषा र पुर्खाको भाषाका विचमा बलियो सहसम्बन्ध देखिएको छ । धेरैजसो अवस्थामा पुर्खाको भाषाको दरभन्दा मातृभाषाका रूपमा उत्तरदाताहरूले उल्लेख गरेका भाषाहरूको दर उच्च पाइएको छ ।

वि.सं. २०७८ मा भाषिक विविधता सूचकाङ्क (Linguistic Diversity Index -LDI) सबैभन्दा उच्च कोशी प्रदेशमा देखिएको छ, त्यसपछि क्रमशः सुदूरपश्चिम र मधेस प्रदेशमा देखिएको छ । यसको अर्थ यी क्षेत्रहरूमा एउटै मातृभाषा बोल्ने दर तुलनात्मक रूपमा कम छ । भाषिक विविधता सूचकाङ्कले प्रत्येक स्थानमा बोलिने विभिन्न भाषाहरूको सङ्ख्या तथा तिनका वक्ताहरूको जनसङ्ख्या दर्शाउँछ । कोशी प्रदेशमा राई-किराँती समूहका भाषाहरूको ठुलो सङ्ख्यामा प्रयोग भएका कारण त्यहाँ भाषिक विविधतादर सबैभन्दा उच्च छ । यसको विपरीत, कर्णाली प्रदेशमा भाषिक विविधतादर सबैभन्दा कम छ । यसको अर्थ त्यहाँ एउटै मात्र मातृभाषा बोल्ने व्यक्तिहरूको अनुपात उच्च छ । कर्णाली प्रदेशमा तुलनात्मक रूपमा कम भाषाहरू (जम्मा ४८) मात्र मातृभाषाका रूपमा बोलिन्छन् र त्यहाँको अधिकतम जनसङ्ख्याले नेपालीलाई मातृभाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गरेको देखिन्छ ।

मधेस प्रदेशमा द्विभाषिकतादर सबैभन्दा उच्च (५६.०%) उल्लेख गरिएको छ । मधेसपछि सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेश (५९.९%) रहेको छ । मधेस प्रदेशमा द्विभाषिकता तथा बहुभाषिकताको दर उच्च हुनुका कारण मैथिली, भोजपुरी र वज्जिका बोल्ने ठुलो जनसङ्ख्याले नेपालीलाई दोस्रो भाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्नु हो । सबैभन्दा कम द्विभाषिकतादर कर्णाली प्रदेशमा रहेको छ ।

कुल ७५३ स्थानीय तहमध्ये ३५९ स्थानीय तहमा नेपाली भाषा आधाभन्दा बढी जनसङ्ख्याले बोल्ने गरेको पाइएको छ भने ७० ओटा स्थानीय तहमा यो अधिकतम जनसङ्ख्याले बोल्ने भाषा भए तापनि यसको हिस्सा ५० प्रतिशतभन्दा कम छ । बाँकी ३२४ स्थानीय तहमा ३४ ओटा भाषाहरू सबैभन्दा ठुलो हिस्साका रूपमा

रहेका छन् (तर ती सबैमा नेपाली भाषा बोल्ने जनसङ्ख्याको हिस्सा ५० प्रतिशतभन्दा न्यून नै रहेको छ) । देशका ११ ओटा स्थानीय तहमा कुनै एक भाषा सङ्ख्यात्मक दृष्टिले सबैभन्दा ठुलो भाषाको रूपमा देखिएका छन् । ती ११ भाषामा चाम्लिङ, खालिङ, वाम्बुले, राना थारु, याम्फु/याम्फे, नार-फु, मनाङ्गे, बरागुनवा र मगर काङ्के पर्दछन् ।

भाषाको उपस्थिति र जीवन अन्य सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक चरहरू, जस्तै जाति, साक्षरता र सम्पन्नता जस्ता विषयहरू समेत अन्तरसम्बन्धित रहेको हुन्छ । बहुभाषिकता भएका व्यक्ति र बसाइँसराइ गरेर आउने जनसङ्ख्याको परिणामस्वरूप कुनै एक जातीय समूहले मात्र बोल्ने एउटै भाषाको अभ्यास कम हुँदै गएको छ । जनगणनाको तथ्याङ्कले सम्पूर्ण जातजातिमध्ये मातृभाषाकै रूपमा नेपाली भाषा बोल्ने मानिसहरू प्रत्येक जातजातिभित्र कम्तीमा पनि १ प्रतिशत रहेको देखाएको छ ।

सहरी जनसङ्ख्यासँग तुलना गर्दा, अर्धसहरी क्षेत्रमा बसोबास गर्ने जनसङ्ख्याले नेपालीलाई मातृभाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्ने सम्भावना कम देखिन्छ (अड्स अनुपात (Odds Ratio) ०.८८७) । यसको विपरीत, ग्रामीण क्षेत्रमा बसोबास गर्नेले नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना सहरी क्षेत्रको तुलनामा २.२ गुणा बढी (अड्स अनुपात २.२१९) देखिएको छ । हिमाली क्षेत्रसँग तुलना गर्दा, पहाडी क्षेत्रको जनसङ्ख्याले नेपाली भाषा प्रयोग गर्ने दर केही उच्च देखिएको (अड्स अनुपात १.२८८) छ ।

गण्डकी प्रदेशमा, कोशी प्रदेशको तुलनामा नेपालीलाई मातृभाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्ने सम्भावना डेढगुणा बढी (अड्स अनुपात १.६२२) देखिएको छ । कर्णाली प्रदेशका जनसङ्ख्यामा, कोशी प्रदेशको तुलनामा नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना ४.३ गुणा बढी रहेको छ । अड्स अनुपात मध्येसमा ०.०७८, बागमतीमा ०.७५९, लुम्बिनीमा ०.८८७ रहेको छ । यो सुदूरपश्चिममा ०.५०३ छ जुन कोशी प्रदेशको तुलनामा कम देखिएको छ । पुरुषको जनसङ्ख्यासँग तुलना गर्दा, महिला जनसङ्ख्याले (अड्स अनुपात १.१५७) नेपाली भाषालाई मातृभाषाका रूपमा बोल्ने सम्भावना आनुपातिक रूपमा बढी देखिन्छ । जनसङ्ख्याको उमेर बढ्दै जाँदा नेपाली बोल्ने दर पनि उच्च देखिन्छ ।

मातृभाषाको रूपमा नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना र सम्पन्नताको वर्गीकरण (Wealth Quintiles) को बिचमा स्पष्ट सकारात्मक सम्बन्ध रहेको छ । कुनै परिवार जति सम्पन्न हुन्छ, नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना त्यति नै उच्च हुन्छ । सम्पन्न परिवारमा नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना लगभग २.५ गुणा बढी देखिएको छ । यसैगरी, सबैभन्दा सम्पन्न जनसङ्ख्याको नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना तीन गुणाभन्दा बढी छ । निरक्षर जनसङ्ख्यासँग तुलना गर्दा, निश्चित हदसम्मको शैक्षिकस्तर भएका सबै वर्गको जनसङ्ख्याले नेपालीलाई मातृभाषाका रूपमा बोल्ने सम्भावना धेरै नै छ । जनगणनाको तथ्याङ्कले शैक्षिकस्तर उच्च हुँदै जाँदा मातृभाषाका रूपमा नेपाली बोल्ने सम्भावना पनि बढोत्तरी हुँदै हुन्छ ।

यस प्रतिवेदनको निष्कर्षले नेपालको भाषागत अवस्था विश्लेषण गर्नका लागि उपयोगी तथ्याङ्कीय आधार प्रदान गरेको छ र राष्ट्रिय, प्रादेशिक र स्थानीय तहस्तरमा भाषासम्बन्धी नीति बनाउनका लागि महत्वपूर्ण मार्गदर्शन प्रदान गर्ने अपेक्षा गरिएको छ । यहाँ प्रस्तुत निष्कर्षहरू देहायका विषयहरूका नीति निर्माणमा समेत महत्वपूर्ण हुने विश्वास लिइएको छ ।

- क) सरकारका विभिन्न तहमा (संघ, प्रदेश, स्थानीय तह) कामकाजको रूपमा भाषाको प्रयोग, संरक्षण र भाषाहरूको आधुनिकीकरणसम्बन्धी नीतिहरूको तर्जुमा,
- ख) मातृभाषाको पहिचान, अभिलेखीकरण र प्रवर्धनसम्बन्धी नीति निर्माण गर्न, र
- ग) स्थानीयस्तरमा ठुलो अनुपातमा प्रतिनिधित्व नभएका र सीमित स्थानहरूमा मात्र व्यवहारमा रहेका भाषाहरूको संरक्षण, पुनर्जीवन र सिकाइसम्बन्धी कार्यनीति कार्यान्वयन गर्न ।

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thematic report presents an analysis of data from Nepal's 2021 census which provides population data on the spatial patterns of languages spoken in Nepal using tables, maps, figures, and logistic regression. In order to capture an account of the language composition of the country, three questions were asked during the census concerning mother tongue, second language, and language of ancestor. According to the census 2021, 124 mother tongues, 117 second languages, and 124 ancestral languages have been identified.

The languages spoken in Nepal largely belong to four major languages: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic, and Dravidian languages. Additionally, Kusunda, a language isolate, and Sign language (SL), belonging to the Indo-Pakistani sign language family, are also present in Nepal. Languages belonging to Sino-Tibetan and Indo-European language families are the main language families which constitute a total of 99.7 percent of the total population. In terms of languages spoken as mother tongue, Nepali constitutes the largest language, although the figure constitutes less than half of the total population (44.9 percent). The share of languages belonging to other language families is not sizeable.

There are a total of 21 large languages (population above 100,000) which constitute a total of 95 percentage of the population. Conversely, the remaining middle-sized and small languages (population below 100,000) at a number of 103 in total, constitute nearly 5 percent of the total population. There is thus an unproportional relation of the number of mother tongues and their share in the total population.

The distribution of Nepali as mother tongue and as a second language is high in Nepal. The high concentration of the Nepali as mother tongue is reported greater in the western part of Gandaki Province (area adjoining with Lumbini Province) and in all districts of Karnali Province. The mother tongue retention rate, determined by comparing the ethnic population with the mother tongue they speak, is low among certain ethnic groups. The reporting of ancestral language is higher than that of the reporting of mother tongues, particularly in ethnic groups. This may be due to populations having an affinity with ancestral languages despite not speaking their ancestral language.

Higher rates of bilingualism are reported in all districts of Madhesh Province in which Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Bajjika are the dominant languages. A majority of the speakers of these languages also speak Nepali as a second language in order to communicate with speakers of other languages than their mother tongues. The high incidence of bilingualism is also reported in Manang district of Gandaki Province. In addition, higher rates of bilingualism are present in the western Tarai districts of Lumbini Province and this trend expands further west to the districts

of Sudurpashchim Province. Among this bilingual population, Nepali is the second language of 79.5 percent in 2011 census data, whereas this figure increased to 89.0 percent in 2021. Thus, the growth of Nepali as a second spoken language is seen at a rate increase of 9.5 percent in 2021.

The presence of Nepali as a second language has grown gradually over the past three censuses. Nepali as a second language constituted 25.2 percent of census data in 2001, 32.8 percent in 2011 and 46.2 percent in 2021. Nepali as a second language is seen highest in Madhesh Province, whereas the lowest percentage is reported in Karnali Province. The greater population either speak Nepali as a mother tongue or as a second language. When combined, rates of Nepali as a mother tongue and as a second language are above 90 percent in all provinces, with the exception of Madhesh Province where the rate is at 76.5 percent. The data shows that the lower the share of Nepali as mother tongue, the higher the use of Nepali as second language.

A question related to the use of the language of ancestor was introduced for the first time in the 2021 census. This question is related to the identity of the population's speakers to ancestors in terms of their languages, rather than measuring language proficiency. A strong correlation is seen between ethnic and ancestral languages. In many cases, the reported rate of mother tongue languages is greater than that of the ancestral language.

In 2021, the linguistic diversity index (LDI) is seen highest in Koshi Province, followed by Sudurpashchim and Madhesh provinces, an indication that a lower rate of the same mother tongue is present in these areas. The linguistic diversity indexes include the value to show a number of different languages in each location along with the speaker population. The linguistic diversity rate is highest in Koshi Province due to a number of Rai-Kiranti languages which are spoken in the province. Conversely, the LDI rate is lowest in Karnali Province, meaning that a greater rate of individuals share the same mother tongue. This is because a smaller number of languages (namely 48) are spoken as mother tongues in Karnali Province, with an overwhelming majority of the population speaking Nepali as their mother tongue.

Bilingualism is reported at a high rate in Madhesh Province (56.0%), followed by Sudurpashchim Province (51.9%). The high degree of bilingualism and multilingualism in Madhesh Province can be attributed to the substantial number of Maithili, Bhojpuri and Bajjika speaking population with Nepali as a second language. The lowest rate of bilingualism is reported in Karnali Province.

Out of 753, Nepali is a majority (more than 50% population) language in 359 local levels and it is the largest language (with less than 50% of the population) in 70 local levels. In the remaining 324 local levels, 34 languages hold the largest presence (with less than 50% of the population). Eleven languages (Chamling, Khaling, Wambule, Rana Tharu, Yamphu/Yamphe, Nar-Phu, Manange, Baragunwa, and Magar Kaike) have a larger population in only one local level each.

It is significant to note that language presence exists alongside cross-cutting themes with other socio-cultural variables, such as ethnicity, literacy, and wealth among others. As a result of multilingualism and in-migration to cities, one caste/ethnic group speaking one language is less common. This is supported by the data which shows that at least a percentage of all caste/ethnic groups reported in the census speak Nepali as their mother tongues.

Three logistic regressions were performed to find associations in the number of socio-cultural factors in relation to using Nepali as mother tongue, Nepali as second language, and in using a single language. Compared to the urban population, the population living in peri-urban are less likely to use Nepali as a mother tongue (with an odds ratio of 0.887). Conversely, living in rural areas entails a 2.2 times greater likelihood of speaking Nepali than in urban areas (with an odds ratio of 2.219). Compared to Mountain zone, the population in Hill zone shows a slightly higher degree of using Nepali language (with an odds ratio of 1.288).

Gandaki Province shows a one and half time higher possibility (AOR 1.622) of using Nepali as mother tongue compared to Koshi Province. Populations of Karnali Province show a 4.3 times larger likelihood of speaking Nepali compared to the reference category (Koshi Province). Madhesh (AOR 0.078), Bagmati (AOR 0.759), Lumbini (AOR 0.887), and Sudurpashchim (0.503) provinces demonstrate a lower AOR than in Koshi Province.

Compared to the male population, female populations (AOR 1.157) are proportionally more likely to speak Nepali as a mother tongue. The rate of Nepali speakers is seen as greater with higher ages of population. There is a clear positive association between the likelihood of speaking Nepali and wealth quintile: the wealthier the household, the higher the likelihood of speaking Nepali. Wealthier populations show nearly more than a 2.5 times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali. Similarly, the population in highest wealth quintile have more than a three times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali. Compared to the illiterate populations, all categories of the population with some level of education are more likely to speak Nepali as a mother tongue. The data shows that the higher the educational level, the more likely for Nepali to be spoken as a mother tongue.

The findings of this thematic report provide helpful contextual data to explain the language situation of Nepal and offer significant guidance for formulating language related policy at national, province, and local level. The programmes associated with language documentation, revitalization, and literacy should be underscored for those languages which are confined in specific locations and which are not in majority at local levels.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Austro-Asiatic
AOR	Adjusted odds ratio
B.S.	Bikram Sambat (Bikram era)
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
IA	Indo-Aryan
IDIL	International decade of Indigenous languages (2022-2032)
LDI	Linguistic diversity index
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NLPRC	National Languages Policy Recommendation Committee
NPHC	Nepal Population and Housing Census
NSL	Nepali sign language
NSO	National Statistics Office
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SL	Sign language
TB	Tibeto-Burman
UN	United Nations

GLOSSARY

- Ancestral language:*** The language of one’s ancestor is defined as “a language used at home, or in the community, and this is the language of one’s identity” (CBS, 2021, p. 76).
- Genetic affiliation:*** Genetic classification of language groups together languages which are known to have developed out of a common ancestral language. These languages are said to be genetically related.
- Language family:*** A group (family) of related languages sharing sound patterns and vocabulary. In historical linguistics, the languages are considered descended from ancestor form (proto language). The daughter languages (offspring) are considered descended from mother tongues. Thus, language family is a group of related languages whose affiliations are recognized and certain.
- Language isolate:*** Languages without recognized language affiliations are language isolates.
- Language retention:*** Language retention is the continuity of the mother tongue spoken by a particular linguistic community. It is the extent to which a language group (an ethnic group) retains their mother tongue.
- Linguistic diversity index:*** An index which is used to scope the probability of two individuals in a given area speaking the same language. Formulated by Greenberg (1956, p. 109), the index refers to spatially distribution of languages within an area. Linguistic diversity increases with an increase in the number of languages in specific areas.
- Monolingualism and bilingualism:*** In sociolinguistics, bilingualism refers to the situation in which at least one person speaks two languages. In this report, the persons who report that they speak the second language in addition to their mother tongue are considered bilingual, although the proficiency in the second language

is not considered. The people who report that they speak only one language are considered to be monolingual.

Mother Tongue:

The language which the respondents learnt to use at first at home. The mother tongue is “the language a child learns first from his grandparents, parents, or any other members of his family, or a child learns from his/her caretakers... For the children who have not started speaking the language, the language of an infant’s parents is his mother tongue”. (CBS, 2021, p. 76).

Second language:

The second language is defined as “the language a person uses in addition to the mother tongue. It is the language a person frequently uses as a language of wider communication to his neighbors, or community” (CBS, 2021, p. 77).

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

Language is one of the significant demographic variables in Nepal. Languages possess power and beauty as means of expression, and stand as symbols of community and personal identity (Crystal, 2000, p.35). Languages enable interpersonal communication and can express the history of a society.

1.1 Introduction

Censuses have taken place in Nepal every ten years, with language-associated information included since the 1952/54 census. The data obtained from national censuses is the official source of information on languages and provides an overall picture of the languages spoken in Nepal. The linguistic diversity of Nepal has been recognized for many decades, despite the number of languages recorded in the decennial censuses varying in past censuses. The 2021 census enumerates 124 languages spoken as mother tongues, including Sign language. In addition, 2021 census data also records languages under ‘others’ and ‘not stated’. The 2021 census was conducted in Nepal after the promulgation of the constitution in Nepal in 2015, which conceived three levels of government in its basic administration – namely federal, province and local level. In addition to this, United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/135 proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032), which aims to “mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion.”¹ Thirdly, although the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not directly talk about language, Goal 16 does prioritize “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.”²

It is pertinent to mention that Nepal’s census records all languages spoken by both large and small linguistic groups, such as Kusunda and Bankariya³ and therefore encompasses marginal linguistic groups in Nepal. Even numerically small languages, including those with less than one-hundred speakers, have been reported in the census which represents linguistic diversity across

¹ (Indigenous Languages Decade (2022-2032), UNESCO, retrieved 29 July 2024).

² (Peace, justice and strong institutions - United Nations Sustainable Development, retrieved July 29, 2024).

³ Kusunda has a total of 23 speakers, and Bankariya has 86 speakers.

the enumeration of languages in Nepal.⁴ This thematic report broadly presents the data obtained from the 2021 census through the perspectives of sociolinguistic analysis. Additionally, some cross-cutting themes associated with language have further been analyzed in this report.

1.2 Linguistic diversity

Nepal's linguistic diversity, in terms of the different number of languages spoken, has been recognized in the country for many decades (Yadava 2007; Sharma 2009, p. 76). In general terms, linguistic diversity is often gauged by three main criteria (Nettle, 1999), with these being the number of languages spoken within an area, the language families the languages are belonging to, and the structural diversity of languages. Firstly, the linguistic diversity is often measured by number of languages spoken within an area. A total of 124 languages, consisting of four major languages, are spoken in Nepal (with inclusion of Sign language). Nepal thus embodies linguistic diversity in terms of its number of languages spoken in a small, close geographical area. Nepal meets the classification of a multilingual country as more than 124 languages are spoken and the speech behaviour of different linguistic communities are characterized by more than one language.

Secondly, the linguistic diversity is also discussed with reference to languages belonging to different language families and sub-families. Aside from the number of languages recorded, Nepal's linguistic diversity is well illustrated through its phylogenetic diversity. The phylogenetic diversity with reference to languages is measured by the diversity of language families. The languages in Nepal belong to four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic, and Dravidian languages. Furthermore, the language used by deaf communities, including the language isolate (Kusunda), is also recorded. Additional smaller groups and sub-groups, mainly within Indo-Aryan and Sino-Tibetan languages, manifest distinct phonological and grammatical features. The languages spoken in high Himalayas (Sinospheric languages), such as Sherpa and Lowa, are characterized by a complex tonal system which is not observed in the Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the lower-Hill zones and plains (Indospheric languages). The Rai and Kirati languages of Tibeto-Burman languages which are spoken in the eastern Hill zone are characterized by complex agreement systems compared to other Tibeto-Burman languages, such as Baram and Magar Dhut.

Thirdly, this diversity is also explained in terms of structural heterogeneity of languages. The variations in structural diversity can be explained mainly in the Indo-Aryan (IA) languages and Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages in Nepal. Some typological features can be compared across different levels of grammar, such as phonology, and morphosyntax of these languages. For

⁴ There are countries where the languages with the small number of speakers of different languages are not recorded in the census.

example, the implosive sounds reported in Wambule are attested in Bahing and Sunuwar languages, yet are missing in the rest of the nearly twenty-five Rai languages (Opgenort, 2004, p. 27). The complex agreement system described in eastern Indo-Aryan languages, such as Maithili and Rajbanshi amongst others, is absent in Nepali and some other IA languages. The structural variation is thus attested in the languages belonging to both IA and TB languages.

1.3 Mother tongues in decadal censuses

The 1952/54 census saw the introduction of two distinctive questions in the national census for the first time, requesting responses on the population's 'mother tongue' and the 'other language' as the language which the respondents use as a second language. In the 1952/54 census, the mother tongue is defined as 'the language one learns first at home', or the language which the mother speaks at home with other family members if an infant has not learnt and started speaking the language. The same classification is present for the deaf respondents (NSO, 2079 B.S., p 47). The definition of the mother tongue fundamentally remained consistent until 1991, after which the definition was further expanded to state that the mother of the respondents may be different from that of one's parents.

Sign language was enumerated in the national census for the first time in 1991. With this change, enumerators were instructed to record the language used by the deaf as Sign language (SL). Despite this shift, the meaning of mother tongue fundamentally retains the definition used in the national census of 1952/54, although the meaning is expanded in subsequent decadal censuses. As of the 2021 census, mother tongue is defined as:

“... the language the respondents learnt to use at first at home. It is the language a child learns first from his grandparents, parents, or any other members of his family, or a child learns from his/her caretakers.... For the children who have not started speaking the language, the language of an infant's parents is his mother tongue.” (CBS, 2078 B.S./2021, p. 76).

The concept of the mother tongue is explained further, noting that mother tongues may be different even for individuals within a family. Additionally, if one's parents speak different languages, the mother tongue of a child may be different from his/her parents.

Similarly, a second language is defined as “the language a person uses in addition to the mother tongue. It is the language a person frequently uses as a language of wider communication to his neighbors, or community” (NSO, 2079 B.S., p.77). The enumerators are advised not to list the language as the second language if the respondent does not actually use the language, even though s/he has some knowledge of it. The same language can not be self-reported as both a

mother tongue and as a second language by the same respondents during the enumeration of languages.

The language of one's ancestor is defined as "a language used at home, or in the community, and this is the language of one's identity" (CBS, 2078 B.S./2021, p. 76). In other words, ancestral language is the language of ones grandparents and parents. An ancestral language may or may not have been transmitted to the new generations. The classification concerns the 'language of one's ancestor', or a language traditionally spoken in a community and representing their identity. It may be the language which the individual does not use at present, but may be the language of one's great grandparents, grandparents, or parents (CBS, 2021, p. 47). The respondent is asked to self-report their mother tongue, second language, and language of ancestors. A respondent is not allowed to report two languages as mother tongue, second language, and his/her ancestors' language.

1.4 Objectives

The objective of this thematic report is to analyze the use of the languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue languages, second languages, and languages of the respondents' ancestors. More specifically, this report aims to analyse the use of the mother tongue and the second language by the respondents, noting their temporal and spatial distribution, and to analyze the use of the ancestral language in relation to the mother tongue.

Additionally, the report aims to interpret the rate of mother tongue and second languages in provinces, districts and at local levels. Furthermore, languages will be analyzed alongside other related areas such as caste/ethnic groups, literacy, religion, disability, educational attainments, among others. Finally, the report offers policy recommendations in various areas, including use of the language in official use, and language in education.

1.5 Language questions in censuses

Nepal's census prompts have included questions on language since data recorded in 1952/54, during which two questions regarding the 'mother tongue' and the 'other language' were mentioned. Within the field of discourse, there are discussions regarding the wording of the questions used in the censuses and consequently the answers elicited from them. In many countries, the wording of the questions directly relate to the proficiency of the respondents of a specific language rather than the selection of the term 'mother tongue'. For example, the wording of the national census of Switzerland is phrased as: 'What is your main language, the language you think in and know best?' (Duchêne, Humbert & Coray, 2018, p.53).

Multilingual ideology has thus been accepted in this census as it intends to elicit more than one language use. The question on the mother tongue, however, covertly does not seek an answer on the respondents' language use. It is therefore not directly associated with the respondents' understanding of the language proficiency. The open question regarding respondents' 'second language' allows multilingual speakers to name their 'second language', the language a person uses in addition to his mother tongue. For the first time, the census also includes a question on heritage language. The heritage language is the language which the family of the respondent has historically used at home. This may be the language which the speakers make use of at home, or may be a different language altogether.

All respondents were expected to answer the questions regarding language. Despite the fact that the term 'mother tongue' is used to record the language in the national census, the term should be carefully examined in a multilingual country context. Arel (2001, p. 97) notes that three situations are explored with regard to the language related questions in the censuses: "the language first learned by the respondent, the language most commonly used by the respondent at the time of the census, and the knowledge of particular official language(s) by the respondent".

The answers to the census questions are useful in determining the official language policy at province and at local levels. This data may also be useful in deciding the languages to be used at schools for imparting education for children in their respective mother tongues.

1.6 Demography of language

This thematic report is concerned with the size, distribution, and change of recorded mother tongue languages, second languages and the language of ancestors, and the interrelations among them. Demography is a process which concerns the "gathering information of various kinds about population groups, including their mother tongues" (Veerdoort, 1988). On occasion, the phrase 'linguistic demography' is also used synonymously to refer to the area of study concerned with 'numerical or statistical aspects of languages and their distribution across the world' (Arel, 2001, p. 35). The demography of language in this thematic report is mainly based on census data obtained from the 2021 National and Housing Census.

The national censuses are the sources of information which present data on language use across Nepal, in lieu of complete surveys of large scales. The census data regarding language is particularly associated with sociolinguistics, and with the 'demography of linguistics' in particular, in which the application of demography is applied to a specific object (language) (Pauwels, 1994, p. 35; Veerdoort, 1988). The linguistic demography in Nepal is reflected through national census data which demonstrates the decadal changes of the country's linguistic composition. The demography of language of which this report deals with is the information gathered by the official census takers.

1.7 Review of literature

The review of literature comprises of a range of themes, such as the questions used in the censuses, the data obtained from the census in different countries, and how they are employed in language planning and policy, among others.

1.7.1 Survey techniques and questions

Across the literature, the issues of questions in censuses are discussed thoroughly and references associated with the census surveys and the ways questions are formed are critically examined (Arel, 2005; Duchêne & Humbert 2018; deVries, 1985). The questions in census surveys are often posed with the purpose to seek to elicit the information on language use and proficiency (Pauwell, 2016, p. 36). Additionally, precise wording used in language-related questions differs across censuses. Occasionally, the questions on census surveys are specific and they elicit questions on whether a person understands, speaks and writes a language (Pauwell, 2016, p. 37). The questions are often specific to which language the speaker uses at home, at their place of work, and focused on more specific questions, such as whether a respondent can have a conversation with the other speakers in his/her language to capture their linguistic reality. Sample questions of censuses across different countries are enumerated (see Pauwells, 2016, p.37).⁵ The questions in North American countries are included in Chiswick and Miller (1998, p. 74). They inform that the questions on language in the US census of 1991 were focused on whether a language other than English is spoken at home. In addition, the respondents were asked about the level of their English language fluency (“Very Well”, “Well”, “Not Well”, “Not at All”).

Pauwell (2016, p. 40) highlights the problem of eliciting information via self-reporting of names of languages in censuses. As the questions associated in the national surveys are open-ended, the names differ across different censuses. For example, the terms ‘Maithili Pradesh dialects’ and ‘Eastern Tarai dialects’ were used in reference to a number of languages in the 1952/54 censuses in Nepal (Malla, 1979, p. 149), however the specific language names were used in later censuses.

⁵ The questions mentioned in Pauwells (2016, p. 37) are: “(a) Which language does the person use regularly? (Australian Census 1976) (b) Does the person speak a language other than English at home? If so, which language? (Australian Census 1986, also in the US Census since 1960) (c) What language does this person speak most often at home? (Canadian Census 1996) (d) Does this person speak any other languages on a regular basis at home? (Canadian Census 2001) (e) What is your main language? (Census 2011 for England and Wales)”.

1.7.2 Language questions in different countries

Higgs, Williams, and Danny (2004) analyze data from 2001 census surveys in Wales and discuss the “need for more detailed language use surveys and the nature of the question included in subsequent censuses that would permit a more useful comparison of spatial and temporal trends.” They further note that the phrasing in the question, such as “Can you?” and “Do you?”, also make a difference in eliciting the information on the respondents’ use.

Duchêne Humbert and Coray (2018), in the context of Switzerland's census reporting, discuss the role of question formulation which asks the individual to answer with language(s) they know the best and posit that this wording may be related to some sociolinguistic aspects of the languages spoken in Switzerland. They outline how the questions were finally decided and discuss the revision of question alternatives across various stages. The question used in the census was ultimately: ‘What is the main language, the language or languages you know best?’ (Duchêne Humbert & Coray, 2018, p. 55)

A number of global references across various kinds of surveys – such as the use of data from the Basque region in Spain (Urla & Burdick, 2018), language and ethnicity in Sudan (Miller, 2018) among others – can be useful in analyzing the national level data in Nepal. Data obtained from censuses is found in some multilingual countries, such as Mexico (Cifuentes & Moctezuma, 2006), bilingualism in India (Khubchandani, 1978), Guatemala (Hawkins, 2005), language shift in South Africa (Deumert, 2010), Scotland (Sebba, 2019) and the United Kingdom (Sebba, 2017), among others. However, the analysis and perspectives and the socio-political contexts in which the censuses were carried out differ in all countries.

1.7.3 Review of the publications on languages of Nepal

This section mainly comprises three components. A review of pertinent literature sourced from the publications by the then, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), was performed, including some references which are largely based on the census data. In addition, studies which are largely related to the enumeration of cluster of languages such as Hansson (1991) and Bielmeier (2008)⁶ are relevant. Van Driem (2001) further presents the sociolinguistic situation of a large number of languages spoken in Nepal.

Since these publications concern data on the languages of Nepal, these are the official records of the languages of Nepal. The small scale surveys of a cluster of languages are often cited to explain the language situation of particular areas in Nepal. The reference materials do not aim to enact surveys similar to the survey reports, but to further include the information of a cluster of languages (ie: the subgrouping of the cluster).

⁶ Hodgson (1874, 1992) contains information on languages of Nepal.

Details regarding languages in Nepal were reported since the questions were included in the national census for the first time in 1952/54. A number of volumes of Linguistic Survey of India were also the sources of information on Nepalese languages.⁷ The information the survey volumes embody clearly differ in scope and in the treatment of the language issues. The words, and some texts included in Grierson's survey are listed in literature by Dhakal (2078 B.S., pp. 73-74). Hodgson's (1874, 1992) work regarding information on different languages spoken in Nepal is useful in enumerating the languages of Nepal. Sociolinguistic information of the languages of Nepal, is presented in Van Driem (2001). The general sociolinguistic and typological features of over 120 languages in Nepal is provided in Epele et al. (2012). Hansson (1991) provides a survey of Rai and Kirati language group spoken in eastern Nepal and Bielmeier (2008) enumerates the languages spoken largely in the bordering areas of Nepal and Tibet. All of these references are of importance as they include varying information of different periods and clusters of languages.

In addition to the official publications of the languages obtained from decadal censuses, additional literature exists which highlights the importance of enumerating the languages in Nepal. In this context, Malla (1979, p. 147) notes:

“The 1952/54 Census Report became a crucial document in this language controversy. It showed that 48.7 per cent of the population spoke Nepali, compared to 16 percent Maithili speakers, the second largest linguistic community... These figures gave the Government enough evidence and political courage to settle the question of a national language to Nepali, a status it had held informally for quite some time.”

Malla (1979) compares the data associated with the census of 1952/54 and 1961 censuses. The context of the 1952/54 census is described as:

“In 1952 a census was begun in all the districts except Mahottari, but it was not completed on a nationwide basis until 1954. However, in the 1952-54 census, such tentative but unhelpful language names were given: Eastern Tarai Dialects, Mid-Western Tarai Dialects, Maithili Pradesh Dialects, etc. Language data is well-produced in the 1961 Census report.”

The key findings of the 1961 census are highlighted, with a total of 36 languages belonging to Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic language families noted in this recording. Out of these languages, only 11 languages had more than 1 percent of the total population. Additionally, it is noted that of the 25 remaining languages of Nepal, only seven are spoken by

⁷ A number of volumes associated with the languages of Nepal are reported in Dhakal (2078 B.S.).

more than 10,000 people, and remaining languages are spoken by less than 10,000 speakers during this data period.

Malla (1979) discusses further issues associated with languages and other socio-political spheres, noting that “there is a prolonged isolation of the Tarai from the Hills, a policy relentlessly followed by the Hill-dominated political structure since the days of Rana rule” and further highlights that there were not many languages with writing systems and a long written tradition.

Aside from CBS/NSO publications, only a few references are available on the 1971 census with the exception of the enumeration of languages. Central Bureau of Statistics (1987) mainly shows the changes of the population and its distribution in rural and urban areas (and sectors) and in various zones and does not present other information in addition to the language distribution.

Gurung (1997, 1998) analyses the data from 1991 census, highlighting the number of languages (53), classification, and distribution. In addition, the language retention is presented by cross-tabulating some ethnic groups with mother tongues. Gurung notes that the data are not comparable to some extent because of their naming (p. 52) and further explains the dynamics of the languages, such as bilingualism, and the spread of Nepali.

The census data over the past two censuses have been analyzed from various perspectives. More recently, the analysis of the census data of 2001 and 2011 are pertinent. Yadava (2003) gives a broader perspective of the languages of Nepal and discusses broader themes associated with the languages in Nepal, such as the nomenclature of the languages, the genetic affiliation, distribution, language and ethnicity, second languages and writing systems, and finally offering policy implications and ways to gather more detailed information on multilingualism. Additionally, recommendations to document and analyze the lesser-described languages of Nepal are provided in order to resolve the issues associated with the uncertainty and controversy of the genetic affiliation of languages.

Brief discussion on the languages of Nepal by Gurung (1998) presents the census data on the languages enumerated in the census from various perspectives. Similarly, Sharma (2009) analyzes the data from the 2001 census from various angles and a section is devoted to the analysis of the languages spoken in Nepal, presenting the analysis from a language diversity perspective. Sharma (2009, p. 76) concludes:

“Language diversity in Nepal is not as pronounced as ethnic/caste diversity. A major reason is that nine Hill caste groups, comprising 38.4 percent of the 2011 population, have Nepali as the common mother tongue. A similar situation prevails among the regional caste groups in the Tarai, many of whom have a common mother tongue.”

Similarly, Sharma (2014) analyzes the data from the 2001 census from various angles, with a section devoted to the analysis of the languages spoken in Nepal. One of the salient topics Sharma discusses is the language retention trend of some ethnic groups, with the author noting:

“Many of the Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken by ethnic populations in their traditional habitats. Migration from these places appears to result in first-language attrition, i.e. proficiency of the language declines, or there is a shift to another more universally understood language of communication or education (p. 34).”

Focused on 2011 census data, Yadava (2014) presents a number of issues related to the languages of Nepal. Some of the suggestions offered concern the use of languages in the federal structure in Nepal, in multilingual education, and with regard to “identification, of language endangerment, documentation, promotion, and preservation.” This is the updated information on the languages of Nepal in this regard based on 2021 census.

1.7.4 Use of census data in policy documents

Data obtained from census reporting is the main source of information in language planning and policy documents in Nepal. It provides policy makers with data on the distribution of languages and the concentration of major languages and is thus useful for analyzing the data for various uses. For example, the Report of National Languages Policy Recommendation Committee (NLPRC, 1994), made a number of recommendations regarding the documentation, preservation and the use of mother tongues in both formal and non-formal education. It was possible to implement such after the restoration of democracy in 1990, which introduced a constitution provision to use the mother tongue in education. The basis for these recommendations are the data from 1991 census. Taking consideration of the linguistic diversity of the country, the report aimed to collect all the mother tongues of the nation in its formal uses.

After the promulgation of the constitution of Nepal in 2015, the Government of Nepal constituted the Language Commission to recommend the criteria to determine the use of the official languages. The recommendations are primarily based on the census data of 2011 census. The number of speakers and the concentration of the languages are two key factors that determine the use of the official languages in the province level (Language Commission, 2021, pp. 148-156). The report mainly takes the size of the population as the main basis for determining the official languages. The size of the speakers of languages, their distribution and concentration, the situation of corpus planning, and the development of a writing system of languages are other factors to be considered while determining the official languages of the province. The Language Commission (2078 B.S.) further discusses additional criteria to

determine the official languages of the local levels, which are somehow similar to the one mentioned earlier.

At the micro level, the Language Commission recommends a number of areas associated with the language planning and policy in Nepal in its annual reports. The recommendations cover all areas of language planning, including status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. They are summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Recommendations of the Language Commission⁸

Reports of language commission/Years	Major recommendations
2017/2074 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying criteria for determining the official language • Initiatives to be taken to establish the language archives
2018/2075 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Sign language to inform the deaf people, and the use of the braille script for the blind people as their linguistic rights • Establishing translation facilities at government offices for those who do not understand Nepali language • Research should be focused on the classical language for their use, and development • Preservation of the folk knowledge of lesser-studied languages • Use of mother tongues at schools as a subject and medium
2019/2076 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the language documentation centre in Language Commission premise • Establishment of the language lab for the research and study of languages
2020/2077 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making language act in the provinces to make regulations of the use of the other languages than Nepali in provinces • Conducting the language survey for determining the number of languages spoken in Nepal • Use of the local language in local administrative units
2022/2079 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting multilingual language policy in legislative, executive, and judiciary • Adopting programs that encourage intergenerational language transmission
2023/2080 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making language act at national level • Adopting multilingual policy at all levels of government, viz. federal, province, and local levels

⁸ This table highlights some recommendation that are relevant to this thematic report.

Reports of language commission/Years	Major recommendations
2024/2081 B.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanism needed to implement the language policy at province and local level • Study on cross-border languages needed

Source: Language Commission Annual reports from 2017 to 2024

1.8 Methodology

This thematic report is mainly based on the data obtained from the 2021 census. As previously mentioned, three questions were posed in the census relating to language: the questions on mother tongue, second language, and the ancestor’s languages. The data were cross-tabulated to find interface of the mother tongues, and other areas, such as age, place of the speakers’ birth, bi/multilingualism, literacy, their educational attainment, economic activities, among others. The data for previous censuses is used to investigate changes in first or main home language reporting, and the 1996 and 2011 censuses data is used to describe trends in bilingualism.

The report follows Greenberg’s (1956, p. 109) formula for calculating the linguistic diversity index, which is similarly employed in other studies, such as Weinreich (1957), Luebbering, Kolivras, and Prisley (2013) among others.

The report employed strict methodology to measure the linguistic diversity index. The linguistic diversity is calculated following Greenberg’s (1956) approach. The data set used in this section comes from the national censuses of Nepal – Census 2001, Census 2011 and Census 2021 – on the basis of the information associated with the mother tongues. It accounts for multiple languages within an area. The linguistic diversity index (LDI) was calculated using the following formula:

$$A = 1 - \sum(P_i)^2$$

Where P = the proportion of the population speaking language, i and i = 1 to n, where n equals the total number of languages.⁹

⁹ Greenberg (1956, p. 109) explains the diversity index in the following words, “If from a given area we choose two members of the population at random, the probability that these two individuals speak the same language can be considered a measure of its linguistic diversity. If everyone speaks the same language, the probability that two such individuals speak the same language is obviously 1, or certainty. If each individual speaks a different language, the probability is zero. Since we are measuring diversity rather than uniformity, this measure may be subtracted from 1, so that our index will vary from 0, indicating no diversity, to 1, indicating total diversity.”

The index calculates the value by subtracting the sum of squares from one. The higher the value, the greater the linguistic diversity. In reality, a score of one is mathematically impossible. In order to score the value of one, every individual would need to speak a different language, i.e., every person should have a different mother tongue. The diversity index shows that there might be a complete homogeneity to complete heterogeneity.

Three models have been used for logistic regression. The first logistic regression examines the socio-cultural and economic factors that influence speaking Nepali as mother tongue. The second logistic regression presents the conditions that influence speaking the second language. The third logistic regression looks at the socio-economic variables that influence the people to speak a single language. The socio-economic issues are regressed with socio-economic characteristics of the speakers. The reference categories have been manually added. Since the data refer to census data, the only interesting output is the odds ratio, indicating the direction and magnitude of the relation between independent and dependent variables. Standard errors and confidence intervals are not considered for analysis.

1.9 Data quality

Most of the language data obtained corresponds to earlier censuses. There are however inconsistencies in naming the languages and enumerating them. Empirical studies on individual languages help assess the quality and reliability of the data.

To some extent, inconsistencies also result from one census to the next. The enumeration of the languages should also be confirmed with the other sources of language enumeration, such as *Ethnologue*, and global platforms of the languages of the world such as *Glottologue*.

There are some cases in which it is not possible to speak with certainty as to whether a mother tongue is truly enumerated. The problems are associated with the nomenclature of languages. There are two distinct languages which show resemblance in naming, such as Mugom and Mugali. Both of these languages belong to the TB language family. The Mugom language is also reported as Mugom Tibetan in some references (Genetti, 2016). The Mugali language, a language of Rai group, is sometimes noted as extinct (Hansson, 1991, p. 111). The census data show that both of these languages are enumerated as Mugali. Similarly, while there is a single category for a language Lowa, there exist two language fields of Lhopa (2,384), and Lowa (648). The speakers of both of these languages concentrate in Mustang district. In this district, the total number of enumerated Lhopa speakers is 1,974 whereas Lowa speakers are at 440. Another example concerns speakers of Bote in She-Phoksundo Rural Municipality. The Bote speakers are mainly concentrated in the Gandaki Province, but are also present across Hill districts.

The rationale for selecting one's ancestor's language is difficult to justify. The respondent might not recall which language their ancestors may have used, yet all respondents respond to this

prompt with a perceived objectivity. In 2021, the “language of one’s ancestor” was added. The question seems to elicit hereditary characteristics of the speakers, without inquiring the languages they use.

It is to be noted that there are clear instructions about enumerating the languages and eliciting the language information in the census, as mentioned in the enumerators’ guide. This explains clearly how the enumerators should fill in the forms while enumerating the languages (CBS, 2021).

From the point of view of language analysis, the absence of language proficiency is a limitation of the relevance of census information. In previous analysis of the census data, for example in Yadava (2003; 2014), the ‘mother tongue’ is analyzed as the language which the speakers use most often, despite the concepts of mother tongues and language proficiency being two different concepts. The definition of mother tongue included in 2021 census does not include the notion of language proficiency. This has a number of implications in language planning and policy. Firstly, as mentioned in the Constitution of Nepal (2015), the official language in the provinces is based on the majority speakers of the mother tongues. This does not include the speakers’ proficiency of these languages. Secondly, the matter of teaching children in their mother tongue is an emerging issue in language planning. The idea of teaching the children in the language they know best is slightly different from the idea of teaching them in the language they learn first.

In addition, the questionnaire was not designed in a way to specify all disability types for persons with multiple disabilities, which could potentially include a disproportionate percentage of persons with disabilities.

1.10 Constitutional and legal safeguards

The Constitution of Nepal adopted several safeguards to protect all languages spoken in Nepal. All languages spoken as mother tongues in Nepal are the languages of the nation (Article 6). The constitution has given equal status to all the mother tongues spoken in Nepal. Secondly, it attempts to guarantee the small languages the right to use in education, offering the languages possibilities of the formal use.

Regarding the official language, the constitution mentions that the Nepali language in the Devanagari script shall be the official language of Nepal (Article 7.1). A State may, by a State law, determine one or more than one languages of the nation spoken by a majority of people within the State as its official language(s), in addition to the Nepali language (Article 7.2). Other matters relating to language shall be as decided by the Government of Nepal, on recommendation of the Language Commission (Article 7.3). More recently, Bagmati Province has issued its language

act that allows Tamang and Nepalbhasa (Newari) in the official use in the working areas of Bagmati Province (Language Act of Bagmati Province, 2023/ 2080 B.S.)¹⁰.

1.11 Delimitations of the report

The presentation in the thematic report is based on the 2021 census data. An attempt has been made to relate the language with a number of socio-cultural variables, such as castes/ethnic groups, and literacy. The census data does not provide information to discuss issues in other areas such as marriage, particularly exogamy and language. Conscious effort to relate language with other socio-economic variables included in the questions used in the census has been made.

1.12 Language and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Language is not directly mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), however the language question is visible in manifold contexts of language use, such as Quality Education (SDG 4), Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 14), and Good Governance (SDG 16). At least two SDGs are associated with language, these being Quality Education (SDG 4) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10).¹¹

The role of language is clearly linked to education and other ranges of contexts. The constitutional provision in Nepal (2072 B.S./2015) notes that: “Every Nepalese community residing in Nepal shall have the right to get education in its mother tongue and, for that purpose, to open and operate schools and educational institutes, in accordance with law” (Article 31.5). Mother tongue education has been underscored in the functions of the Language Commission formed after the Constitution of Nepal was promulgated. One of the functions assigned to the Language Commission was to measure the levels of development of mother tongues and make suggestions to the Government of Nepal, on the potentiality of their use in education (Article 287.4.c). Language is both the subject and medium of instruction in Nepal. UNESCO (1951) notes that it is best to teach the children in their mother tongue and if children are not given the opportunities to learn in their mother tongues, the children are not treated fairly. In some cases, language becomes the means of a barrier in their learning process and this can be associated with marginalization. There is thus an interrelation between quality and equity in education. Conversely, if access to education is not permitted, inequalities are seen to increase. Therefore, SDG 4 and SDG 10 are related to languages in the context of Nepal. Additionally, those with language disabilities face inequality in ranges of spheres in their daily lives. Thus, SDG 16 and its association with peace, justice, and strong institutions is also relevant in this context.

¹⁰ The Act was certified on November 9, 2023.

¹¹ Fettes (2023) discusses a number of issues associated with SDGs.

1.13 International decade of Indigenous languages

The United Nations has proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032). The International Decade is a key outcome of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages and Nepal has formed action plan in order to mark the celebration of this decade. The action plan aims to help the Indigenous people to help them document, promote, and revitalize their languages. In the report submitted by the task force, a number of activities associated with the documentation, preservation, and promotion of Indigenous languages are included. The broad activities and the program are associated with the use of Indigenous languages in the transactions of the government across legislative, executive and judiciary branches.

As a member state of the United Nations, Nepal is committed to upholding this declaration. In response, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation has developed a national action plan outlining a strategic framework for preserving, revitalizing, and promoting the 93 indigenous languages.¹² This plan will be implemented through collaboration between national government organizations, Indigenous peoples' institutions, research bodies, and various public and private partners operating at national and local levels. Other activities are related to the promotion, preservation, their capacity building, using them in technology, and their corpus development. In brief, languages should be given the public space for use in various domains.

Through its Legislative Parliament in 2007, Nepal has approved the ratification of the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (No. 169), adopted by the ILO in 1989. This convention mandates the protection of Indigenous peoples' rights, including the right to use their languages in education and other critical areas. Convention No. 169 is the only legally binding instrument specifically addressing Indigenous peoples' rights globally. In the countries which have ratified the convention, it has provided a framework for constitutional and legal reforms, fostering the development of more equitable and inclusive societies.¹³

1.14 Writing systems and literate tradition

A large number of languages spoken in Nepal are still confined to their oral traditions. Each of them has a rich oral heritage of traditional folk stories and songs handed down from parent to child over a long period (Yadava, 2003, pp. 6-7). Nepali, Newari, Maithili, Limbu, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi are languages with written traditions (NLPRC, 1994, p. 12). Only a few of Nepal's

¹² International decade of Indigenous languages, a National action plan, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation 2024.

¹³ <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/nepal-ratifies-ilo-convention-indigenous-and-tribal-peoples--rights>

indigenous languages have literary traditions. Tibetan and Sherpa are two of the Tibeto-Burman languages with the earliest written records (van Driem, 2001, p. 428). The languages closely affiliated to Tibetan face the choice of ‘multiscriptal’ situation in Nepal (Chamberlain, 2008, p.117). Nepali, Newari, and Maithili are the subjects of studies at university education upto Master’s level. Some script used in writing the languages of Nepal are given in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Writing systems used in Nepal

S.N.	Scripts	User communities
1	Devanagari	Nepali, and more recently, Tharu, Rajbanshi, and a subset of the Rai group of languages
2	Ranjana ¹⁴	Nepalbhāsa (Newari)
3	Mithilakshar, Tirhuta, Kaithi	Maithili
3	Sirianga	Yakthung/Limbu and other Rai Kirati groups ¹⁵
4	Rong	Lepcha
5	Sambhota, Tamyig	Tamang
6	Akkha	Magar
	Khema	Gurung
7	Roman	Santhali, Gurung [more recently]
8	Bengali	Bangla
9	Ol Chiki (Ol Chemet/ Ol)	Santhali
10	Arabi	Urdu
11	Gurumukhi	Punjabi

Source: Bandhu, 2074

The Devanagari script is used by non-Nepali languages from the Tibeto-Burman groups, such as Tamang, Gurung, and some Rai-Kirati languages. However, these languages have developed their own writing systems. For instance, Wambule was traditionally written in Devanagari but is now shifting to Kirat Sirijanga script (Bandhu, (ed.), p. 29).

In the last decade, dictionaries and grammars of the lesser-described languages have been written. The text books have been prepared in order to teach the children in their mother tongues. Such materials have been developed by Curriculum Development Center under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Nepal. The languages include:

¹⁴ Some other scripts are also used in Newari, such as Golmol, Litumol, Kwemol, Kunmol, Hinmol, Pachumol. See Bandhu (2074 B.S.) for details.

¹⁵ Rai et al. (2078) proposed the common alphabet for the Kirati languages.

Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tamang, Limbu, Bantawa Rai, Chamling Rai, Sherpa, Gurung, Magar, Nepalbhasha (Newari), Tharu, Sunuwar, Rajbanshi, Yakkha, Mugali, Tharu (Middle area), Tamang (Sambhota), Dhimal, Magar (Athar), Bajjika, Kulung, Chepang, Khaling Rai, Rana Tharu (based on Early Grade Reading Program), Majhi, Urdu, Mundhum Limbu language.¹⁶

Similarly, some pages are set aside in Gorkhapatra, the Nepali language government daily newspaper, to publish the materials in the mother tongues in the languages of Nepal. Gorkhapatra daily began to publish the pages in other languages than Nepali on 2064 Ashoj 1 B.S. (18 September 2007) after adding the page title 'New Nepal' to its pages. This daily newspaper now publishes the materials in a total of 44 languages. The languages include:

Tamang, Maithili, Limbu, Gurung, Rai, Nepalbhasha (Newari), Urdu, Tharu, Bhojpuri, Sherpa, Jirel, Thangmi, Kisan, Tajpuriya, Bahing, Bantawa, Awadhi, Sunuwar, Magar, Dhimal, Bajjika, Kumar, Magahi, Baram, Sanskrit, Uraun, Majhi, Mugali (Mugal), Achhami, Dotyali, Darai, Meche, Jumli, Chepang, Marwari, Lhomi, Rajbanshi, Danuwar, Bajhang, Yohlmo, Yakkha, Dadeldhuri, Nepal Bhote (Bhote), and Rana Tharu (Gorkhapatra daily, October 21, 2024).

1.15 Structure of the thematic report

This thematic report is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides the background to the thematic report. It also discusses the questions used in the national censuses in the light of the questions used in census reporting in other countries. Similarly, the second chapter briefly presents and analyzes data obtained from 2021 census. This section discusses the enumeration of data on mother tongues, second languages and the language of ancestor in temporal and spatial contexts. The third chapter demonstrates the language situation in the provinces, districts, and in local levels in brief. The analysis of the relationship between language with other interrelated themes, such as language and gender, and literacy is presented in chapter four. The fifth chapter presents the key findings and policy implications.

¹⁶ Tummyahang (2080, p. 4), and personal communication, Kumar Ghimire, Curriculum Development Center, MoEST, November 8, 2024.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE ENUMERATION

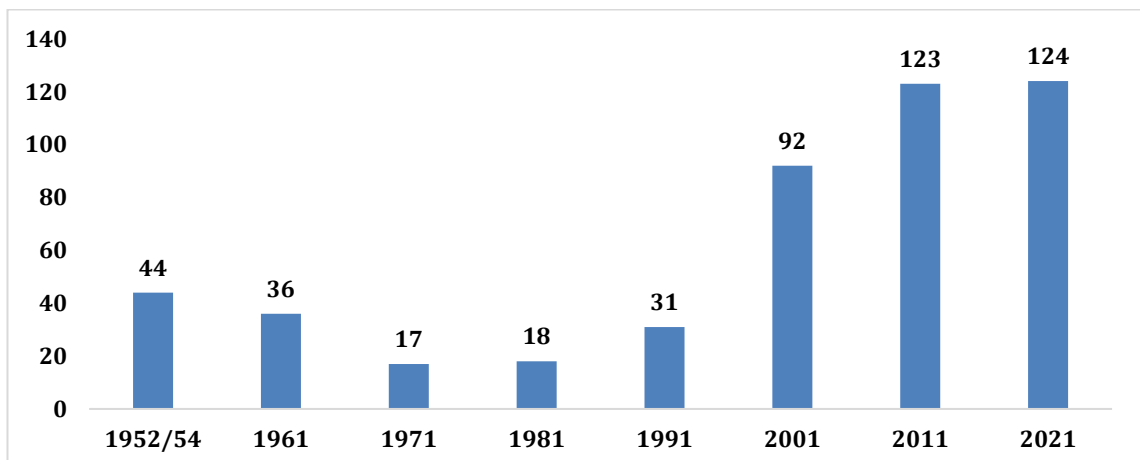
2.1 Outline

This chapter presents a number of issues associated with the language enumeration in the 2021 census, comparing the data with previous censuses, and comprises the enumeration of languages based on language families. This is followed by the description of the recently reported languages in 2021 census, to which the description of languages is stated in terms of the size of the speakers. Following this, the distribution of the languages is presented in the next section, which presents the mother tongues according to the age of the speakers and the language retention for highlighting how the degree of bilingualism varies across the provinces and the districts. The language of ancestors and its relation with mother tongue is analyzed in the next section. Finally, linguistic diversity indexes of the last three censuses (namely 2001, 2011, 2021 census data) is calculated and presented.

2.2 Mother tongue enumeration

Aside from data recorded as ‘others’ and ‘not stated’, the 2021 census reported 124 mother tongue languages. Prior to this, the past six censuses recorded a varying number of languages in Nepal, as follows: 44 (1952/54); 36 (1961); 17 (1971); 18 (1981); 31 (1991); 92 (2001); 123 (2011); and 124 (2021) (NSO, 2021 and Yadava, 2024). The data is further reflected in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Number of mother tongues reported in different censuses



Source: Table (2.1)

The varying number of languages recorded in the decadal censuses may be attributed to several reasons. As previously mentioned, the decrease in the number of languages in 1971 and 1981 censuses can be attributed to the monolingual 'one language, one nation' ideology of the nation and this exclusionary state policy. Conversely, the increase in the number of languages in 2001 can be attributed to awareness amongst the ethnic communities about their languages and identity (Yadava, 2014, p. 53).

One reason for the increase or decrease in the census data rates is attributed to the 'unhelpful language names' previously mentioned in the censuses (Malla, 1979, p. 136). Some languages recorded in the 1952/54 census were not precisely included as they are categorized as broadly defined language groups spoken over specific languages – for example, 'Eastern Tarai Dialects', 'Mid-Western Tarai Dialects', 'Maithili Pradesh Dialects'. Each of these terms include a larger group of languages spoken in each specific geographical territory and stands as one of the reasons why particular languages were not included in 1961 census. Similarly, the Byansi, Hayu and Bote languages which were included in 1952/54 census questions were not enumerated in the 1961 census.

The recorded number of languages increased from 92 to 123 in 2011 census data. The increase in the number of languages in this census can be attributed to the socio-political changes during this period. The constitutional assembly could not promulgate the constitution within the time frame during the time the census was undertaken. Additionally, the debate revolved round the language and culture of Indigenous people during this period and Indigenous people expressed interest in identifying as 'distinct' in terms of their language and culture, owing to distinct identity.

The newly reported languages in 2011 can be broadly categorized into three groups. Firstly, native languages were mentioned for the first time, including languages such as Athpariya, Belhare, Manange of the TB language family and languages such as Malpande and Sonaha of the IA language families. Secondly, a number of IA languages spoken in western Nepal were named after their district names. Many speakers in Achham self-reported their language as Achhami, and many speakers in Doti self-reported their language as Doteli. Achhami, Dailekhi, Dadeldhuri, Bajureli, Darchuleli, Bajhang, Baitadeli, and Doteli are the languages which were classified in this category. Thirdly, international languages spoken largely in foreign countries such as Russian, French, and Arabic were also reported as mother tongues.

The 2021 census records 124 languages spoken in Nepal, including the language used by deaf communities. Some languages with a small number of speakers, and some other languages which are mainly spoken in neighboring (foreign) countries, are categorized under 'other'

languages.¹⁷ The number of speakers of ‘others’ and ‘not’ is small in number, at a figure of 4,203 and 346 respectively.

2.3 Language families

The languages spoken in Nepal and enumerated in the 2021 census mainly belong to four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Additionally, Kusunda, a language isolate, is spoken by a small linguistic group. Sign language (SL) used by the deaf community is attributed to Asian Sign language (Sinha, 2003). Overall, there are no disagreements associated with the classification of languages despite differing opinions regarding the actual number of languages spoken in Nepal. The number of speakers and the percentages of the language groups from 1952/54 to 2021 is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Population of language families (1952/54-2021)

S.N.	Mother tongues	1952/54	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
1	Indo European	63,51,899	74,49,604	90,62,435	1,24,17,886	1,47,01,283	1,79,82,769	2,17,53,009	2,42,27,411
	%	77.1	79.1	78.4	82.7	79.5	79.1	82.1	83.1
2	Sino-Tibetan	17,95,337	18,13,083	19,82,635	18,11,944	30,98,698	41,83,995	45,84,523	48,37,808
	%	21.1	19.3	17.2	12.1	16.8	18.4	17.3	16.6
3	Austro-Asiatic	16,751	29,485	23,853	28,208	33,332	40,260	49,858	55,916
	%	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
4	Dravidian	-	-	-	-	15,175	28,615	33,651	38,873
	%	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
5	Others	70,340	1,14,392	4,87,060	7,64,802	6,48,627	28,615	25,745	3,799
	%	0.9	1.2	4.2	5.1	3.5	0.1	0.1	0.0
6	Not Stated	752	6,432	-	-	9,157	5,03,295	47,718	4,201
	%	0.0	0.1	-	-	0.1	2.2	0.2	100.0
Total		82,35,079	94,12,996	1,15,55,983	1,50,22,839	1,84,91,097	2,27,38,934	2,64,94,504	2,91,64,578

Source: Yadava (2014, NSO 2021).

¹⁷ NSO (2021) mentions about the review process of the languages as “Newly reported language information has undergone a thorough review process involving stakeholders and subject experts. Some of the foreign languages published in census 2011 census have been included under “Other language” category in 2021 census. The published data is derived from respondents' responses and conclusive findings obtained from expert reviews.”

A slight increase in mother tongue languages in the total population of Indo-European speakers is seen in 2021 (83.03%) compared to 2011 (82.1%) (Table 2.1, Figure 2.2). Conversely, there is a decline in the number of ST language speakers. The population of the remaining language families does not change as the speakers of other languages is not sizeable. The percentage of Dravidian language representation in this census is exactly the same as in the last census. Collectively, Sign language, other languages, and the languages not mentioned in the census constitute a small percentage of the total population.

Figure 2.2: Population of Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan languages (1952/54-2021)

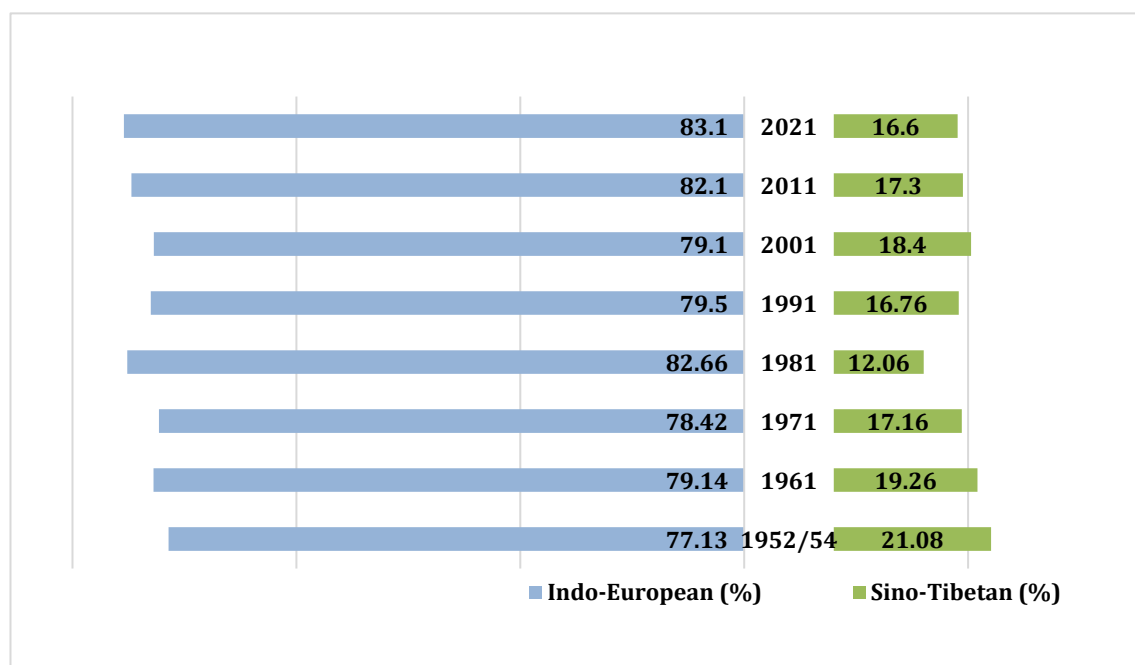


Figure source: <Table 2.1>

The Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in Nepal comprise a total of 75 languages, constituting the most diverse group in terms of the number of languages. On the other hand, a total of 45 Indo-Aryan languages are spoken in Nepal, with a share of the largest number of speakers (Table 2.1). There is a sub-grouping of the languages as they spread geographically across different ecological zones, and from the east to the west of Nepal.

2.3.1 Indo-European languages

The Indo-European languages, consisting of 83.1 percent of the total population, are the largest language family spoken in Nepal in terms of the speakers of languages. Owing to the large size of the language, it is spoken in all provinces and in all ecological zones. Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu and Bajjika belonging to this group and have a population of more than one million. Aside

from Nepali, Maithili is mainly dominant in eastern and central Tarai, and in Bhojpuri in the central Tarai (Maps 3.1, 3.2).

Only a few languages are included in Grierson's classification of Indo-Aryan languages, as mentioned in Masica (1991, p. 449), such as Nepali, Maithili, Magahi, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi (Avadhi). A more complete detailing of the genetic affiliation of the IA languages spoken in Nepal is presented in Yadava (2003, p. 145). The genetic affiliation of English and Sanskrit is not provided here as their classification is well-established.

With the broader overview presented in Masica (1991), the genetic affiliation of IA languages spoken in Nepal is presented in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Genetic classification of Indo-Aryan languages (Masica, 1991, p. 449)

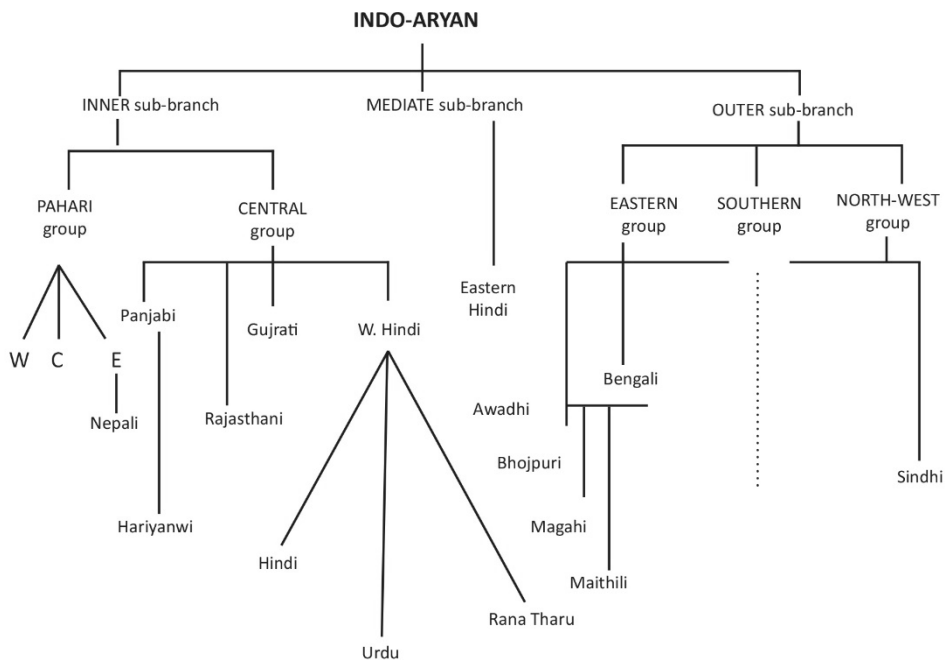


Figure source: <Masica, 1991, p. 449, adapted>

In Grierson's classification (Figure 2.3), Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi belong to the Bihari group of Eastern Indo-Aryan languages. The other languages belong to the broader Eastern group of Bengali. The grammatical descriptions of some languages are available and reveal that these languages belong to the same group. These languages include Bajjika, Darai, Majhi, Tharu (Chitonia) and Danuwar, including Done and Kisan (see details Yadava et al., forthcoming).

Geographically, Angika and Kewarat are spoken close to Maithili-speaking areas, although their genetic affiliation is yet to be established.¹⁸

Figure 2.4: Genetic classification of Eastern Indo-Aryan languages

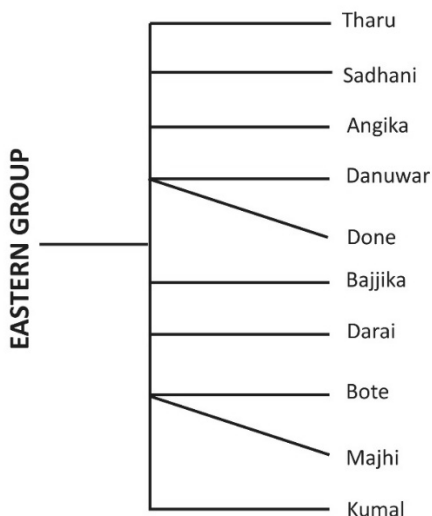


Figure source: <Tb7 Notes>

Sonaha is a language spoken along with Tharu varieties, such as Rana Tharu and Kathriya Tharu in western Tarai (Figure 2.3). This language is presumed to be associated with Tharu varieties. Hindi, Urdu, and Musalban belong to one inner sub-branch of Indo-Aryan languages and central group.

The genetic affiliation of some IA languages mentioned in 2011 and 2021 censuses are difficult to establish. The languages in this category include Achhami, Dailekhi, Dadeldhuri, Bajureli, Baitadeli, Doteli, Jumli, and Khas. They were first reported in the 2011 census and still lack adequate descriptions and comparable linguistic evidence. These languages seem to be closer to central group of Pahari group of languages, with the exception of Khas, which is closer to Eastern group of the inner sub-Branch.

2.3.2 Sino-Tibetan languages

The most diverse language group spoken in Nepal is Tibeto-Burman of Sino-Tibetan languages (also referred to as Trans-Himalayan languages).¹⁹ A total of 73 languages constituted this group in the 2021 census. The term Tibeto-Burman refers to all the languages except Chinese (Matisoff,

¹⁸ Kisan is reported as Indo-Aryan language in Nepal (Mahato, 2014). It is, however, to be noted that Kisan, a North Dravidian language is spoken in India (Steever, 1998, p. 3).

¹⁹ See details (van Driem, 2014).

1991, 470; Thurgood, 2017, p. 5) (Figure 2.5). Despite being one of the greatest language families in the world (Matisoff, 1991, p. 470), only eight of these languages have more than 100,000 speakers (NSO, 2021). The Tibeto-Burman languages and their population is given in Annex 1 and the main grouping of Tibeto-Burman languages are given in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Broader classification of Sino-Tibetan languages (Matisoff, 1991)

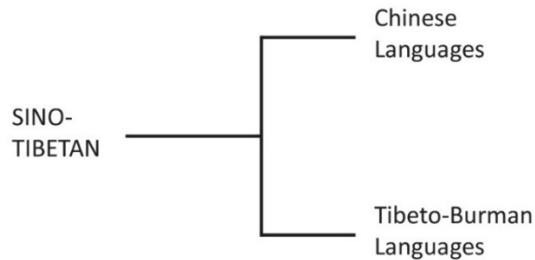


Figure source: <Matisoff, 1991, p. 470>

The TB languages spoken in the Himalayas have been classified by a number of scholars, such as Bradley (1997), Genetti (2016), LaPolla and Thurgood (2018), and DeLancey (2021), among others. The genetic relationship of some languages are well-established whereas the classification of some languages are yet to be decided. Bradley (1997) proposes the classification of TB languages via sub-groupings, as given in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: Classification of TB languages (Bradley, 1997)

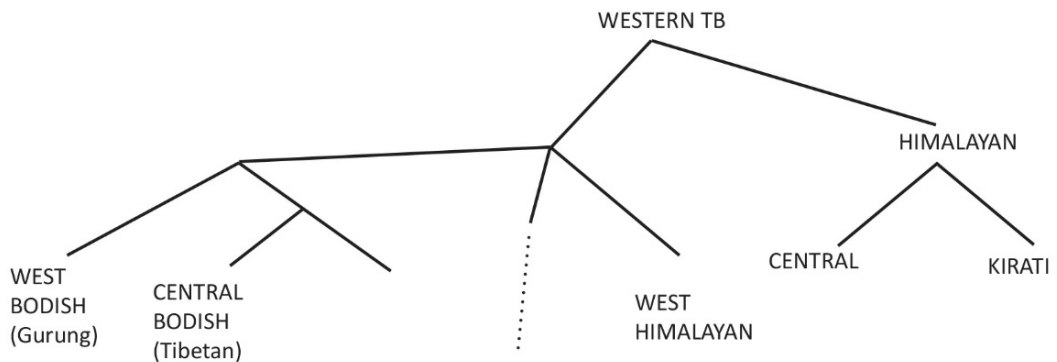


Figure source: <Bradley, 1997, p. 3>

Central Bodish (Tibetan)

The central Bodish languages consist of around 10 languages (Figure 2.7). All of these languages are mentioned under ‘Nepal-Tibet Border’ in Genetti (2016). In Bradley’s classification, these languages are grouped as Central Bodish (Tibetan) and gTsang. The languages which fall in this group as enumerated in the 2021 census are: Sherpa, Bhote, Jirel, Tibetan, Chum/Nubri, Dolpali, Karmarong, Lhopa, Lowa, Kagate, Waling/Walung, and Lhomi.²⁰

Figure 2.7: Central Bodish languages

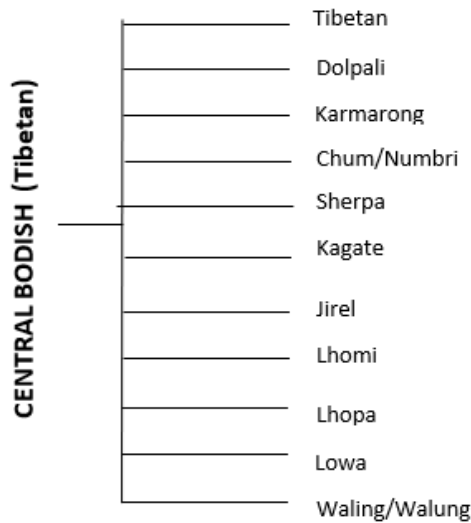


Figure source: <Bradley, 1997, p. 10, adapted>

West Bodish (Gurung, Tamang) group

This group consists of 10 languages, with inclusion of some larger TB languages such as Tamang and Thakali. It is assumed that the Baragunwa language, reported for the first time in 2021, is close to Thakali. The preliminary lexicon shows that Nar-Phu, spoken in Manang, resembles Tamang to some extent. The Nar-Phu language is spoken in two main villages, Nar and Phu, in Manang (Figure 2.8).

²⁰ Bielmeier (2008) lists all the Tibetan dialects, which also includes all the languages mentioned above. Although the name Dolpo is used to refer to a Tibetan dialect spoken in Dolpa, the Nepali name Dolpali is used in the census.

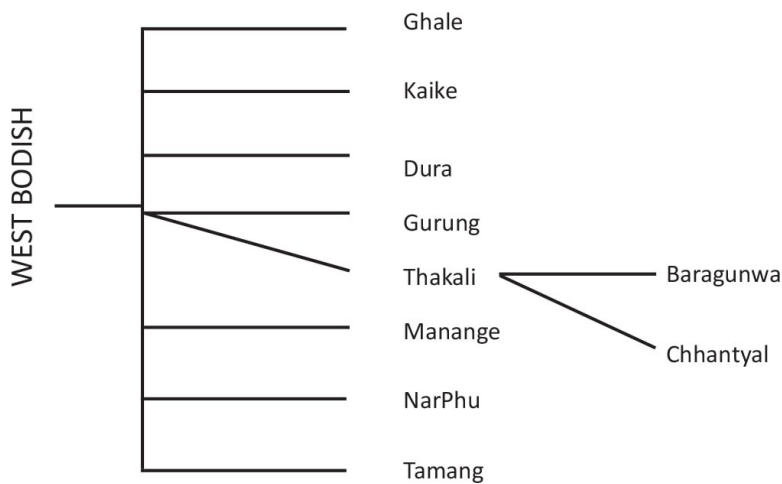
Figure 2.8: West Bodish languages

Figure source: <Bradley, 1997, p. 10, adapted>

As shown in Figure 2.8, the languages belonging to this group are Ghale, Kaike, Dura, Gurung, Thakali, Manange, NarPhu, Tamang, Baragunwa, and Chhantyal. It is to be noted that Baragunwa was reported for the first time in the 2021 census. Tichorong Poike is presumed to be close to Kaike in preliminary studies, although further evidence is still needed to support this claim.²¹

West Himalayish (Kannauri)

The languages under this group are spoken in far western Nepal, in bordering areas between Nepal and India. The languages classified under the Almora group are Byansi and Dhuleli. Since Dhuleli was reported for the first time in the 2011 census, only preliminary information about the language is available. Hammarström, Forkel, Haspelmath and Bank (2023) propose that Dhuleli belongs to the West-Himalayish group and is closely related to Byangshi.

The other two languages that are included under ‘Eastern Nepal group’ are Baram and Thangmi (Figure 2.9).

²¹ Magar Kaike enumerated in census 2021, was enumerated merely as Kaike in 2011 census.

Figure 2.9: West Himalayish languages

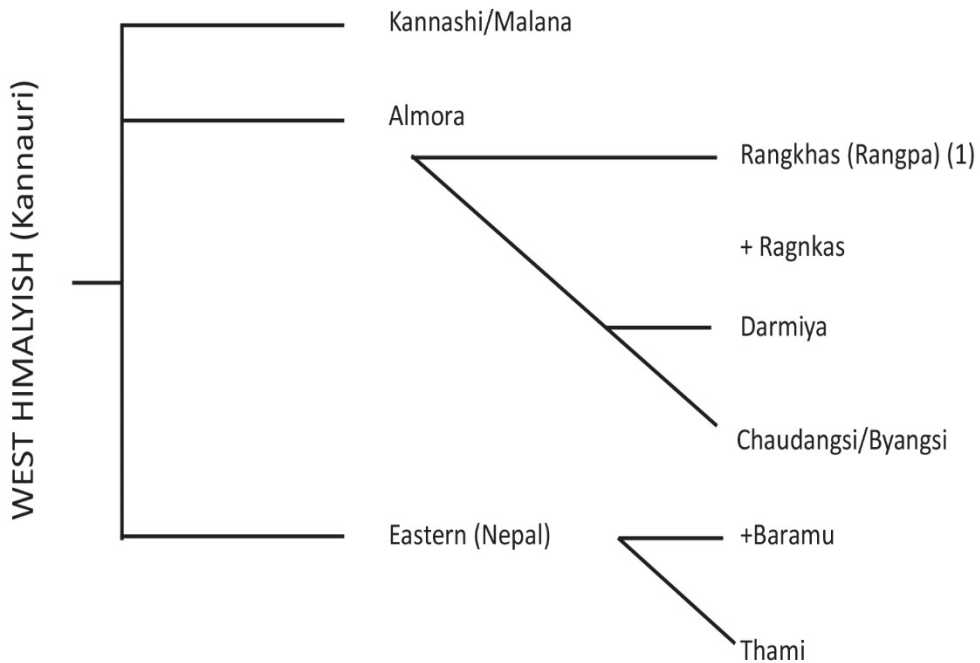


Figure source: <Bradley, 1997, p. 13, adapted>

Himalayan

Bradley (1997) includes Himalayan and Central Himalayan in this subgroup:

Central Himalayan

With Bradley’s (1997) classification, there are two main branches within the Himalayan group of TB. The first is the central Himalayan languages consisting of Magar Dhut and Magar Kham. Chepang and Bhujel form one more group with Central Himalayan languages.

Owing to the lack of the description of the Raji and Raute, their classifications have been doubted in some studies, such as Bradley (1991, p. 17) and Thurgood (2018, p. 30). Both of these languages reveal features which indicate that they are belong to TB languages and are therefore closely affiliated to this group (Magar) (Figure 2.10)²².

²² There are some recent references on Raji, such as Dhakal (2019) and Khadka (2006).

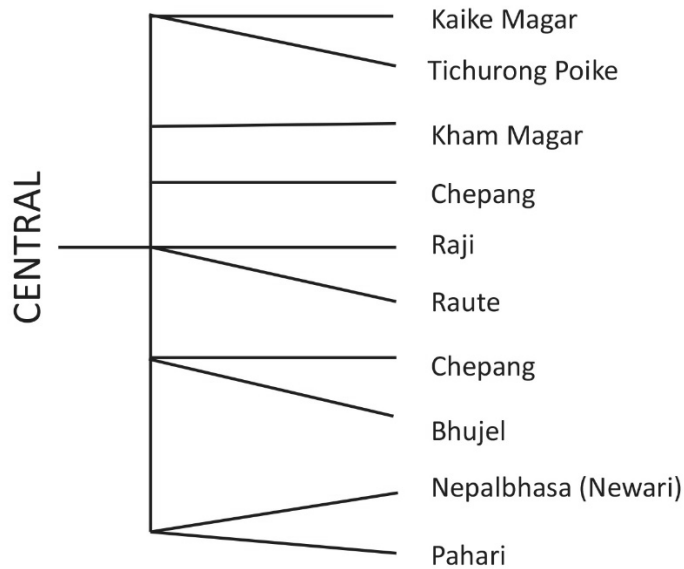
Figure 2.10: Central Himalayan languages

Figure source: <Bradley, 1997, p. 16, adapted>

Kirati

A total of 27 languages belonging to the Kiranti group are reported in the 2021 census. Aside from Bradley (1991), van Driem (2001) and Hansson (1991) offer further information on their genetic classification and sociolinguistic situations (Figure 2.11).

There are several proposals regarding the genetic affiliations of Kirati (also spelled as Kiranti) languages to which Genetti (2016, p. 141) proposes further classification.²³

Dhimalish

The genetic relationship of Dhimal, spoken in eastern Tarai, is associated with Toto, spoken in India. Whilst there is an argument that Dhimal and Toto form a subgroup (DeLancey, 2021, p. 211; Genetti, 2016, p. 116), there are also more recent proposals which suggest the close phylogenetic relationship between Lhokpu and Dhimal (Grollmann & Gerber, 2018).

2.3.3 Austro-Asiatic (AA) languages

All Austro-Asiatic (AA) languages spoken in Nepal belong to its Munda sub-group (Anderson, 2008, p. 4). Only the three AA languages of Santhali, Munda (Mudiyari) and Khariya are reported in this census.

Table 2.2: Austro-Asiatic Languages, NPHC 2021

S.N.	Languages	Total	Male	Female
1.	Santhali	26,094	27,583	53,677
2.	Munda/Mudiyari	1,012	1,095	2,107
3.	Khariya	63	69	132
	Total	27,169	28,747	55,916

The Munda languages are further classified into North and South Munda groups. Santhali and Mundari belong to the Kherwarian branch of North Munda group, whereas Kharia belongs to the Kharia-Juang subgroup of the South Munda group (see Yadava, 2003, p. 147). The genetic affiliation of Munda languages are given in Figure 2.12.

²³ For example, Genetti cites van Driem (2001, p. 615) and makes four subgroups of the Kiranti languages: They include: (a) **Limbu: Eastern Limbu** (Pāñcthare, Tamarkhole); **Western Limbu** (Phedāppe, Chathare); (b) **Eastern Kiranti- Greater Yakkha** (Yakkha, Chiling, Āṭhpahariyā); **Upper Arun** (Lohorung, Yamphu, Mewahang); (c) **Central Kiranti- Khambu**: Kulung, Nachiring, Sampang, Sām; **Southern** (Camling, Puma, Bantawa, Chintang, Dungmali); (d) **Western Kiranti- Midwestern** (Thulung), **Chaurasiya** (Ombule, Jero); **Upper Dudhkhoi** (Dumi, Khaling, Kohi) **Northwestern** (Bahing, Sunwar, Hayu).

Figure 2.12: Genetic affiliation of Munda languages

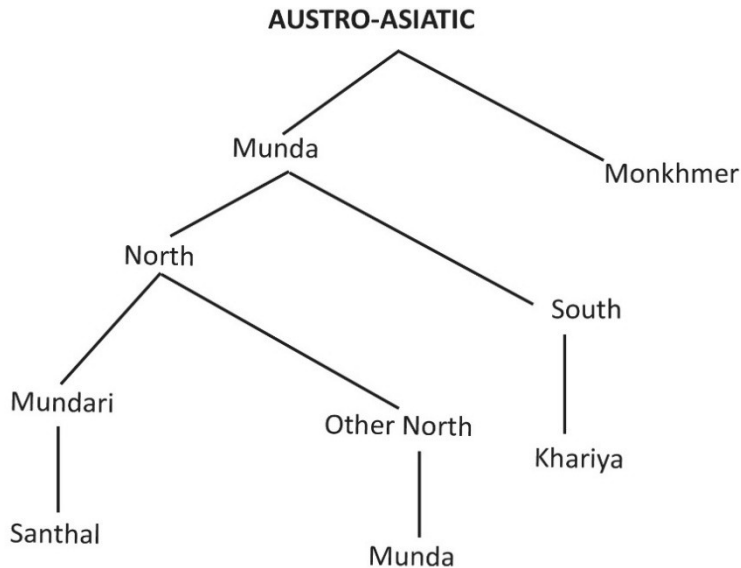


Figure source: <Anderson, 2008, p.4>

2.3.4 Others

Some languages spoken and used in Nepal belong to the Dravidian language family, a language isolate, and to the Sign language group used in Nepal.

Oraon (also spelled as Uranw/Urau, or Kurux) is the only Dravidian language spoken in Nepal by a total of 38,873 people. Oraon belongs to the North Dravidian language of the Proto-Dravidian languages and its close neighbours are Malto and Brahui. It is mainly spoken in Sunsari (with 13,125 speakers), Morang (3,494 speakers), and Jhapa (801 speakers) districts. The classification of Oraon in Nepal is presented in Figure (2.13) (Krishnamurty, 2003, p.19, Yadava, 2003, p. 147; Kolichala, 2016, p. 76).

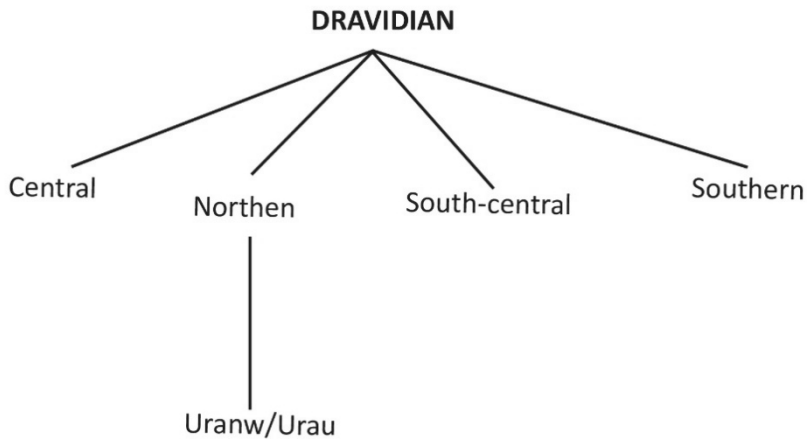
Figure 2.13: Genetic classification of Dravidian languages

Figure source: <Yadava, 2003, p. 147>

Sign language is enumerated in national censuses under slightly different nomenclatures. For example, the 2001 census enumerates the language as ‘Nepali Sign Language’, whereas it is enumerated under ‘Sign Language’ in 2011 and 2021 censuses. Sign languages are largely used by the deaf communities as mother tongues, in addition to a limited number of speakers who use this as a second language. A total of 4,476 people use Sign language as mother tongue in the 2011 census, and 35 as the second language. Similarly, 1,184 people reported Sign language as their mother tongue in 2021, and 828 people used SL as the second language (Yadava 2014, NSO, 2021).

The Sign language used in Nepal belongs to the Indo-Pakistani group of Sign languages, with other members being Indian Sign Language, and Pakistani Sign Language, which is further affiliated to Asian Sign language. Sign language in Nepal is used by 71 different caste/ethnic groups and by caste groups that speak both IA and TB languages. The Sign language is mainly used by Kshetri (239), Brahman-Hill (184), Magar (163), Rai (196), Kulung (103), Bishwokarma (85), Tamang (91), Tharu (85) and Newa/Newar (83) groups. All other caste/ethnic groups who use Sign language are below 50 in number.²⁴ The Sign language is used by different ethnic communities without showing any direct link with caste/ethnic groups and language families (Table, 4.1).²⁵

²⁴ Assuming that sign language is used by people with a hearing impairment, one may assume that the distribution is proportionate to the caste distribution.

²⁵ Several references mention the sign languages which are present in Nepal. As reported in Jaspen, De Clerck, Lutalo-Kiingi, and McGregor (2015), there are as many as four sign languages of Nepal: Jumla

2.4 Newly reported languages in 2021

Some languages enumerated as mother tongues in the 2011 census are not mentioned in the 2021 census. These languages include Arabic (8), Spanish (16), Russian (17) and French (34).²⁶ Additionally, some languages such as Dzonkha, Mizo, Kuki, Assamese, Oriya, Garhwali and Nagamese (spoken in India), as well as Chinese, have not been included in this census.

2021 census data sees the introduction of new languages. Some TB languages, such as NarPhu, Chum-Nubri, Mugali, Karmarong, TichurongPoike and Baragaunwa of the ST language family have been enumerated for the first time in the 2021 census. The first two languages among these, NarPhu and Chum-Nubri, are further found in other linguistic resources. The distribution of Mugali is mainly concentrated in Pakhribas Urban Municipality (598) of Dhankuta, and MuguKarmarong Rural Municipality (1,550) in Mugu (2,834). Lhopa and Lowa are mainly concentrated in Mustang.²⁷ Karmarong, a newly reported language, is mainly concentrated in Mugu district. NarPhu is largely present in Manang, Chum/Nubri in Gorkha and TichurongPoike in Dolpa districts respectively. Baragaunwa is exclusively spoken in Mustang.

Marwari, Done, Kewarat and Sadri are enumerated for the first time in 2021 census data. Tharu as a single language is mentioned in both of the previous censuses (Yadava, 2014; Yadava 2011). The Done language, enumerated in Nepal for the first time, is concentrated in Udaypur, Sindhupalchowk and Kavrepalanchowk.

2.5 Major languages in the last four censuses

Some of the larger languages in the 2021 census show an increased number, whereas some others show a decrease in speakers. The five major languages with the greatest number of speakers in the last four censuses are shown in Table 2.3.

Sign Language, Jhankot Sign Language, Nepalese Sign Language, and Ghandruk Sign Language. Sinha (2003) notes that the Nepali Sign Language (NSL) is closely related to Pakistani SL, which includes Indian SL and Pakistani SL, and falls broadly under Asian SLs. This is also supported by other evidence, such as Zeshan (2003).

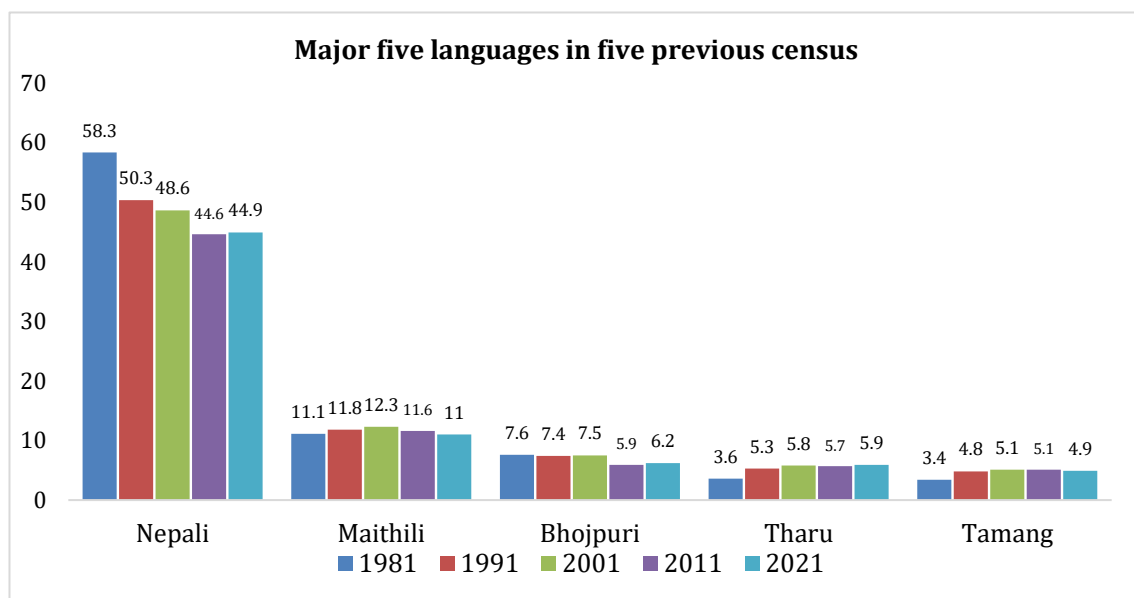
²⁶ Despite the statistically small number, these languages were listed as mother tongues in the 2011 census.

²⁷ This seems to be a single language except for slight variation in naming.

Table 2.3: Major five languages in the last five censuses, NPHC 2021

Major languages	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Nepali	58.3	50.3	48.6	44.6	44.9
Maithili	11.1	11.8	12.3	11.6	11.0
Bhojpuri	7.6	7.4	7.5	5.9	6.2
Tharu	3.6	5.3	5.8	5.7	5.9
Tamang	3.4	4.8	5.1	5.1	4.9
Total population	15,022,839	18,491,097	22,736,934	26,494,504	29,164,578

The six major languages of the last five censuses are Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri and Tharu of Indo-European languages and Tamang and Newar of the TB language family. Nepali remains the dominant language in all of these censuses (Table 2.3), at a rate of 58.3 percent in 1981 and a decreased rate of 44.9 percent in the recent census. A decline in the number of Nepali speakers is seen from 1981 to 2011. The population of Nepali speakers declined in 2011 likely because some languages which were considered as regional variations of Nepali – such as Doteli, Baitadeli, Achhami, Bajhangi, Bajureli, Darchuleli, Dailekhi, Khash, Jumli and Dadeldhuri in Karnali and Sudurpashchim – were reported as distinct languages in the following census. Similarly, there is a slight decrease in the Maithili and Bhojpuri speakers in 2011 likely due to the fact that Bajjika, reported for the first time in 2001, is the seventh major language in 2011. The population change of the major languages is shown in Figure 2.14.

Figure 2.14: Population change of major languages (1981-2021)

Source: Table (2.3)

As shown in Table 2.3 and Figure 2.14, there is changes in the percentages of the individual languages in the previous censuses. There may be a number of reasons for the gain or loss of percentage of the languages and the changes in reporting of the languages might be attributed to the reporting of a higher number of languages.

2.6 Language groupings: large, medium and small languages

The languages documented in the 2021 census may be classified into large, medium and small language groups.²⁸

2.6.1 Large languages

There are 21 languages with over 100,000 speakers, accounting for approximately 95 percent of the population. The remaining 103 languages constitute 5 percent of the total population. Nepali, with nearly 13 million speakers (44.9%), remains the most widely spoken language. Table 2.4 provides a list of languages with over 100,000 speakers, along with their respective percentages and cumulative percentages and the large mother tongues of Nepal are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Nepal’s large languages (minimum 100,000 speakers), NPHC 2021

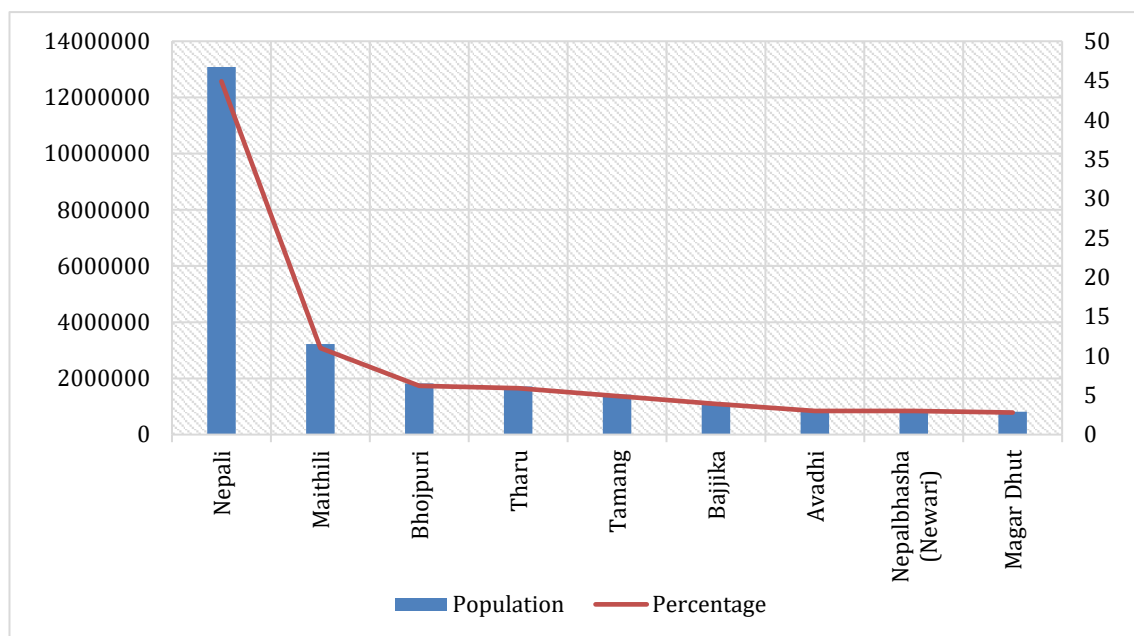
S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
1	Nepali	13,084,457	44.9	44.9
2	Maithili	3,222,389	11	55.9
3	Bhojpuri	1,820,795	6.2	62.2
4	Tharu	1,714,091	5.9	68.1
5	Tamang	1,423,075	4.9	72.9
6	Bajjika	1,133,764	3.9	76.8
7	Avadhi	864,276	3	79.8
8	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	3	82.8
9	Magar Dhut	810,315	2.8	85.5
10	Doteli	494,864	1.7	87.2
11	Urdu	413,785	1.4	88.7
12	Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	1.2	89.9
13	Gurung	328,074	1.1	91
14	Magahi	230,117	0.8	91.8
15	Baitadeli	152,666	0.5	92.3
16	Rai	144,512	0.5	92.8

²⁸ The terms ‘large’, ‘medium’, and ‘small’ are based on numerical criteria, rather than their functional domains. The terms are, therefore, not associated with power relations of the languages.

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
17	Achhami	141,444	0.5	93.3
18	Bantawa	138,003	0.5	93.7
19	Rajbanshi	130,163	0.4	94.2
20	Sherpa	117,896	0.4	94.6
21	Khash	117,511	0.4	95
	Total	2,76,96,013		

Source: NSO, 2021

Figure 2.15: Nepal's major languages



Source: Table (2.4)

2.6.2 Medium-sized languages

The languages consisting of a population between 10,000 to 99,999 speakers are considered to be medium-sized languages. They consist of a total of 36 languages spoken by approximately 4.4 percent of Nepal's total population. The number of speakers, percentages, and cumulative percentages of these languages are given in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Medium languages (10,000 to 99,999 speakers), NPHC 2021

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
22	Bajhangi	99,631	0.3	95.3
23	Hindi	98,399	0.3	95.7
24	Magar Kham	91,753	0.3	96
25	Chamling	89,037	0.3	96.3
26	Ranatharu	77,766	0.3	96.6
27	Chepang	58,392	0.2	96.8
28	Bajureli	56,486	0.2	97
29	Santhali	53,677	0.2	97.1
30	Danuwar	49,992	0.2	97.3
31	Darchuleli	45,649	0.2	97.5
32	Oraon/Kudukh	38,873	0.1	97.6
33	Kulung	37,912	0.1	97.7
34	Angika	35,952	0.1	97.9
35	Majhi	32,917	0.1	98
36	Sunuwar	32,708	0.1	98.1
37	Thami	26,805	0.1	98.2
38	Ganagai	26,281	0.1	98.3
39	Thulung	24,405	0.1	98.3
40	Bangla	23,774	0.1	98.4
41	Ghale	23,049	0.1	98.5
42	Sampang	21,597	0.1	98.6
43	Marwadi	21,333	0.1	98.7
44	Dadeldhuri	21,300	0.1	98.7
45	Dhimal	20,583	0.1	98.8
46	Tajpuriya	20,349	0.1	98.9
47	Kumal	18,435	0.1	98.9
48	Khaling	16,514	0.1	99.0
49	Musalman	16,252	0.1	99.0
50	Wambule	15,285	0.1	99.1
51	Bahing/Bayung	14,449	0	99.1
52	Yakkha	14,241	0	99.2
53	Sanskrit	13,906	0	99.2
54	Bhujel	13,086	0	99.3
55	Bhote	12,895	0	99.3
56	Darai	12,156	0	99.4
57	Yamphu/Yamphe	10,744	0	99.4
	Total	12,86,583		

Source: NSO, 2021

2.6.3 Small languages

The small languages are further grouped into two small groups: languages with 1,000 to 9,999 speakers, and languages with fewer than 1,000 speakers. The first group of small languages (between 1,000 to 9,999 speakers) constitute a total of 44 languages. Most of the languages in this group belong to the ST language family. The number of speakers, percentages, and the cumulative percentages of these languages are presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Small languages (between 1,000 to 9,999 speakers), NPHC 2021

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
58	Nachhiring	9,906	0.0	99.4
59	H Yolmo/Yholmo	9,658	0.0	99.5
60	Dumi	8,638	0.0	99.5
61	Jumli	8,338	0.0	99.5
62	Bote	7,687	0.0	99.6
63	Mewahang	7,428	0.0	99.6
64	Puma	6,763	0.0	99.6
65	Pahari	5,946	0.0	99.6
66	Athpahariya	5,580	0.0	99.7
67	Dungmali	5,403	0.0	99.7
68	Jirel	5,167	0.0	99.7
69	Tibetan	5,053	0.0	99.7
70	Dailekhi	4,989	0.0	99.7
71	Chum/Nubri	4,284	0.0	99.7
72	Chhantyal	4,282	0.0	99.8
73	Raji	4,247	0.0	99.8
74	Thakali	4,220	0.0	99.8
75	Meche	4,203	0.0	99.8
76	Koyee	4,152	0.0	99.8
77	Lohorung	3,884	0.0	99.8
78	Kewarat	3,469	0.0	99.8
79	Dolpali	3,244	0.0	99.8
80	Done	3,100	0.0	99.9
81	Mugali	2,834	0.0	99.9
82	Jero/Jerung	2,817	0.0	99.9
83	Karmarong	2,619	0.0	99.9
84	Chhintang	2,564	0.0	99.9
85	Lhopa	2,348	0.0	99.9

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
86	Lapcha	2,240	0.0	99.9
87	Munda/Mudiyari	2,107	0.0	99.9
88	Manange	2,022	0.0	99.9
89	Chhiling	2,011	0.0	99.9
90	Dura	1,991	0.0	99.9
91	Tilung	1,969	0.0	99.9
92	Sign Language	1,784	0.0	99.9
93	Byansi	1,706	0.0	100.0
94	Balkura/Baram	1,539	0.0	100.0
95	Barangunwa	1,536	0.0	100.0
96	Sadri	1,347	0.0	100.0
97	English	1,323	0.0	100.0
98	Magar Kaike	1,225	0.0	100.0
99	Sonaha	1,182	0.0	100.0
100	Hayu/Vayu	1,133	0.0	100.0
101	Kisan	1,004	0.0	100.0
	Total	1,68,942		

Source: NSO, 2021

There are a total of 23 languages which have a population of less than 1,000 speakers. The number of speakers, percentages, and cumulative percentages of these languages are presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: Small languages (less than 1,000 speakers), NPHC 2021

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
102	Punjabi	871	0.0	100.0
103	Dhuleli	786	0.0	100.0
104	Khamchi(Raute)	741	0.0	100.0
105	Lungkhim	702	0.0	100.0
106	Lowa	624	0.0	100.0
107	Kagate	611	0.0	100.0
108	Waling/Walung	545	0.0	100.0
109	Nar-Phu	428	0.0	100.0
110	Lhomi	413	0.0	100.0
111	Tichhurong Poike	410	0.0	100.0
112	Kurmali	397	0.0	100.0
113	Koche	332	0.0	100.0

S.N.	Mother tongues	Population	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
114	Sindhi	291	0.0	100.0
115	Phangduwali	247	0.0	100.0
116	Belhare	177	0.0	100.0
117	Surel	174	0.0	100.0
118	Malpande	161	0.0	100.0
119	Khariya	132	0.0	100.0
120	Sadhani	122	0.0	100.0
121	Hariyanwi	114	0.0	100.0
122	Sam	106	0.0	100.0
123	Bankariya	86	0.0	100.0
124	Kusunda	23	0.0	100.0
	Others	4,201	0.0	100.0
	Not stated	346	0.0	100.0
	Total	13,040		
	Grand total	29,164,578	100.0	

Source: NSO, 2021

The share of large languages (21 languages in total) constitutes almost 95 percent of the total population, whereas the remaining languages (103 languages in total) are spoken by only 5 percent of the total population of Nepal. This unproportioned share of the number of speakers among mother tongues have consequences with regard to the language planning of the provinces and at local level. A large number of small and medium-sized languages are concentrated to specific municipalities, notably rural municipalities and in small villages.

Table 2.8: Population by mother tongue and size cohort, NPHC 2021

Population size category	No. of mother tongues	Population	%	Cumulative %
Over 100,000	21	27,696,013	95	95.0
100,000 < 9,999	36	1,286,583	4.4	99.4
10,000 < 999	45	168,942	0	100.0
999 below	22	8,493	0	100.0
Others and not stated		4,547	0	100.0
Total	124	29,164,578		

The mother tongue languages spoken by a population above 100,000 constitutes 95 percent of the total population and consists of only 21 languages (Table 2.8). Similarly, the share of mother tongue speakers between 100,000 to 9,999 speakers is 4.4 percent of the population and this

group consists of 36 languages. The cluster of languages spoken by a population of 999 to 1,000 speakers consists of a total of 45 languages and covers only 0.6 percent of the total population. There are a total of 22 languages with a population below 1,000. The number of speakers in ‘others’ and ‘not stated’ is not sizable.

2.7 Language distribution

It is significant to analyze the areas or regions where languages are spoken in order to implement language policy and planning in a bilingual and multilingual setting. It is also important to determine the language use in administration, education, and media. Language distribution in different sectors are given in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Language distribution by ecological zone and language family, NPHC 2021

Area	Total	Indo-European	%	Sino-Tibetan	%	Others	%
Ecological zone							
Mountain	1,772,948	1,269,222	71.6	503,309	28.4	417	0
Hill	11,757,624	8,402,097	71.5	3,351,373	28.5	4,154	0
Tarai	15,634,006	14,553,976	93.1	983,458	6.3	96,572	0.6
Urban and rural municipalities							
Urban municipality	19,296,788	16,295,807	84	2,949,936	15	51,045	1
Rural municipality	9,867,790	7,929,488	80	1,888,204	19	50,098	1
Urban/Rural							
Urban	7,963,572	6,334,158	80	1,621,643	20	7,771	0
Peri-urban	11,554,282	10,743,056	93	726,900	6	84,326	1
Rural	9,646,724	7,148,081	74	2,489,597	26	9,046	0
Province							
Koshi	4,961,412	3,495,371	70.5	1,375,904	27.7	90,137	1.8
Madhesh	6,114,600	5,940,366	97.2	168,694	2.8	5,540	0
Bagmati	6,116,866	3,795,879	62.1	2,317,910	37.9	3,077	0
Gandaki	2,466,427	1,902,898	77.2	562,534	22.8	995	0
Lumbini	5,122,078	4,814,951	94	306,363	6	764	0
Karnali	1,688,412	1,627,166	96.4	61,132	3.6	114	0
Sudurpashchim	2,694,783	2,648,664	98.3	45,603	1.7	516	0

Source: NSO, 2021

Indo-Aryan languages of the Indo-European language family are majoritarily concentrated in Tarai (61.5%), followed by the Hill (33.2%) and Mountain (5.3%) zones. Conversely, the majority of the TB language speaking population (67%) is mainly concentrated in the Hill region. However,

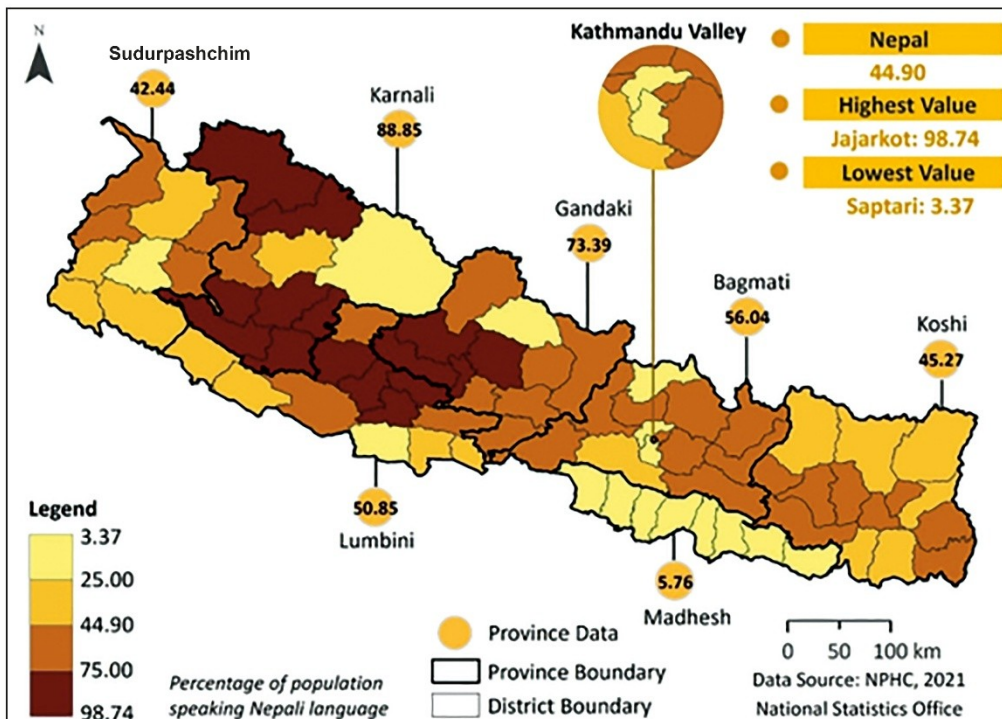
the speakers of Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages are concentrated in eastern Tarai (in Koshi Province).

Table 2.9 also shows the distribution of the population of language families in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Nearly half of the population (45.5%) of Indo-European language speakers live in a peri-urban area (45.5%). The population of Indo-European languages in rural and urban areas are also significant constituting 20.4 percent and 25.8 percent respectively.

Conversely, the ST languages show high concentration in rural areas (48.8%), followed by in urban (33.8%) and peri-urban (45.5%) areas. The Dravidian and AA languages are largely spoken in eastern Tarai and are distributed in peri-urban areas, at a rate of 86.1 percent and 89 percent respectively. The Dravidian, AA, Sign language, and language isolates are classified in a single category as their share is not significant.

The small linguistic groups spoken in specific localities demand language documentation and language revitalization. The densely distributed languages are likely to be used in administration and are likely to be used as used as medium of instruction in respective region or areas. The distribution of Nepali, the largest language in terms of number of speakers in Nepal, is given in Map 2.1.

Map 2.1: Distribution of Nepali, used as mother tongue, by province and district, Nepal, 2021



There are areas where the concentration of Nepali is high, including the western part of Gandaki Province, the areas adjoining with Lumbini Province, and in all districts of Karnali Province except Kalikot and Jajarkot, where the concentration is less dense. Lesser concentration is mainly seen in the Hill zone, stretching from Gandaki Province to the eastern Hill districts. The distribution of Maithili, Bhojpuri, Bajjika and Tamang is given in Annex II: Maps.

2.8 Language use

This section examines the use of the language data among different age groups.

2.8.1 Age groups among mother tongues

In bilingual and multilingual communities, the retention of language by the speakers of all ages is significant for inter-generational transmission of languages. UNESCO (2003) notes that one of the factors of the language vitality is the inter-generational transmission of languages to new generations. Table 2.10 presents age groups among major five languages.

Table 2.10: Language use by age groups among major mother tongues, NPHC 2021

Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Nepali	13,084,457	937,007	2,515,607	2,663,055	2,115,745	1,727,909	2,234,583	890,551
%	100	7.2	19.2	20.4	16.2	13.2	17.1	6.8
Maithili	3,222,389	308,965	710,139	680,367	503,087	390,572	444,897	184,362
%	100	9.6	22.0	21.1	15.6	12.1	15.6	5.7
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	174,213	401,078	396,080	287,889	226,629	238,148	96,758
%	100	9.6	22.0	21.8	15.8	12.4	13.1	5.3
Tharu	1,714,091	122,672	264,219	348,509	321,569	251,248	301,506	104,368
%	100	7.2	15.4	20.3	18.8	14.7	17.6	6.1
Tamang	1,423,075	106,732	256,008	286,186	240,563	186,308	243,106	104,172
%	100	7.5	18.0	20.1	16.9	13.1	17.1	7.3
Nepal (Total)		2,439,283	5,676,292	5,749,464	4,607,061	3,789,324	4,881,440	2,021,714
		8.4	19.5	19.7	15.8	13.0	16.7	6.9

Source: NSO, 2021

The percentage of the speakers below five years may not be very significant as this group also consists of children who have not started speaking their mother tongues. For the age groups between five and fourteen, the share of the mother tongue speakers is between Tharu (15.4%) to Maithili and Bhojpuri (22.0% in each case).

Table 2.11 presents the use of languages among minor languages with a population between 10,000 to 1,000. Compared to the major languages, the share of mother tongue speakers between 5-14 is very low in Jumli (2.4%). In the remaining four languages (Table 2.11), their

share is between 12.8 percent (Yohlmo) to 19.9 percent (Nachhiring). A population of young speakers is positive for the vitality of small and endangered languages.

Table 2.11: Language use by age group among minor languages, NPHC 2021

	Nachhiring	%	H yolmo/Yholmo	%	Dumi	%	Jumli	%	Bote	%
0-4	761	7.7	526	5.4	610	7.1	2,280	27.3	498	6.5
5-14	1,969	19.9	1,234	12.8	1,574	18.2	204	2.4	1,313	17.1
15-24	1,952	19.7	1,443	14.9	1,554	18.0	210	2.5	1,686	21.9
25-34	1,435	14.5	1,396	14.5	1,381	16.0	850	10.2	1,487	19.3
35-44	1,205	12.2	1,416	14.7	1,013	11.7	1,355	16.3	1,014	13.2
45-64	1,737	17.5	2,419	25.0	1,684	19.5	2,381	28.6	1,320	17.2
65+	847	8.6	1,224	12.7	822	9.5	1,058	12.7	369	4.8
Total	9,906	100	9,658	100.0	8,638	100.0	8,338	100.0	7,687	100.0

Source: NSO, 2021

Moseley (2010, p. 60) mentions that a number of TB languages spoken in Nepal are on the verge of extinction. They include Baram, Dumi, Hayu, Sam, and Yakkha. The data shows that, even in the endangered languages given in Table 2.12, the share of the mother tongue speakers between the age group of 5-14 is not sizable.

Table 2.12: Language use by age groups among endangered languages, NPHC 2021

Age groups	Baram		Hayu	
	Population	%	Population	%
0-4	92	6	98	8.6
5-14	205	13	256	22.6
15-24	259	17	247	21.8
25-34	227	15	166	14.7
35-44	208	14	134	11.8
45-64	348	23	161	14.2
65+	200	13	71	6.3
Total	1,539	100	1,133	100
Age groups	Sam		Yakkha	
	Population	%	Population	%
0-4	6	5.7	850	6.0
5-14	13	12.3	2,332	16.4
15-24	24	22.6	2,563	18.0
25-34	18	17.0	2,103	14.8
35-44	14	13.2	1,970	13.8
45-64	23	21.7	2,990	21.0
65+	8	7.5	1,433	10.1
Total	100	100	14,241	100

Source: NSO, 2021

All of these languages have the speakers across all age groups. This is somewhat similar to Kusunda, a language isolate in which the speakers of all age groups are reported except for speakers above the age of 65. In examining the share of the mother tongue speakers between age group 5-14, Lowa has the highest percentage of speakers of this age group (46.3%), followed by Dhuleli (33.5%). Additionally, the languages whose speakers of this age group are above 25 percent are Bajjika (26%), Avadhi (25.3%), Urdu (27.2%), Khamchi (29.7%). More details of all age groups, and their shares of all languages are given in Annex 2.

2.8.2 Language retention

Language retention in this report is defined as the continuity of the languages to new generations, or transmission to new generations. By establishing the relationship between the population of the caste/ethnic groups and the language they speak, the degree of continuity of the language (or language retention) can be reached. The mother tongue retention in this section is calculated by relating the ethnic population and the mother tongue they speak (Sharma, 2014, p. 36). The mother tongue retention is reported in Table 2.13.²⁹ Only the languages which have 1:1 relation between castes/ethnic groups have been included in this table (2.8.2).

Nine languages languages which have 1:1 relation among these groups – Tharu, Rajbanshi, Sherpa, Santhal, Chumba/Nubri, Karmarong, Raute and Lhomi – have been reported with high language retention rate (more than 90%) in the 2021 census. Speakers of three languages outnumber their ethnic number, these being Karmarong, Raute, and Lhomi. Karmarong and Lhomi are spoken in Mountain areas. The remaining 13 languages have a retention rate between 60 to 89 percent. All remaining languages have the retention rate below 59 percent.

Table 2.13: Mother tongue retention in selected languages, NPHC 2021

S.N.	Languages	1991	2001	2011	2021
1.	Tharu	83.2	86.8	88.1	94.9
2.	Tamang	88.8	92.2	87.9	86.8
3.	Nepalbhasa (Newar)	66.3	66.3	64.0	64.4
4.	Yakthung/Limbu	85.5	92.8	88.7	84.5
5.	Gurung	50.7	62.4	62.3	60.3
6.	Rajbanshi	104.1	135.5	106.0	98.2
7.	Sherpa	110.4	83.9	101.7	90.2
8.	Chepang				69.2
9.	Santhal		94.3	96.4	93.7
10.	Uraon/Kudukh				83.0

²⁹ The relation between caste/ethnic groups is shown in section (4.2). The languages which fall under Rai-Kiranti groups have not included in Table (2.13) as it comprises a number of languages.

S.N.	Languages	1991	2001	2011	2021
11.	Majhi	20.6	30.1	29.2	29.6
12.	Sunuwar				41.4
13.	Thami	75.4	82.6	80.7	81.9
14.	Dhimal	89.5	88.6	73.4	80.3
15.	Kumal	1.8	6.6	10.1	14.2
16.	Yakkha				81.6
17.	Darai	60.6	68.7	69.6	65.0
18.	H Yolmo		88.4	94.6	98.4
19.	Bote		35.4	84.3	68.2
20.	Pahari				39.6
21.	Jirel	86.5	92.5	83.6	85.7
22.	Chumba/Nubri				97.1
23.	Chhantyal/Chhantel		60.2	36.3	35.8
24.	Raji	90.9	100.6	88.7	82.9
25.	Meche		87.7	89.8	80.9
26.	Karmarong				157.4
27.	Munda				58.7
28.	Dura		65.7	40.0	35.7
29.	Byasi		82.5	12.3	29.8
30.	Balkura/Baram		4.6	1.9	19.6
31.	Hayu				36.9
32.	Raute		78.7	74.6	130.9
33.	Lhomi				116.3
34.	Surel				54.7
35.	Bankariya				47.8
36.	Kusunda		53.0	10.3	9.1

Source: (NSO, 2021, Sharma, 2014)

There is a constant increase of the retention of three mother tongue groups from 1991 to 2021, these being Kumal, Tharu and Hyolmo. With the rest of the languages, there is fluctuation in the retention rate.

One factor of language endangerment is the loss of the language speakers. Among the selected languages mentioned in Table 2.13, Kusunda and Balkura/Baram show less than a 20 percent rate of language retention. Such languages risk ceasing to be spoken unless measures are taken to revitalize them.

2.8.3 Language use by sex

Some languages show a higher share of speaker population with female populations compared to male populations. The national average of female speakers is 51.1 percent, compared to 48.9

percent male speakers (Annexes 3, 4). Some languages have speakers consisting of more than 60 percent female mother tongue speakers, such as Baitadeli, Achhami, Darchuleli, Dailekhi, Jumli, and Dadeldhuri. A number of languages have a number of female speakers above the national average, such as Doteli, Rai, Danuwar, Magahi, Uraunw, Magar Kham, amongst others.

There is a difference across the national average in the use of the mother tongues by sex. The language use by female is slightly higher (51.1%) than male (48.9%) speakers at national level (Annexes 3, 4). Among the mother tongues, 64 mother tongues have higher percentages of female speakers than the national average. The highest percentage of female speakers are reported in Dadeldhuri (67.8%), Dailekhi (66.4%), and Darchuleli (63.1%). These languages are followed by Jumli (62.0%), Achhami (61.7%), Bajureli (61.4%), Baitadeli (60.3%), and Bajhang (59.3%). All of these languages are spoken in the Karnali, and Sudurpashchim provinces. Chamling and Tamang have exactly the same percentage of share of female speakers at a shared rate of 51.1 percent each. The remaining languages (60 in total) have female speakers at a rate lower than the national average.

When subtracting the use of the second language population from those who do not speak the second language, the national average of female speakers is 50.5 percent compared to male speakers (49.5%). More than half of female speakers (50.4%) reported that they speak Nepali as compared to male speakers (49.6%). A total of 79 languages show higher rates of female speakers than the national average. Conversely, all remaining languages (39 languages) have a rate of female speakers which is lower than the national average.

Amongst the 124 mother tongues, the share of female speakers is higher than male speakers in 72 of the languages. This means that the degree of monolingualism, or individuals not speaking a second language, is higher in female speakers compared to male speakers. Monolingualism is evident in some groups which speak their ethnic language, such as Tharu (56.4%), Rajbanshi (56.8%), Oraon (54.4%), Chum/Nubri (56.2%) among others. Overall, the share of male and female population varies in different linguistic groups (Annex 5).

2.9 Second languages

The question on the second language follows the question on the mother tongue in the 2021 census. In case the respondent does not know a second language, it is reported as 'no second language'. Only one language can be reported as a second language. Leaving aside 'others' and 'not stated' responses, a total of 117 languages are recorded as second languages in the 2021 census.

Although some major languages are dispersed across provinces and districts, there is high concentration of speakers of some languages in specific ecological zones, or confined in small areas such as in the local levels. The information on the second language began to be reported in the Nepalese census consistently from 1991 onwards. At a rate of 48.1 percent or 14 million people, nearly half of the population reported to be monolingual in the 2021 census. This group of the population could not communicate effectively with speakers of other linguistic groups because they do not have a link language to communicate with them. The question neither permitted the respondents to report more than two second languages, nor to report the proficiency of the second language.

Bilingualism and multilingualism is a linguistic reality in many parts of the country. The NLPRC (2008, p. 9) underscores the importance of multilingual areas of Nepal:

“It is difficult to demarcate where one language ends and another begins. Owing to this, the people living in the two immediate vicinities can understand the language of other speech communities. Although it is the case in the immediate vicinities, intelligibility between languages gets reduced with increase in distance. As a result, the residents living at the extremes of the two languages cannot communicate.”

A large percentage of respondents (46.2%) report that they use Nepali alone as their second language. This share constitutes 89.1 percent of the total bilingual population (who report that they speak the second language). Although Maithili and Hindi rank the second and the third largest second languages, each of these constitutes less than one percent each. The share of second languages (excluding ‘No second language’) is given in Annex 6. The relationship between the mother tongue languages and major ten second languages are given in Annex 7.

2.9.1 Major second languages (2011-2021)

In order to compare the major ten languages from 2011 and 2021 censuses, the top ten languages from each census are given in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14: Major ten second languages (2011, 2021)

S.N.	2011			S.N.	2021		
	Second languages	Population	% of the total pop		Second languages	Population	% of the total pop
1	Nepali	8,682,499	32.7	1	Nepali	13,482,904	46.2
2	Maithili	195,287	0.7	2	Maithili	267,621	0.9
3	Hindi	1,225,950	4.6	3	Hindi	223,106	0.8
4	Bhojpuri	159,518	0.6	4	Bhojpuri	138,572	0.5

S.N.	2011			S.N.	2021		
	Second languages	Population	% of the total pop		Second languages	Population	% of the total pop
5	English	81,447	0.3	5	English	102,561	0.4
6	Tharu	84,748	0.3	6	Tharu	89,606	0.3
7	Bajjika	60,863	0.2	7	Bajjika	86,062	0.3
8	Avadhi	45,428	0.1	8	Avadhi	75,651	0.3
9	Urdu	45,766	0.1	9	Urdu	72,128	0.2
10	Magar	42,951	0.1	10	Tamang	71,569	0.2

Table 2.14 shows the decadal change in the bilingual population in 2011 and 2021. The largest nine second languages are identical in these two censuses.

Firstly, there is a sizable increase in the population who report speaking Nepali as a second language. The increase is reported from 32.77 percent in 2011 to 46.2 percent in 2021. There is a decrease of the number of speakers of Hindi as a second language in 2021 compared to 2011 census. This shift can be seen to have increased the percentage of those reporting to speak Nepali as a second language. Similarly, a slight increase in the second languages in Maithili, English, Bajjika, Avadhi, and Urdu is observed. Conversely, a slight decrease is reported in Bhojpuri and Tharu. Additionally, there is decadal decrease in the use of Hindi as a second language. A total of 4.62 percent of speakers were reported as second language users of Hindi in 2011, whereas the number is at a rate of 0.8 percent in 2021. The second languages and their share is presented in Annex 8.

2.9.2 Use of the second languages by age groups

In order to demonstrate the use of the second languages as recorded in the 2021 census, the ten largest spoken languages from 2011 and 2021 censuses are recorded (Table 2.15). This data records the use of second languages by selecting the highest number of speakers from three categories: large second languages, medium second languages with the population between 10,000 to 100,000, and small second languages with the population below 9,999 speakers.

Table 2.15: Use of the second languages by age groups, NPHC 2021

S.N.	Large second languages (top five second languages)								Population	Total
		Second languages	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64		
1	Nepali	7.2	21.4	21	17	12.4	14.9	6.1	13,482,904	100.0
2	Maithili	11.1	22.1	17.9	14.1	12	16.2	6.7	267,621	100.0
3	Hindi	4.9	13.9	19.1	19.6	16.8	19.2	6.5	223,106	100.0
4	Bhojpuri	9.3	20.8	18.1	14.8	13.4	16.7	6.9	138,572	100.0
5	English	1.2	16.9	34	22.4	12.8	10.6	2.1	102,561	100.0

S.N.	Large second languages (top five second languages)									
Medium second languages (languages between 99,999 to 10,000 speakers)										
6	Tharu	5.7	16.4	19.7	17.2	14.9	19.6	6.6	89,606	100.0
7	Bajjika	12.3	26.3	19.7	13	10.3	12.6	5.9	86,062	100.0
8	Avadhi	22.2	21.7	17.4	14.1	17.6	7		69,315	100.0
9	Urdu	9.9	25.2	21.7	14.3	11	12.5	5.4	72,128	100.0
10	Tamang	6.4	17	19.2	16.7	13.5	18.6	8.5	71,569	100.0
Small second languages (below 1,000 speakers)										
11	Baitadeli	5.1	15.1	19.1	19.5	15.5	18.5	7.3	9,521	100.0
12	Sherpa	6.8	18.7	20	16.2	12.2	18.5	7.5	9,435	100.0
13	Sanskrit	3.1	14.3	17.6	14.2	13.2	23.7	14	6,615	100.0
14	Achhami	5.5	17.8	21	16.7	13.9	16.5	8.6	6,522	100.0
15	Angika	8.6	20	19.3	15.7	13.4	16.1	7	6,127	100.0

Source: NSO, 2021

The 2021 census has reported the respondents' second languages for all age groups. There is a sizable population between ages 5-14 who speak second languages and it can be inferred that this group contains a large number of individuals who become bi/multilingual during the age range.

Table 2.16: Population by second language and size cohort, NPHC 2021

Population size category	Number of mother tongues	Population	%	Cumulative %
Over 100,000	5	14,214,764	48.7	48.7
100,000 < 9,999	20	774,916	2.7	51.4
10,000 < 999	30	120,611	0.4	51.8
999 below	69	22,937	0.1	51.9
Others and Not Stated		8,264	0.0	51.9
No second language		14,023,086	48.1	100.0
Total		29,164,578	100.0	

Source: NSO, 2021

The top five languages constitute nearly 49 percent of the second languages (Table 2.16). These languages include Nepali (46.2%), Maithili (0.9%), Hindi (0.8%), Bhojpuri (0.5%), and English (0.4%). The next twenty second languages constitute 2.7 percent of the total population. On the other hand, 48 percent of the total population report that no use of a second language and therefore are monolingual, speaking only a single mother tongue.

2.9.3 Mother tongues and second languages

As previously outlined, a total of 48.1 percent of Nepal's population (nearly 14 million speakers) do not speak the second language. Bilingualism (or the use of the second languages) serves as a

communication bridge between different speech groups (Khubchandani, 1978, p. 570). The degree of bilingualism may differ from across districts, local levels and villages (or small areas) where languages with a small number of speakers are present. It seems that the speakers of small linguistic communities are bi/multilingual in the dominant languages spoken in the vicinity in order to achieve effective communication.

Annex 7 present the details of the relation of the mother tongue and the main ten second languages. The speakers of the remaining languages are lumped together in the category 'others'. Among the population which speak Nepali as their mother tongue, 95,770 people (0.6% of the population which speak second language) report that they speak English as a second language. A total of 26,23,800 speakers of Maithili as a mother tongue report that they speak Nepali as a second language (17.3% of the population which speak second language). A total of 1,503,020 speakers of Bhojpuri as a mother tongue report that they speak Nepali as a second language.

There are some language groups which are exclusively bi/multilingual. They generally include two linguistic groups. Firstly, small linguistic communities use second languages to communicate with the other linguistic groups and the degree of bi/multilingualism is high in these communities. The same applies in some communities, such as Kusunda, Phangduwali, Tichhurong Poike, Byansi, Munda/Mundariya, and Dolpali. Some recently reported linguistic communities in 2011 and 2021 also record exclusive bi/multilingualism, such as Done, Kewarat, Jumli, Sanskrit, Dadeldhuri, Bajhangi, Achhami, and Baitadeli.

2.9.4 Bilingualism and multilingualism

The census reports second languages if used by individual respondents.³⁰ Bilingualism is one of the means of bridging communication between different mother tongue groups (Weinreich, 1957, p. 1). As explained, bilingualism differs in different geographical belts (zones), and in different linguistic communities. Although the census reports the use of the second language (bilingual population), it does not record how fluently individuals speak their second language, nor does it record the proficiency of the respondents. Bilingualism/multilingualism is measured by whether the speakers report the second language in the census if a respondent reports a second language.

Among the bilingual population, Indo-European languages comprise a total of 14,657,991 (96.8%) of the total bilingual speakers, whereas ST languages consist of 473,429 (3.1%) of the total bilingual speakers. The share of languages of other language families – Dravidian, Austro-

³⁰ The census does not record the multilingualism of individuals. However, a certain percentage of the bilingual respondents may be multilingual. Since the census does not record the multilingualism separately, different aspects of multilingualism have not been examined in this thematic report.

Asiatic and Sign language – is not sizable. Kusunda, a language isolate, has a total of 23 mother tongue speakers whereas it is used as a second language by 32 speakers. A total of 828 people use Sign language as a second language.

The distribution of second languages in ecological zones and in rural and urban areas are given in Table 2.15. It shows that 65.8 percent of the total bilingual speakers (those who report that they speak the second language) live in Tarai zone. A total of 28.6 percent of bilingual speakers live in the Hill zone, whereas only 5.6 percentage of the bilingual speakers live in the Mountain zone. Conversely, monolingualism is higher in the mountain compared to Hill and Tarai.

Table 2.17 shows that incidences of bilingualism is high (63.7.8%) in Tarai, far above the incidence of bilingualism at the national level (51.9%). The incidence of bilingualism in Mountain (47.5%) is slightly lower than the national average. By contrast, the incidence of bilingualism in Hill is much less than the national average. As the speakers of Nepali as a mother tongue is mainly concentrated in the Hill zone, the incidence of bilingualism is low in the Hill region. A total of 71.5 percent of the total Indo-European languages is spoken in this ecological belt.

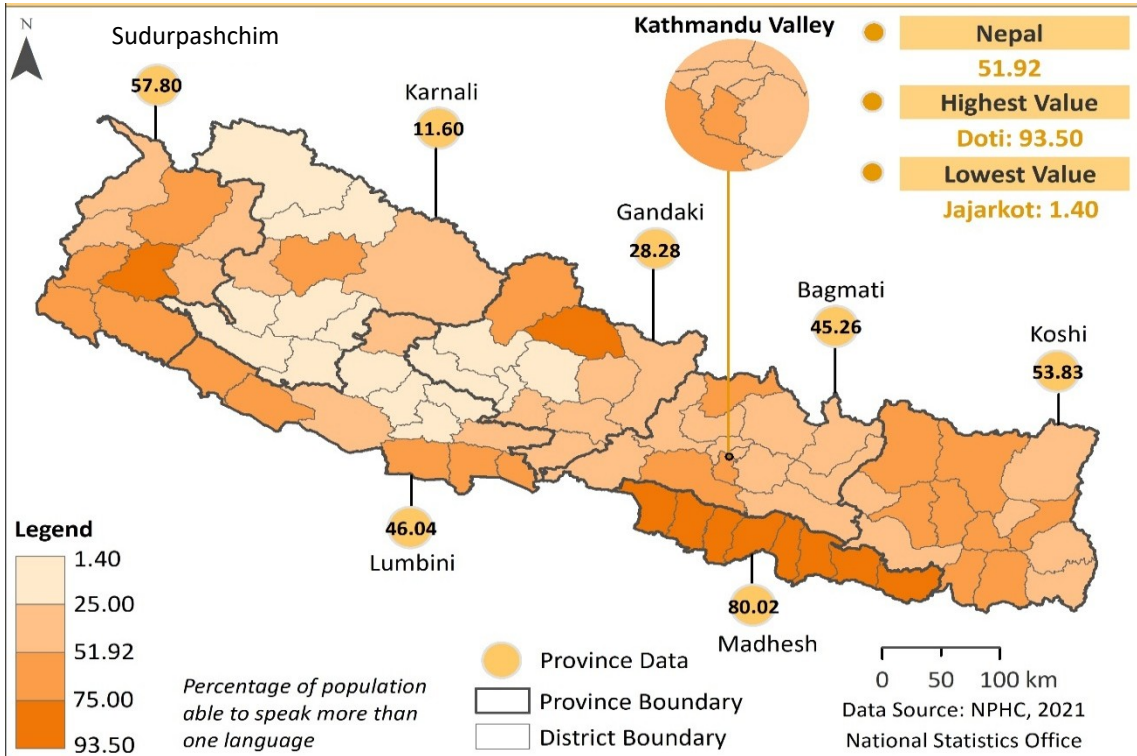
Table 2.17: Bilingualism by sector, NPHC 2021

Area	Total population	No second language	Total number of bilingual speakers	Bilingualism %
Nepal	29,164,578	14,023,086	15,141,492	51.9
Ecological zone				
Mountain	1,772,948	931,124	841,824	47.5
Hill	11,757,624	7,422,852	4,334,772	36.9
Tarai	15,634,006	5,669,110	9,964,896	63.7
Urban versus rural municipalities				
Urban	19,296,788	9,568,908	9,727,880	50.4
Rural	9,867,790	4,454,178	5,413,612	54.9
Total			15,141,492	100.0
Urban/ Rural				
Urban	7,963,572	4,138,571	3,825,001	48.0
Peri-urban	11,554,282	4,223,459	7,330,823	63.4
Rural	9,646,724	5,661,056	3,985,668	41.3
Total			15,141,492	

Source: NSO, 2021

Bilingualism is slightly higher in rural areas compared to the urban population. This suggests that people who live in rural areas speak other languages than Nepali and implies that these individuals need to speak a second language in order to communicate with the speakers whose mother tongue is different than Nepali.

Map 2.2: Bilingualism by province and district, Nepal, 2021



As shown in Map 2.2, a higher rate of bilingualism is reported in all districts of Madhesh Province. Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Bajjika are the dominant languages in this province. A majority of the speakers of these languages also speak Nepali as a second language in order to communicate with the speakers of other languages than their mother tongues. The high incidence of bilingualism is also reported in the Manang district of Gandaki Province. In addition, bilingualism expands in the western Tarai districts of Lumbini Province and expands further west to the districts of Sudurpashchim Province. There are varying degrees of bilingualism in Koshi Province. A slightly higher degree of bilingualism is reported in Kathmandu district compared to Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur.

At the national level, it seems that there is a growth of bilingualism in 2011 compared to 2001, but incidences of recorded bilingualism were seen to decline in 2021 (Table 2.18).

Table 2.18: Bilingualism (2001, 2011, 2021)

Census year	Total population	No second language	Monolingual population	Monolingual %	Bilingual population	Bilingual %
2001	22,736,934	15,828,965	6,907,969	69.6	6,907,969	30.4
2011	26,494,504	10,883,804	15,610,700	41.1	15,610,700	58.9
2021	29,164,578	12,675,284	16,489,294	43.5	16,489,294	56.5

Source: NSO, 2021; CBS, 2011; CBS, 2001

2.9.5 Gain/loss of bilingualism (2011, 2021) in major languages (excluding no second language)

The gain/loss of bilingualism in major languages reported in the second languages are given in Table (2.19). The percentage of bilingualism is calculated by subtracting the monolingual population. Among the bilingual population, the Nepali is the second language of 79.5 percent in 2011, whereas it grows to 89.0 percent in 2021. Thus, the bilingualism gain (growth) in Nepali is by 9.5 percent in 2021. Conversely, the bilingualism rate is decreased by 9.7 percent in Hindi.

Table 2.19: Gain/loss of bilingualism in major second languages excluding no second language (in 2011, 2021)³¹

Second language	2011		2021		Gain/loss in bilingualism
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	
Nepali	8,707,154	79.5	13,482,904	89	9.5
Hindi	1,225,951	11.2	223,106	1.5	-9.7
Maithili	204,052	1.9	267,621	1.8	-0.1
Bhojpuri	159,887	1.5	138,572	0.9	-0.6
Tharu	86,924	0.8	89,606	0.6	-0.2
English	81,447	0.7	102,561	0.7	0
Urdu	68,924	0.6	72,128	0.5	-0.1
Bajjika	60,863	0.6	86,062	0.6	0
Avadhi	45,444	0.4	75,651	0.5	0.1
Magar	42,914	0.4	NA	NA	NA
Tamang	36,960	0.3	71,569	0.5	0.2

Source: NSO, 2021, CBS, 2011

2.9.6 Nepali as a second language

The use of the second language is directed towards Nepali in 2021 census. It is relevant to highlight Nepali as a second language because speakers with a non-Nepali mother tongue except

³¹ Since Magar is grouped into 3 groups in this census – Magar Dhut, Magar Kaike and Magar Kham – the data is not comparable.

generally use Nepali as their second language. The data shows that there is a gain in the use of Nepali as a second language in the 2021 census compared to the earlier censuses (Table 2.20).

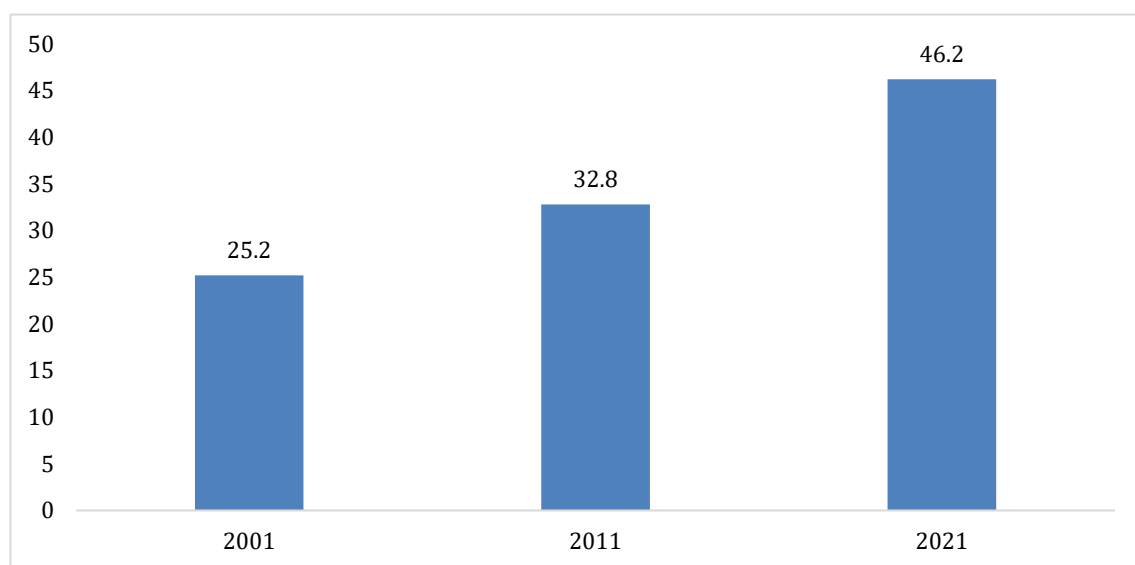
Table 2.20: Nepali as a second language (2001,2011,2021)

Census year	Total population	Nepali as a second language	Percentage
2001	22,736,934	5,722,151	25.2
2011	26,494,504	8,682,499	32.8
2021	29,164,578	13,482,904	46.2

Source: NSO 2021, Yadava 2003, Yadava 2014

Nepali as a second language is shown to grow over the last three censuses (Table 2.20, Figure 2.16). It was recorded at a rate of 25.2 percent in 2001, 32.8 percent in 2011, and increased to a rate of 46.2 percent in 2021.

Figure 2.16: Nepali as a second language (2001, 2011 and 2021)



Source: Table 2.20

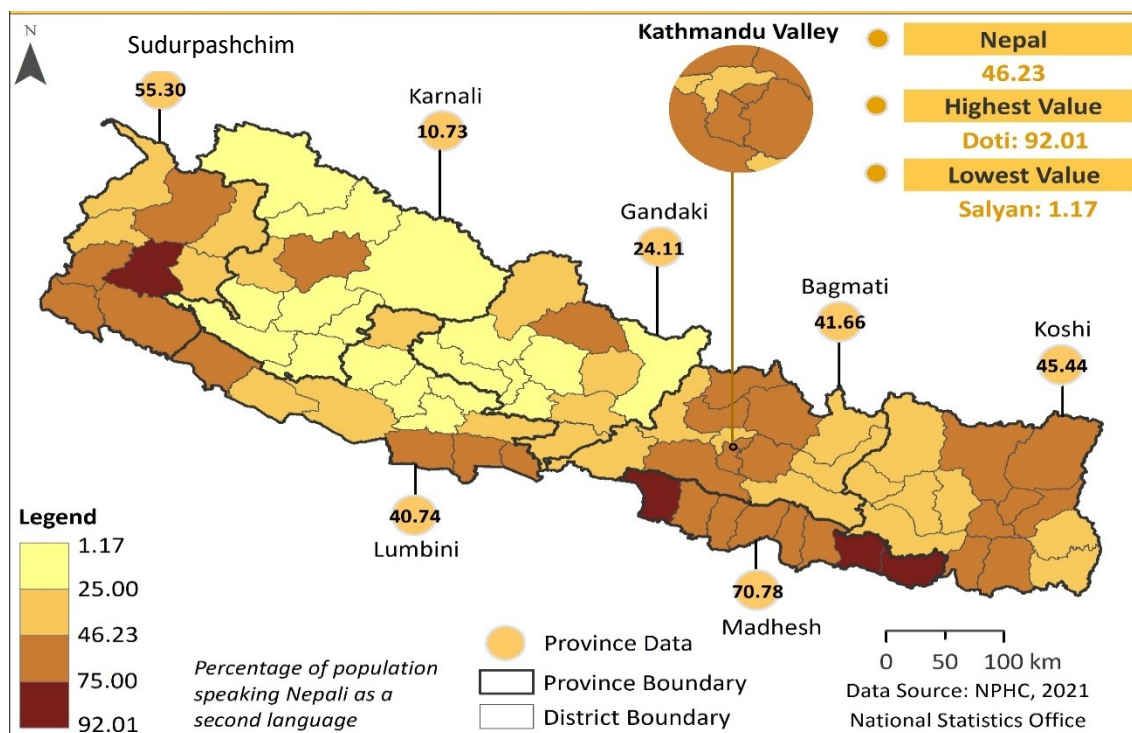
Nepali as a second language is reported highest in Madhesh Province (70.8%) whereas the lowest percentage is reported in Karnali Province (10.7%) (Table 2.21, Map 2.3). The use of Nepali as a second language is higher than the national average in Madhesh and Sudurpashchim provinces.

Table 2.21: Nepali as a second language in provinces, NPHC 2021

Area	Total	Population that does not speak second language	Nepali as a second language	Percentage
Nepal	29,164,578	14,023,086	13,482,904	46.2
Province				
Koshi	4,961,412	2,290,444	2,254,267	45.4
Madhesh	6,114,600	1,221,423	4,327,951	70.8
Bagmati	6,116,866	3,348,503	2,548,213	41.7
Gandaki	2,466,427	1,768,868	594,619	24.1
Lumbini	5,122,078	2,764,056	2,086,512	40.7
Karnali	1,688,412	1,492,627	181,191	10.7
Sudurpashchim	2,694,783	1,137,165	1,490,151	55.3

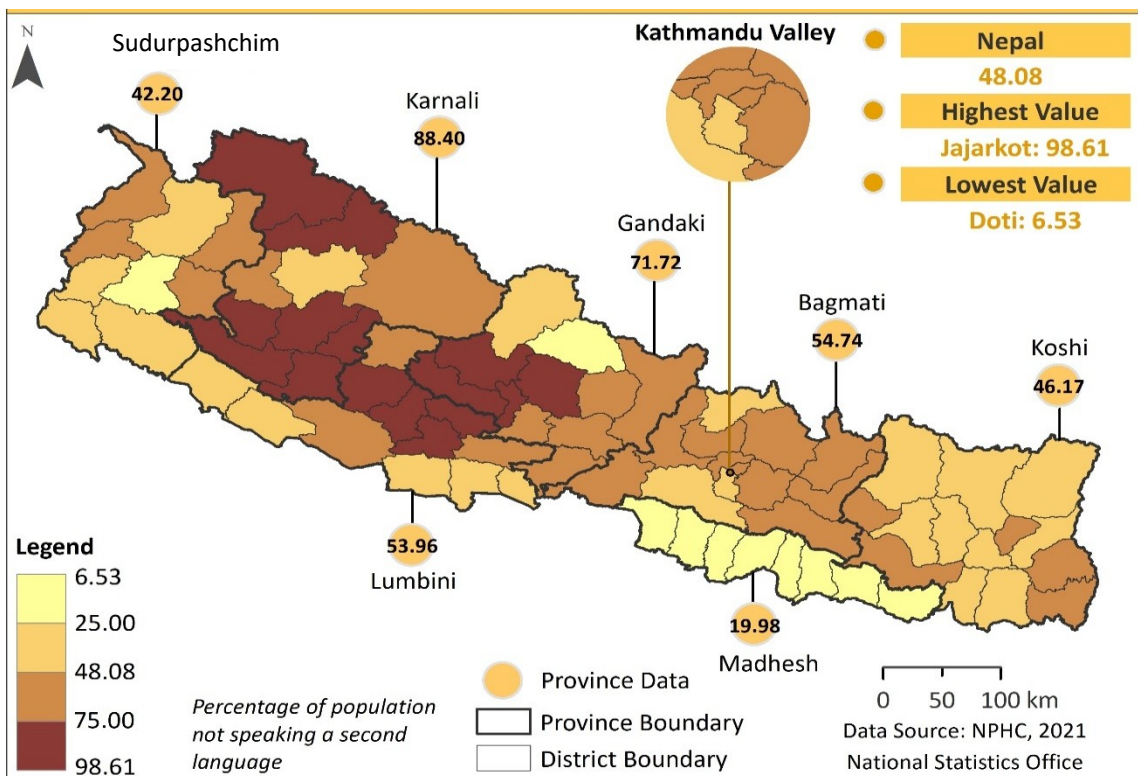
Source, NSO 2021

The top two districts where Nepali as a second language is most reported are Doti (92%) and Siraha (76.7%). By contrast, the two districts where Nepali is reported to be spoken as a second language the least are Salyan (1.6%), and Rukum (1.3%). The use of Nepali as a second language by districts is shown in Map 2.3.

Map 2.3: Nepali as a second language by province, and district, Nepal, 2021

As shown in Map 2.3, there are varying degrees of use of Nepali as a second language. This geographical region lies to districts located to the east of Bagmati Province. Aside from this, the districts in Sudurpashchim Province show the use of Nepali as a second language. The three districts with a high use of Nepali as a second language are Saptari, and Parsa in Madhesh Province, and Doti of Sudurpashchim Province. The use of Nepali as a second language can be contrasted to the geographical areas where the population do not speak a second language. The distribution of the speakers shown in Map 2.3 can be contrasted with Map 2.4, showing monolingualism or individuals not speaking a second language. Given the fact that Nepali is by far the most recorded second language in terms of population, the distributions of bilingualism and Nepali as second language are largely similar (Maps 2.2 and 2.3).

Map 2.4: Monolingualism by province and district, Nepal, 2021



The districts located in the western part of the lower region of Gandaki Province (namely Myagdi, Parbat, Parbat, Kaski), some districts of Lumbini Province (namely Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Pyuthan, Rolpa), and some districts of Karnali Province (namely Rukum West, Salyan, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Dailekh), as well as Humla and Mugu, show a high degree of monolingualism.

2.9.7 Bilingualism in major languages

A number of reasons incite communities to speak other languages in addition to their mother tongues. Aside from the incidence of bilingualism in different geographical regions, there is a need for the speakers to learn second languages to communicate across linguistic groups.

Table 2.22: Bilingualism in major languages, NPHC 2021

Mother tongues	Total	No second language	Bilingual population	Incidence of bilingualism (%)
Total	29,164,578	14,023,086	15,141,492	51.9
Nepali	13,084,457	12,496,587	587,870	4.5
Maithili	3,222,389	491,692	2,730,697	84.7
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	257,322	1,563,473	85.9
Tharu	1,714,091	84,957	1,629,134	95.0
Tamang	1,423,075	53,546	1,369,529	96.2
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	25,369	838,011	97.1
Bajjika	1,133,764	195,516	938,248	82.8
Magar Dhut	810,315	26,915	783,400	96.7
Doteli	494,864	15	494,849	100
Urdu	413,785	39,961	373,824	90.3
Avadhi	864,276	181,554	682,722	79.0
Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	9,557	340,879	97.3
Gurung	328,074	11,912	316,162	96.4
Baitadeli	152,666	0	152,666	100
Rai	144,512	5,105	139,407	96.5
Achhami	141,444	0	141,444	100
Bantawa	138,003	5,368	132,635	96.1
Rajbanshi	130,163	5,399	124,764	95.9
Sherpa	117,896	4,569	113,327	96.1
Hindi	98,399	13,980	84,419	85.8

Source: NSO 2021

The incidence of bilingualism in Nepali is the lowest (4.5%) among the languages mentioned in Table 2.22. This is because the speakers of Nepali don't need to learn another language to communicate with other linguistic groups. Conversely, the degree of bi/multilingualism is reported highest in three languages spoken in Sudurpashchim Province, or Achhami, Baitadeli, and Doteli, which show a rate of 100 percent bi/multilingualism in these languages.

2.10 Language of ancestors

The 2021 census has reported the respondents' ancestral language for the first time since modern census records in Nepal. A total of 124 languages are reported as the languages of ancestors. These languages are identical to the mother tongues despite the fact that the share of individual languages differs. The languages of ancestors and their shares are given in Annex 9. Table 2.23 reports the top 10 languages of ancestors (above 50,000 speakers).

Table 2.23: Top ten languages of ancestors, NPHC 2021

S.N.	Ancestor's languages	Population	Percentage	Mother tongue population
1.	Nepali	10,137,006	34.76	13,084,457
2.	Maithili	2,959,876	10.15	3,222,389
3.	Bhojpuri	1,768,618	6.06	1,820,795
4.	Tharu	1,764,709	6.05	1,714,091
5.	Tamang	1,602,875	5.50	1,423,075
6.	Magar Dhut	1,248,003	4.28	810,315
7.	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	1,179,946	4.05	863,380
8.	Bajjika	1,145,924	3.93	1,133,764
9.	Avadhi	911,800	3.13	864,276
10.	Urdu	569,626	1.95	413,785

These ten languages of ancestors constitute nearly 80 percent of the total language of ancestors. These languages constitute 98.4 percent of the reported languages. This can be compared to the mother tongues reported in the census. While the top twelve languages constitute 89.9 percent of the mother tongues, the top 12 languages of the ancestors comprises 98.8 percent.

Table 2.24 : Population by ancestor's language and size cohort, NPHC 2021

Population size category	No. of mother tongues	Population	%	Cumulative %
Over 100,000	27	27,743,017	95.1	95.1
100,000 < 9,999	37	1,253,968	4.3	99.4
10,000 < 999	40	151,109	0.5	99.9
999 below	20	8,810	0.0	99.9
Others & not stated		7,674	0.0	100.0
Total	124	29164578		

Source: NSO, 2021

The major 27 languages with a population of over 100,000 population constitute 95 percent of the total language of ancestors. The remaining languages form nearly 5 percent of the population. The population of the languages of ancestors and their size cohort are given in Table 2.24. A comparison can be made in the distribution of the speakers between the mother tongues

and the language of the ancestors. In many cases, the number of reporting of the ancestral language is greater than the mother tongue, especially with languages spoken by ethnic population. For example, a total of 1,764,709 speakers report Tharu as their ancestral language, whereas the Tharu report a total of 1,714,091 as their language of ancestors. This applies to Tamang, Magar Dhut and Nepalbhasa, including some small languages.

The relation between mother tongue and ancestral language is shown in Table 2.25. A strong relation is attested in the mother tongues and ancestral languages, except Nepali. The case of Nepali differs from other languages because Nepali is spoken by people of other ethnic groups who do not speak their distinct ethnic language. This is more evident with the ethnic population which speak a distinct language such as Tharu, Tamang, Nepalbhasa (Newari), Magar Dhut, and Doteli languages as mother tongues, as shown through the second language rates in Table 2.25.

Table 2.25 : Mother tongues and ancestral language, NPHC 2021

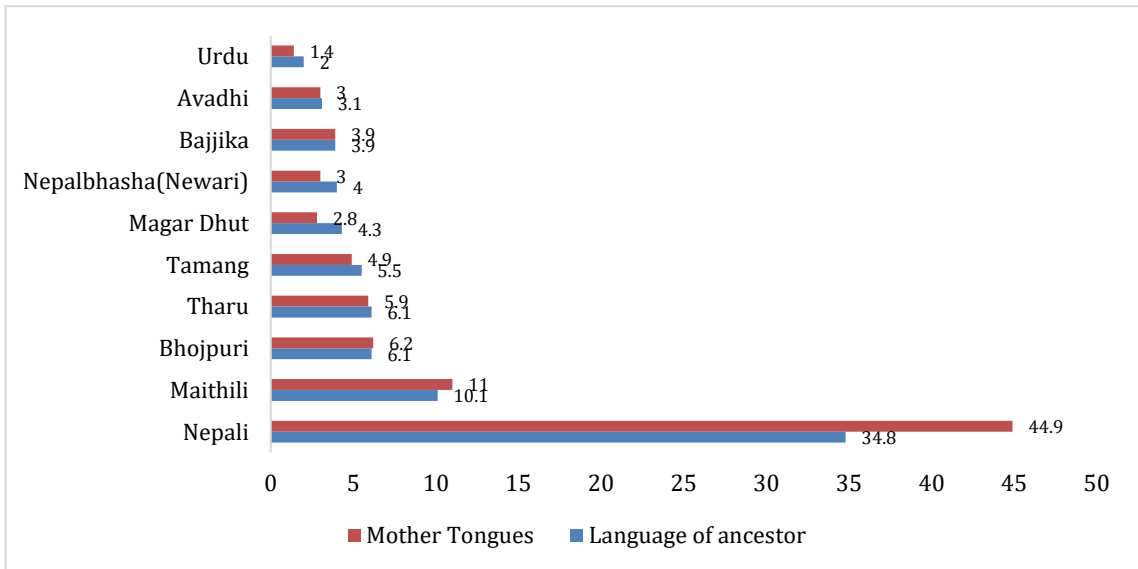
Mother Tongues	Ancestral languages										
	Total	Nepali	Maithili	Bhojpuri	Tharu	Tamang	Dhut Magar	Nepalbhasa (Newari)	Bajjika	Others	Not stated
Nepali	13,084,457	10,099,790	43,324	30,638	35,821	181,352	441,553	318,609	7,994	1,924,210	1,166
Maithili	3,222,389	4,158	2,873,898	3,235	7,295	44	237	61	59,432	273,948	81
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	2,468	2,726	1,712,361	13,759	18	1,653	62	4,854	82,824	70
Tharu	1,714,091	1,801	2,435	1,998	1,704,220	42	82	19	519	2,953	22
Tamang	1,423,075	1,722	19	20	25	141,9284	162	130	5	1,627	81
Bajjika	1,133,764	497	5,817	7,074	1,291	3	28	7	106,7387	51,652	8
Avadhi	864,276	5,771	283	2,934	1,021	6	29	12	45	854,169	6
Nepalbhasa (Newari)	863,380	2,423	14	24	16	129	69	86,0321	5	366	13
Magar Dhut	810,315	2,504	27	930	32	111	801,420	84	16	5,179	12
Doteli	494,864	1,753	63	26	61	2	144	188	15	492,605	7

Source: NSO, 2021

A comparison of ancestral languages and mother tongues are given in Annex 9. The comparison of the reporting of the ancestral language and the mother tongue refers to two situations. Firstly, the reporting of ancestral language is higher than the mother tongues, particularly in the ethnic languages (Figure 2.17). This may be because the individuals have a sense of affinity with their ancestral language even despite not speaking their ancestral language. This can be seen in Tharu, Newari, Magar Dhut, and Nepalbhasa (Newari) among the major languages given in Figure (2.17).

Figure 2.17: Share of top ten languages of ancestors and mother tongues (values are shown in percentages)

Figure 2.17: Share of top ten languages of ancestors and mother tongues (values are shown in percentages)



Source: Table 2.23

As shown in Figure 2.17, two types of relations are seen when mother tongues and language of ancestors are compared. In the case of the languages spoken largely by more than one ethnic group, the population of mother tongue is larger than that of ancestral language.³² For example, Tharu as a mother tongue constitutes about 5.9 percent of the total population, whereas the share of Tharu is 6.1 percent of the total population. In some other ethnic languages, largely spoken by the ethnic population of the same group, the percentages spoken by ancestors is slightly higher than the percentage of the mother tongue speakers. This also shows that the language retention (with regard to retention of ancestral languages) is rather weak among ethnic languages.

Conversely, in the case of the languages used largely by more than one ethnic groups, the percentage of mother tongues is higher than the language of ancestors. As shown in Figure 2.17, the percentage of mother tongue (44.9%) is much higher than the ancestral language (34.8%). This applies also to Maithili and Bhojpuri as well although the difference is rather minimal.³³

³² The percentage of the ancestral language and mother tongue is calculated on the basis of share of each language in a total population of Nepal.

³³ This is also true when the language retention is calculated by ethnic population and mother tongue speakers as shown in Table (Table 2.13).

2.11 Indigenous languages³⁴

Many of the world's Indigenous languages are endangered and, following the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's proclamation of the period 2022 to 2032 as the decade of Indigenous languages (IDIL 2022-32), it is indispensable to promote, preserve and revitalize those languages.³⁵ Nepal is home to approximately 93 Indigenous languages from various language families. The Sino-Tibetan family constitutes a greater number of languages compared to the Indo-Aryan family. However, the Indo-Aryan languages have a larger number of speakers. Among 93 languages, 78 languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan family, while 10 languages belong to Indo-Aryan family. Additionally, there are three languages from the Austro-Asiatic family, one from the Dravidian family, and one language isolate (Kusunda) (Table 2.26).

Table 2.26: Languages of the Indigenous groups, NPHC 2021

Language family	Indigenous languages	Number
Sino-Tibetan	Tamang, Nepalbhasa (Newari), Magar Dhut, Yakthung/Limbu, Gurung, (Rai), Bantawa, Shrepa, Magar Kham, Chamling, Chepang, Kulung, Sunuwar, Thami, Thulung, Ghale, Sampang, Dhimal, Khaling, Wambule, Bahing/Bayung, Yakkha, Bhujel, Bhote, Yamphu/Yamphe, Nacchiring, Hyolmo/Yholmo, Dumi, Mewahang, Puma, Pahari, Jirel, Athpahariya, Dungmali, Chum/Nubri, Chhantyal, Raji, Thakali, Meche, Koyee, Lohorung, Dolpali, Mugali, Jero/Jerung, Karmarong, Chhintang, Lhopa, Lapcha, Manange, Chhiling, Dura, Tilung, Byansi, Balkura/ Baram, Baragungwa, Magar Kaike, Hayu/Vayu, Dhuleli, Khamchi (Raute), Lungkhim, Lowa, Kagate, Waling/Walung, Nar-Phu, Lhomi, Tichurung Poike, Koche, Belhare, Phangduwali, Surel, Sam, Bankariya	72
Indo-European	Tharu, Rajbanshi, Rana Tharu, Tajpuriya, Danuwar, Sonaha, Majhi, Kewarat, Kumal, Darai, Bote, Done, Gangai, Sadri, Kisan, Malpande,	16
Austro-Asiatic	Santhali, Khariya, Munda/Mudiyari	3
Dravidian	Uranw/Urau	1
Language isolate	Kusunda	1
Total		93

Source: NSO, 2021

³⁴ The term is used in this report solely for analytical convenience.

³⁵ <https://www.unesco.org/en/decades/indigenous-languages>, retrieved September 15, 2024.

2.12 Cross-border languages

Nepal shares its borders with the two neighboring countries of China and India. India borders Nepal on three sides – east, south, and west – while China borders Nepal to the north. As a result, some languages are spoken across the national borders. According to the 2021 census, there were 47 such cross-border languages, including Angika, Avadhi, Bajjika, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Nepali, Maithili, Urdu, Rajbanshi, and Tharu. These languages belong to different language families such as Sino-Tibetan (e.g. Bodo, Tamang, Magar, Dzonkha, Byangsi, Lapcha, and Rai-Kirati), Austro-Asiatic (e.g. Santhali), and Dravidian (e.g. Kurux) (Yadava, 2014, p. 61). Table 2.27 provides an overview of these cross-national or cross-border languages.³⁶

Table 2.27 : Cross border languages

S.N.	Language family	2011	2021
1	Indo-Aryan	Angika, Avadhi, Bajjika, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Nepali, Maithili, Urdu, Rajbanshi, and Tharu	Angika, Avadhi, Bajjika, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Nepali, Maithili, Urdu, Rajbanshi, and Tharu
2	Sino-Tibetan	Bodo, Tamang, Magar, Dzonkha, Byangsi, Lapcha, and Rai-Kirati	Meche, Tamang, Magar, Dzonkha, Byangsi, Lapcha, Thami, Yakthung/Limbu, Sunuwar, Yakkha and Rai language groups
3	Austro-Asiatic	Santhali	Santhali
4	Dravidian	Kurux	Uranw

Source : Yadava 2014; NPHC 2021

2.13 Linguistic diversity index

As mentioned in this report’s methodology, the linguistic diversity index (LDI) is calculated following the approach of Greenberg (1956). Table 2.28 shows the LDI in different provinces, ecological zones, and with rural and urban population. The linguistic diversity indexes include the value to show a number of different languages in each location along with the speaker population.

The diversity index is fairly consistent in 2011 and 2021 censuses, viz. 0.772 and 0.773 respectively. The LDI is highest in Koshi Province, followed by Sudurpashchim Province, and Madhesh Province in 2021. This is because a number of Rai-Kiranti languages are spoken in this

³⁶ Some further details on cross-border languages between Nepal and India is found in Turin and Yadava.

province. This is also the province where 100 mother tongues are spoken as mother tongues showing that this is the most language-diverse province. Conversely, the LDI is the least in Karnali Province followed by Gandaki Province in 2021. Only 48 languages are spoken as mother tongues in Karnali Province, meaning that this province is most language-uniform. There is a significant increase change in LDI in the past two censuses in the Karnali province.

The language diversity index is consistent in the last two censuses in all provinces except in Karnali, in which the LDI is increased significantly from 0.087 to 0.206 over a decade (in 2011 to 2021). One of the reasons for increasing diversity in Karnali Province can be attributed to the changes in the number of language reporting.

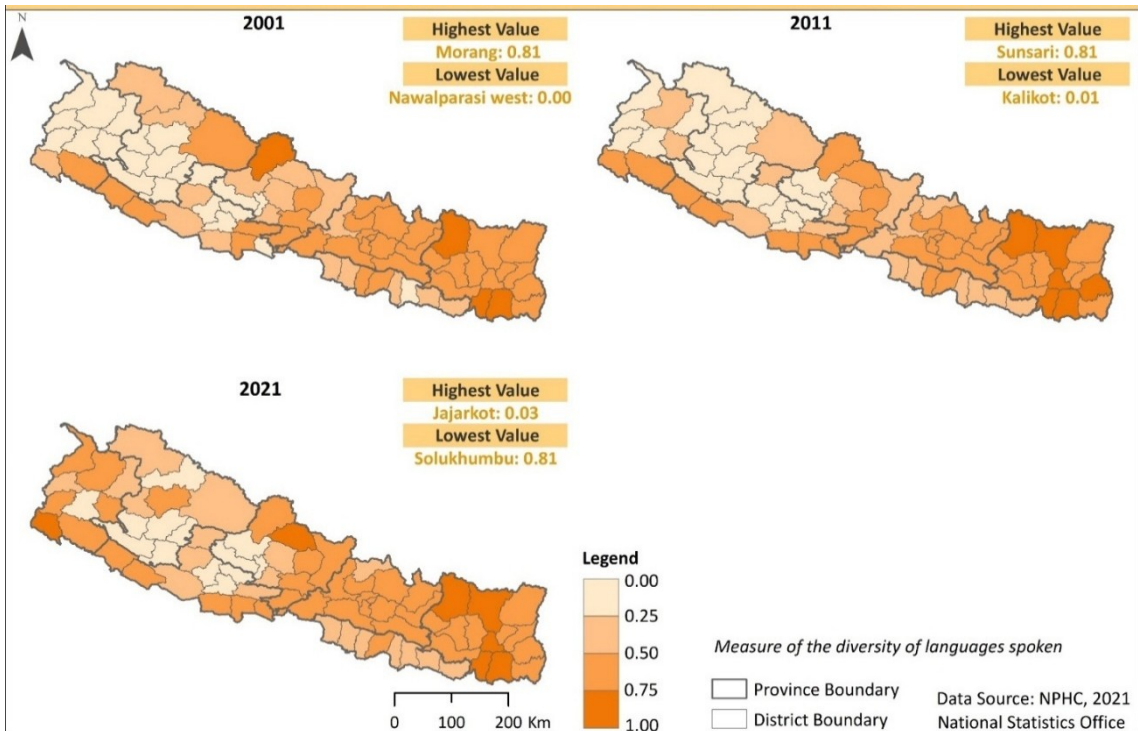
Table 2.28: Linguistic diversity index in provinces and ecological regions (2011, 2021)

Area	Censuses	
	2021	2011
Koshi	0.770	0.788
Madhesh	0.748	0.729
Bagmati	0.638	0.621
Gandaki	0.444	0.442
Lumbini	0.681	0.691
Karnali	0.206	0.087
Sudurpashchim	0.757	0.772
Rural and urban municipalities		
Rural municipalities	0.805	0.705
Urban municipalities	0.752	0.783
Ecological zone		
Mountain	0.702	0.596
Hill	0.571	0.582
Tarai	0.840	0.846
Urban/Rural		
Urban	0.707	0.705
Peri-urban	0.840	0.838
Rural	0.640	0.644

Source: NSO, 2021; CBS, 2011

As shown in Maps 2.4 and 2.5, there is a correlation between low linguistic diversity index and monolingualism. In these maps, the western parts of Gandaki and Lumbini provinces and the southern parts of Karnali Province and adjoining areas exhibit lower linguistic diversity. This is also an area with high degree of monolingualism.

Map 2.5: Linguistic diversity index in different years by district, Nepal



As shown in Map 2.5, the diversity pattern is consistent in the eastern part of Nepal, mainly in the region east to the Kathmandu Valley. The diversity is also consistent in the northern part of Nepal (i.e., in the plain areas of Nepal). By contrast, some changes are seen in the western part of Nepal.

The LDI is higher in rural municipalities than in urban municipalities. It is highest in Tarai, followed by Mountain and in Hill zones. It is reported highest in peri-urban, followed by urban and rural areas respectively. The districts with the highest LDI in 2021 are given in Annex 10 and Map 2.5. Although LDI is constant in some districts, there is considerable increase in LDI in Manang (42.8% in 2001 to 78.7% in 2021) and Kanchanpur (from 46.7% in 2001 to 75.3% in 2021). As shown in Map 2.5, the reporting of diversity is rather consistent in the eastern part of Nepal compared to western part of Nepal.

The lowest LDI is reported in Jajarkot, Rukum - West and Salyan. As shown in Table 2.29, below 20 languages are spoken in all of these districts. Although LDI is constant in some districts of this cohort, there is sizable decrease in LDI in Myagdi (34.6 percent in 2001 to 13.9 percent in 2021). The districts with a high diversity index in the last three censuses (2001, 2011, 2021) are Solukhumbu, Morang, and Sunsari. Some districts consistently show the least diversity in the 2001, 2011, 2021 censuses. As shown in Map 2.5, the districts include Doti, Surkhet, Salyan,

Dailekh, Jajarkot, Rukum - West, Baglung, Gulmi, Myagdi, and Pyuthan. In order to show the relationship between the languages spoken within the districts, and the linguistic diversity, the sum of the number of the languages spoken in different districts and number of languages are shown in Table 2.29.

Table 2.29: Linguistic diversity in terms of number of languages spoken

No of reported languages	Districts	Number
Below 20	Rukum- East, Mugu, Kalikot, Rukum - West, Jajarkot, Dolpa, Baitadi, Rasuwa, Pyuthan, Humla, Salyan, Manang, Parbat, Arghakanchi, Dailekh, Myagdi, Rolpa, Darchula	18
21-30	Bajhang, Dolakha, Gulmi, Bajura, Achhcham, Syangja, Dadeldhura, Mustang, Baglung, Jumla, Doti, Ramechhap, Tehrathum, Saptari, Nuwakot, Lamjung, Rolpa, Kapilbastu, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Rautahat, Sindhupalchowk, Dang, Surkhet, Okhaldhunga, Dhading, Sindhuli	27
31-40	Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung, Sarlahi, Parsa, Nawalparasi-East, Nawalparasi- West, Siraha, Bardiya, Khotang, Makwanpur, Bara, Kavrepalanchowk, Panchthar, Bara, Banke	15
41-50	Rupandehi, Bhojpur, Dhankuta, Tanahu, Sankhuwasabha, Kanchanpur, Chitawan	7
51-60	Kaski, Kailali, Ilam, Udaypur, Bhaktapur	5
61 and above	Kathmandu, Morang, Lalitpur, Jhapa, Sunsari	5

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGES IN PROVINCE, DISTRICT AND LOCAL LEVEL

3.0 Outline

This chapter presents the situation of languages in provinces, districts and the municipalities, taking consideration of the mother tongues and the second languages spoken in the respective sectors. The chapter first presents the mother tongues and second languages in the provinces, and the situation of bi/multilingualism. This is followed by the language situation in each of the seven provinces of Nepal. This is then followed by the comparison of the diversity of languages in terms of the number of languages in all districts.

3.1 Languages in provinces

The mother tongues reported in Bagmati and Koshi are 107 for each province. This is again followed by Gandaki and Sudurpashchim provinces, each of which accommodates 72 mother tongues. Lumbini ranks third with regards to the diversity of the languages spoken. Madhesh Province accommodates 60 mother tongues. The least number of mother tongues were reported in Karnali (48), showing the least linguistic diversity. An overview of the languages used in the provinces are given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Languages spoken in provinces, NPHC 2021

Languages	No. of languages spoken	Total population	Largest language of the province (%)	No. of second languages	No. of language of ancestor
Koshi	107	4,961,412	Nepali (45.3)	105	110
Madhesh	60	6,114,600	Maithili (41.7)	67	70
Bagmati	107	6,116,866	Nepali (56.0)	98	112
Gandaki	72	2,466,427	Nepali (73.4)	71	90
Lumbini	66	5,122,078	Nepali (50.9)	63	82
Karnali	48	1,688,412	Nepali (88.9)	37	55
Sudurpashchim	72	2,694,783	Nepali (42.4)	49	72

Source: NSO, 2021

Only four provinces have mother tongues with a majority, these being Bagmati, Gandaki, Lumbini, and Karnali. Although Nepali is the largest language in Koshi and Sudurpashchim, it is

not in absolute majority.³⁷ The Maithili language is the largest language in Madhesh Province with 41.7 percent of the mother tongues in the province.

3.1.1 Distribution of languages in provinces

The distribution of major languages is shown in Table 3.2. A few patterns of distribution of the languages is noticed. While some languages are largely concentrated in specific province, others are scattered across Nepal. Nepali is reported in all provinces, with less than 3 percent in Madhesh Province, and less than 9 percent in Sudurpashchim Province. Maithili is concentrated in the districts of Madhesh Province (79.2%), with a sizable number of speakers in Koshi Province (18.0%) which is the area which Maithili has been associated with for many decades. Bhojpuri is mainly distributed largely in Madhesh Province, with a sizable population in Lumbini Province. Magar Dhut is scattered in different provinces, such as Gandaki (29.2%), Lumbini (24.1%), and Bagmati (18.1%).

Table 3.2: Current geographic distribution of large languages (with above 100,000) as a percent, NPHC 2021

Languages	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Nepal
Nepali	17.2	2.7	26.2	13.8	19.9	11.5	8.7	13,084,457
Maithili	18.0	79.2	2.4	0.1	0.2		0.1	3,222,389
Bhojpuri	1.2	63.2	3.8	0.8	30.9		0.1	1,820,795
Tharu	12.7	14.9	5.6	2.5	40.6	0.5	23.3	1,714,091
Tamang	12.3	7.1	77.3	2.4	0.3	0.1	0.6	1,423,075
Bajjika	0.1	99.4	0.4	0.1	0.0			1,133,764
Avadhi	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	99.0	0.1	0.4	864,276
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	7.3	1.5	83.7	4.4	2.8	0.1	0.2	863,380
Magar Dhut	17.7	5.5	18.1	29.2	24.1	3.3	2.1	810,315
Doteli			1.3		0.1	0.1	98.4	494,864
Urdu	27.8	60.3	1.0	0.3	10.6		0.1	413,785
Yakthung/ Limbu	94.9	0.1	4.8	0.2	0.1			350,436
Gurung	8.3	0.4	20.7	63.4	6.2	0.5	0.5	328,074
Magahi	6.3	93.5	0.1					230,117
Baitadeli	0.2		0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	99.3	152,666
Rai	63.5	3.2	30.7	1.9	0.3	0.1	0.3	144,512
Achhami			0.2		1.1	0.8	97.9	141,444

³⁷ The population above 50 percent in the respective sector (i.e., province, district, local level) is categorized as 'majority', whereas the languages with largest percentage, but below 50 percent in the respective sector, are termed as 'largest'.

Languages	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Nepal
Bantawa	96.9	0.1	2.9	0.1				138,003
Rajbanshi	98.5	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	130,163
Sherpa	55.5		43.4	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.1	117,896
Khash	0.5	0.5	1.4	2.0	2.3	91.1	2.2	117,511

Source, NSO, 2021

The languages with a small number of speakers are those who reside mainly in specific municipalities/rural municipalities, districts, and provinces. This applies true to many Rai and Kirati languages spoken in Koshi Province. This additionally applies true to a number of TB languages, such as Nar-Phu, Lowa, Tichurong Poike, among others. Some IA languages also are concentrated in specific provinces, such as Done and Rana Tharu. The distribution of each language with less than 100, 000 speakers in different provinces are given in Annex 11.

3.1.2 Bilingualism in provinces

The use of the second languages in provinces varies. The provinces in Nepal are not structured on a linguistic basis. The situation of bilingualism in different provinces is shown in Table 3.3. The national average of incidence of bilingualism in 2011 is 39.2% (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Bilingualism by province (2011), NPHC 2021

Area	Total population	No second language/ Monolingualism	Monolingual	Second language reported/bilingualism	Bilingualism %
			%		
Nepal	21,959,561	13,350,813	60.8	8,608,748	39.2
Province					
Koshi	4,534,943	2,189,966	48.3	2,344,977	51.7
Madhesh	5,404,145	2,378,273	44.0	3,025,872	56.0
Bagmati	5,529,452	3,296,913	59.6	2,232,539	40.4
Gandaki	2,403,757	1,778,678	74.0	625,079	26.0
Lumbini	4,499,272	3,166,384	70.4	1,332,888	29.6
Karnali	1,570,418	1,503,265	95.7	67,153	4.3
Sudurpashchim	2,552,517	1,227,300	48.1	1,325,217	51.9

Source: NSO, 2021

Bilingualism is reported at a high rate in Madhesh Province (56.0%), followed by Sudurpashchim Province (51.9%). The high degree of bi/multilingualism in Madhesh can be attributed to the substantial number of Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Bajjika speaking population using Nepali as a second language. The lowest rate of bilingualism is reported in Karnali Province.³⁸ However, the

³⁸ The largest change is seen in Madesh, and smallest in Koshi.

rate of bilingualism in Karnali shows the absolute change (7.3%), which is in fact the larger than in most other provinces, with the relative change also the greatest at an increase of 2.7 times.

Compared with the incidence of bi/multilingualism at national level in 2011, the incidence of bi/multilingualism increased from 41.3 percent to 51.9 percent in 2021 (with 12.7 percentage points growth).³⁹ The largest growth point is reported in Lumbini Province (16.4%), which is higher than the national average. Conversely, the lowest degree of bi/multilingualism (2.1%) is reported in Koshi Province (3.4).

Table 3.4: Bilingualism by province and increase in share of bilingualism, NPHC 2021

Area	Total population	No second language	Monolingual %	Second language reported	Bilingualism %	Increase in share of bilingualism (2011, 2021)
Nepal	29,164,578	14,023,086	48.1	15,141,492	51.9	12.7
Province						
Koshi	4,961,412	2,290,444	46.2	2,670,968	53.8	2.1
Madhesh	6,114,600	1,221,423	20	4,893,177	80	24
Bagmati	6,116,866	3,348,503	54.7	2,768,363	45.3	4.9
Gandaki	2,466,427	1,768,868	71.7	697,559	28.3	2.3
Lumbini	5,122,078	2,764,056	54	2,358,022	46	16.4
Karnali	1,688,412	1,492,627	88.4	195,785	11.6	7.3
Sudurpashchim	2,694,783	1,137,165	42.2	1,557,618	57.8	5.9

Source: NSO, 2021

Table 3.4 shows that most of those from the Madhesh Province (80.0%) reported that they speak the second language compared to other provinces, followed by Sudurpashchim (57.8%) and Koshi (53.8%) provinces. As presented in Table 3.4 and Map 2.2, bilingualism is high in Madhesh Province. Conversely, most monolingual speakers reported in the census are in the Karnali Province (88.4%) followed by Gandaki (71.7%) and Lumbini (46%) provinces. Karnali Province reported the least percentage of the bilingualism (11.6%) because an overwhelming majority of the population in this province speak the Nepali language, which is also the lingua franca of the nation. These are the districts with least linguistic diversity (Map 2.4).

Bi/multilingualism is the communicative needs in the multilingual regions or provinces. Since the population of non-Nepali speaking population is reported higher in the Madhesh Province, the bi/multilingualism is reported high in this province. At the province level, the Nepali mother tongue percentage is inversely related to the bi/multilingualism nearly in all provinces (compare with Table 3.3). In all of the provinces, the share of Nepali as a second language is significant.

³⁹ The growth point is slightly different from the actual growth in calculation.

3.1.3 Bilingualism by districts

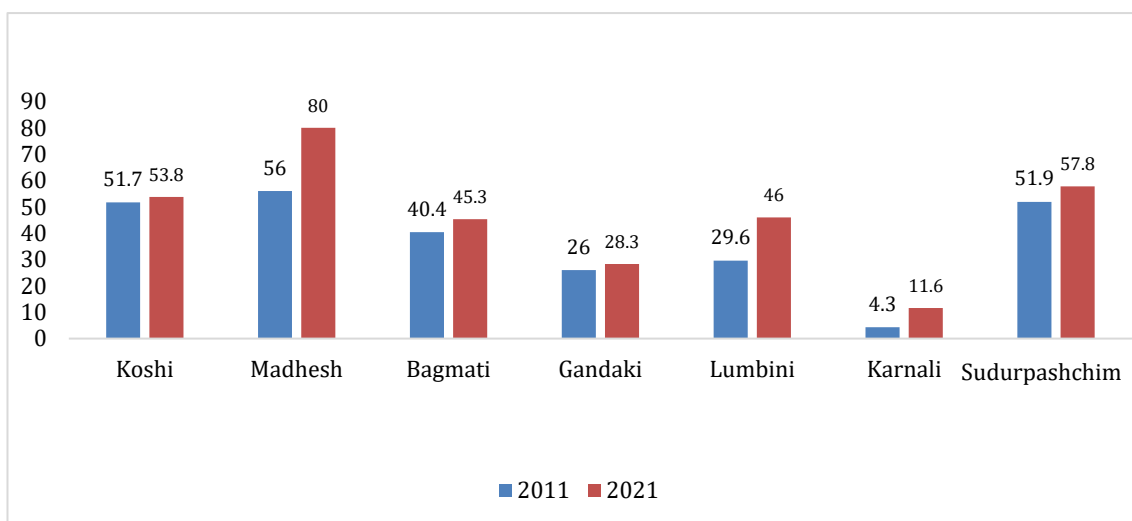
Owing to the dispersal of language speakers, some districts characterize high incidences of bilingualism, whereas other areas show lower bilingual rates. The rates of monolingualism and bilingualism by district are presented in Map 2.2. Table 3.5 presents the top five bilingual and least bilingual districts of Nepal. Table shows that the least bi/multilingualism exists in Jajarkot, Rukum - West, Salyan, Dailekh, and Arghakhanchi respectively. Conversely, the highly bilingual districts are Doti, Parsa, Siraha, Saptari and Rautahat in descending order.

Table 3.5: Top five bilingual and least five monolingual district, NPHC 2021

District	Number	Monolingualism	Monolingualism %	Bi/multilingualism %
Jajarkot	189,360	186,730	98.6	1.4
Rukum - West	166,740	164,093	98.4	1.6
Salyan	238,515	233,056	97.7	2.3
Dailekh	252,313	241,316	95.6	4.4
Arghakhanchi	177,086	167,481	94.6	5.4
Rautahat	813,573	154,156	18.9	81.1
Saptari	706,255	132,045	18.7	81.3
Siraha	739,953	121,873	16.5	83.5
Parsa	654,471	102,434	15.7	84.3
Doti	204,831	13,372	6.5	93.5

Source, NSO, 2021

Figure 3.1: Bilingualism by province (2011,2021)



Source: Tables (3.4, 3.5)

The incidence of bilingualism increases in all provinces across the last two censuses. There is a change in the incidence of bilingualism by province in 2021 compared to 2011. The increase is seen in the Madhesh Province as bilingualism increases from 56.0 percent to 80 percent (from 2011 to 2021). The incidence of bilingualism increased sizably in Lumbini (29.6% to 46%) in decadal census. The least increase in bilingualism is reported in Karnali.

3.2 Language situation in provinces

This section presents in brief the language situation in different provinces in Nepal.

3.2.1 Koshi

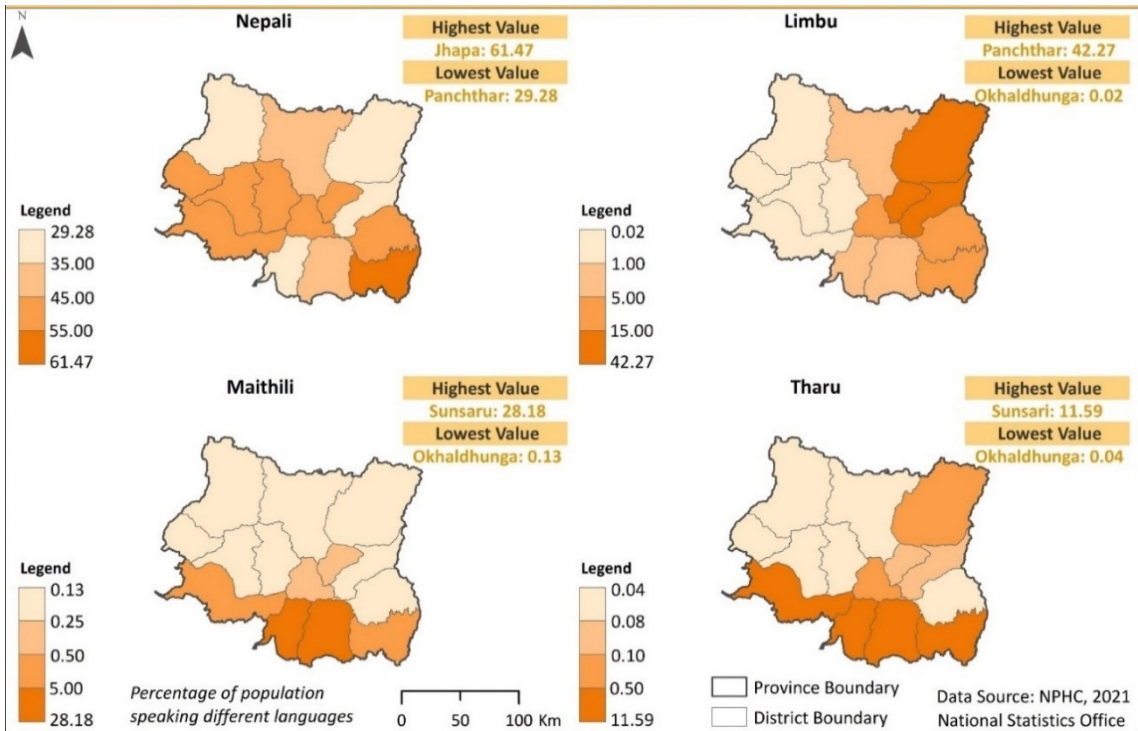
Koshi Province in eastern Nepal is home to 100 mother tongues in addition to ‘others’ and ‘not stated’. Of these, 14 languages have more than 1 percent of the population as speakers, while the rest have less than 1 percentage of the total population of the province (Table 3.6). Among these, 8 languages have over 100,000 speakers each, while the remaining languages have comparatively small share. The majority of Rai-Kirati languages are spoken in this province. Some languages, such as Acchami, Bajhangi, Chepang, Surel, Lhopa, Thakali, and Dhuleli are primarily spoken in other provinces, and their population is relatively small in this province. There is a gain in the population of Nepali, and Maithili in 2021 compared to 2011. However, the population of Yakthung/Limbu reduced slightly. Most languages in Koshi Province declined in 2021 compared to 2011 as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Major languages of Koshi Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Language	Population	Percentage	Language	Population	Percentage
Nepali	1,953,396	43.1	Nepali	2,246,027	45.3
Maithili	507,275	11.2	Maithili	579,347	11.7
Limbu	331,685	7.3	Yakthung/Limbu	332,512	6.7
Tharu	177,789	3.9	Tharu	218,534	4.4
Tamang	177,613	3.9	Tamang	175,445	3.5
Magar	146,252	3.2	Magar Dhut	143,117	2.9
Bantawa	130,958	2.9	Bantawa	133,745	2.7
Urdu	125,625	2.8	Rajbanshi	128,189	2.6
Rajbanshi	121,291	2.7	Urdu	114,994	2.3
Rai	120,791	2.7	Rai	91,746	1.8
Newar	77,559	1.7	Chamling	82,640	1.6
Chamling	75,061	1.7	Sherpa	65,399	1.3
Sherpa	67,305	1.5	Nepalbhasa (Newari)	62,741	1.2
Santhali	48,921	1.1	Santhali	53,438	1
Total	4,534,943		Total	4,961,412	

Source: NPHC 2021; CBS 2011

Map 3.1: Distribution of major languages in Koshi Province by district



The distribution of major languages of Koshi Province is shown in Map (3.1). Among four major languages (Table 3.6 and Map 3.1), the major concentration of Nepali is seen in Jhapa, followed by Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Bhojpur, Udayapur, and Tehrathum.

Maithili speakers are mainly concentrated in Morang and Sunsari. Yakthung/Limbu speakers are mainly concentrated in Taplejung, followed by Tehrathum and Panchthar. Tharu speakers are mainly concentrated in Udayapur, Morang and Sunsari.

A total of 104 languages are spoken in Koshi Province as a second language. The majority of languages among this group belong to TB family, many of which are highly endangered. Among the 56 TB languages spoken in this province, the Limbu/Yakthung, Tamang, Magar, and Bantawa languages (4 in total) have populations exceeding 100,000 speakers. Other languages are lesser in number.

Table 3.7: Major second languages of Koshi Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second language	Population	Percentage	Second language	Population	Percentage
No second language	2,189,966	48.3	No second language	2,290,444	46.2
Nepali	2,029,776	44.8	Nepali	2,254,267	45.4
Maithili	71,629	1.6	Maithili	78,334	1.6
Hindi	49,856	1.1	Bantawa	42,308	0.9
Bantawa	23,973	0.5	Bhote	29,597	0.6
Tharu	21,795	0.5	Chamling	25,498	0.5
Rajbanshi	21,288	0.5	Hindi	23,485	0.5
Limbu	20,704	0.5	Tharu	16,918	0.3
Rai	15,836	0.3	Thulung	16,541	0.3
English	11,878	0.3	Yakthung/Limbu	13,719	0.3
Magar	8,728	0.3	Bahing/Bayung	12,384	0.20
Total	4,534,943		Total	4,961,412	

Source: NSO 2021: CBS 2011

The major three second languages include Nepali, Maithili, and Bantawa. Despite the fact that a number of Rai and Kiranti languages are spoken in this province, their share as second languages is not sizable. There is a gain in the use of Nepali as a second language in 2021.

A total of 110 ancestor's languages are reported in Bagmati Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Nepali (35.9%), followed by Maithili (11.4%) and Yakthung/Limbu (7.7%). Compared with the mother tongue, the reporting of the Nepali as the language of ancestors is less by nearly 10%. The reporting of the ancestors' language is higher than the mother tongues in some Indigenous languages, such as Bantawa (2.9%), Tharu (4.5%), Santhali (1.1%).

3.2.2 Madhesh

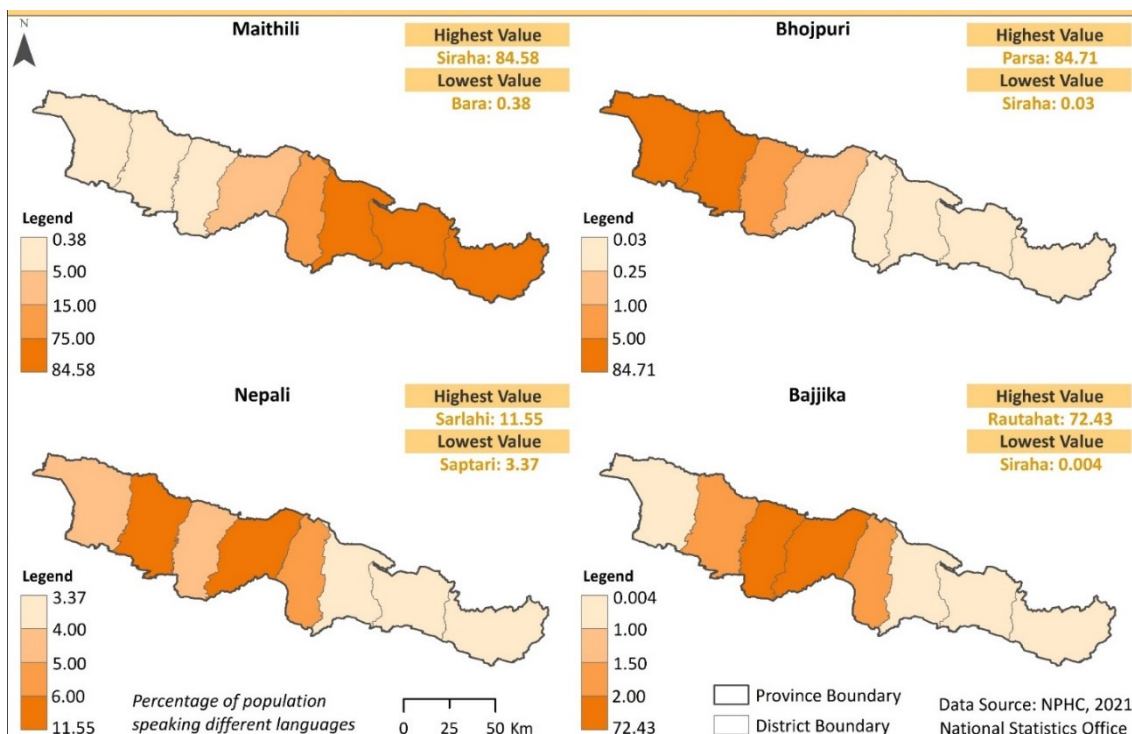
A total of 62 languages are spoken in Madhesh Province. Maithili (41.7%), Bhojpuri (18%), Bajjika (18.4%), and Tharu (4.2%), all belonging to the IA language family, are the major languages spoken in this province. Only eight of the languages spoken in this province have more than 1% of the population (Table 3.8). The shares of Maithili, Bajjika, Nepali, Urdu and Tamang decrease in 2021 compared to 2011. Conversely, the population of remaining languages in Table 3.8 slightly increase in Madhesh province in 2021.

Table 3.8: Major languages of Madhesh Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Language	Population	Percentage	Language	Population	Percentage
Maithili	2,447,978	45.3	Maithili	2,551,917	41.7
Bhojpuri	1,003,873	18.6	Bhojpuri	1,149,962	18.8
Bajjika	791,642	14.6	Bajjika	1,127,255	18.4
Nepali	360,276	6.7	Nepali	352,109	5.8
Urdu	317,060	5.9	Tharu	254,685	4.2
Tharu	203,575	3.8	Urdu	249,614	4.1
Tamang	104,984	1.9	Magahi	215,236	3.5
Magar	42,931	0.8	Tamang	100,669	1.6
Magadi	31,049	0.6	Magar Dhut	44,385	0.7
Newar	16,944	0.3	Hindi	14,232	0.2
Total	5,404,145		Total	6,114,600	

Source: NSO, 2021

Map 3.2: Distribution of major languages in Madhesh Province by district



As shown in Map 3.2, there are three distinct geographical regions in terms of the languages distributed in Madhesh Province. Maithili is largely spoken in the four districts from the eastern

region of this province – these being Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari – which are concentrated in the southeastern part of Nepal. Bhojpuri is predominantly spoken in Bara and Parsa, located in the western region of Madhesh Province. Bajjika speakers are mainly concentrated in Sarlahi and Rautahat, which are located in the central districts of this province. Most of the major languages spoken in this province belong to the Indo-Aryan language family, with the exception of Tamang which belongs to the TB language family. Additionally, other major languages spoken in this region include Tharu, Urdu, and Magahi.

A total of 67 second languages are spoken in Madhesh Province. The major second languages of Madhesh Province are given in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Major second languages of Madhesh Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second languages	Population	Percentage	Second languages	Population	Percentage
No Second languages	2,378,273	44	No second language	1,221,423	20
Nepali	1,601,664	29.6	Nepali	4,327,951	70.8
Hindi	995,486	18.4	Maithili	172,455	2.8
Bhojpuri	135,045	2.5	Bhojpuri	104,543	1.7
Maithili	127,260	2.4	Hindi	87,218	1.4
Bajjika	60,240	1.1	Bajjika	85,057	1.4
Urdu	52,207	1	Urdu	37,686	0.6
Tharu	21,796	0.4	Magahi	27,156	0.4
Magadi	10,681	0.2	Tharu	13,977	0.2
Magar	3,904	0.1	Avadhi	12,097	0.2
Tamang	3,339	0.1	Musalman	4,924	0.1
Total			Total	6,114,600	

Source: NSO, 2021

Among speakers in Madhesh Province, a rate which is slightly below three-quarters of the population (70.8%) speak Nepali as a second language. One of the reasons for this figure is the fact that Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Bajjika are mainly spoken as mother tongues. Further, speakers may need to learn the language of wider communication to communicate in the Nepali language. The share of Nepali as a second language increased drastically from 29.6 percent in 2011 to 70.8 percent in 2021.

A total of 70 ancestor's languages are reported in Madhesh Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Maithili (37.5%), followed by Bhojpuri and Bajjika (18.6% each). Compared with the reporting of Maithili as mother tongue (41.7%), the presence of Maithili as the language of ancestors is lower (37.5%).

3.2.3 Bagmati

Bagmati Province is home to 109 languages. Only eight of them are spoken by more than 1% of the population within the province. Nepali is the most widely spoken language (56.0%), followed by Tamang (18%), and Nepalbhasa (Newari) (11.8%) which have traditional roots in this province. The share of speakers of other languages is smaller (Table 3.10). The population of all three major languages of the province – Nepali, Tamang, and Newar – slightly decreased in 2021 when compared to 2011.

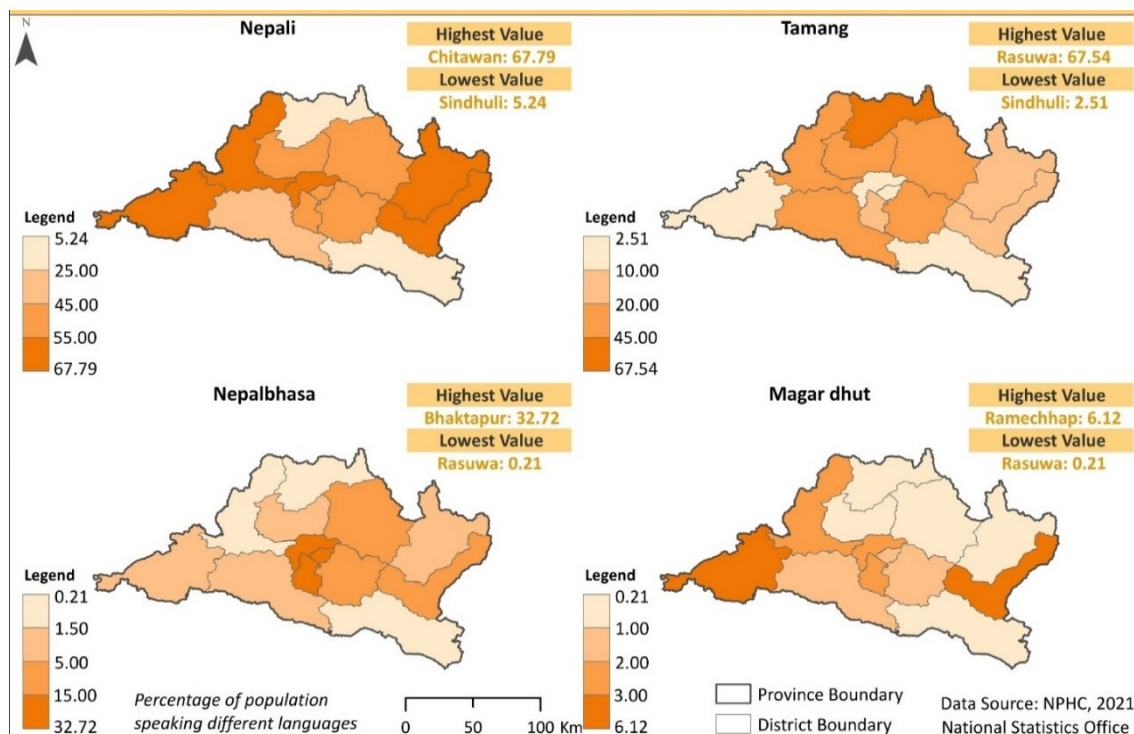
Table 3.10: Major languages of Bagmati Province

2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Nepali	3,175,246	57.4	Nepali	3,427,981	56
Tamang	1,012,862	18.3	Tamang	1,100,442	18
Newar	680,027	12.3	Nepalbhasa (Newari)	722,943	11.8
Magar	100,796	1.8	Magar Dhut	146,738	2.4
Tharu	74,279	1.3	Tharu	95,423	1.6
Maithili	67,142	1.2	Maithili	76,455	1.2
Gurung	52,553	1	Bhojpuri	69,763	1.1
Chepang	46,235	0.8	Gurung	67,893	1.1
Bhojpuri	42,198	0.8	Chepang	54,889	0.9
Sherpa	41,466	0.7	Sherpa	51,212	0.8
Total	5,529,452		Total	6,116,866	

Source: NSO, 2021: CBS 2011

As shown in Map 3.3, Tamang is one of the major languages of the province. It is primarily concentrated in the districts of Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchowk, Kavrepalanchowk, Makwanpur and Dhading, with presence in some additional districts which circle around the Kathmandu Valley.

Nepalbhasa is concentrated in the Kathmandu Valley, a central part of Bagmati Province, located in the southern part of Nepal. Magar Dhut, ranked fourth, is sparsely distributed in several districts.

Map 3.3: Distribution of major languages in Bagmati Province by district

Nepalbhasa (Newari) is rich in literature and has a long tradition of written literature. Moreover, a number of languages have territories in this province: these are Pahari, Chepang, Thangmi, Hayu, Surel, Yohlmo, Kagate, Jirel, Surel, Thangmi of the TB language family and Danuwar, Done, Darai, Majhi of the IA language family. While glossaries, sample texts, and sketch grammars are available for these languages, they lack comprehensive documentation.

The major second languages of Bagmati Province are given in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: Major second languages of Bagmati Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second languages	Population	Percentage	Second languages	Population	Percentage
No second language	3,296,913	59.6	No second language	3,348,503	54.7
Nepali	2,074,115	37.5	Nepali	2,548,213	41.7
English	59,108	1.1	English	63,129	1
Tamang	23,120	0.4	Tamang	30,492	0.5
Newar	19,517	0.4	Nepalbhasa (Newari)	20,875	0.3
Hindi	15,734	0.3	Hindi	16,411	0.3
Magar	7,459	0.1	Maithili	11,292	0.2
Gurung	4,019	0.1	Bhote	10,972	0.2

2011			2021		
Second languages	Population	Percentage	Second languages	Population	Percentage
Maithili	3,754	0.1	Magar Dhut	8,286	0.1
Sherpa	2,828	0.1	Gurung	4,863	0.1
Bhojpuri	2,716	0	Avadhi	4,478	0.1
Total	5,529,452		Total	6,116,866	

Source: NSO, 2021; CBS, 2011

A total of 98 languages are spoken as a second language in Bagmati Province. Nepali is the major second major language (54.5%) followed by English (1%). The reporting of the second language decreases in 2021 compared to 2011, which is to say that the incidence of monolingualism increases.

A total of 112 ancestor’s languages are reported in the census in Bagmati Province. The largest population of the ancestor’s language is Nepali (46.3%), followed by Tamang (19.6%), and Nepalbhasha (14.4%). The reporting of both of these languages as ancestor’s languages is higher than their returns as mother tongues.

3.2.4 Gandaki

Gandaki Province reveals the linguistic diversity in terms of number of languages spoken in this province. A total of 72 mother tongues are spoken (Table 3.12). Nepali is in absolute majority (73.4%) in the province level. There is no substantial change in the size of population in major three languages in 2021 as compared to 2011.

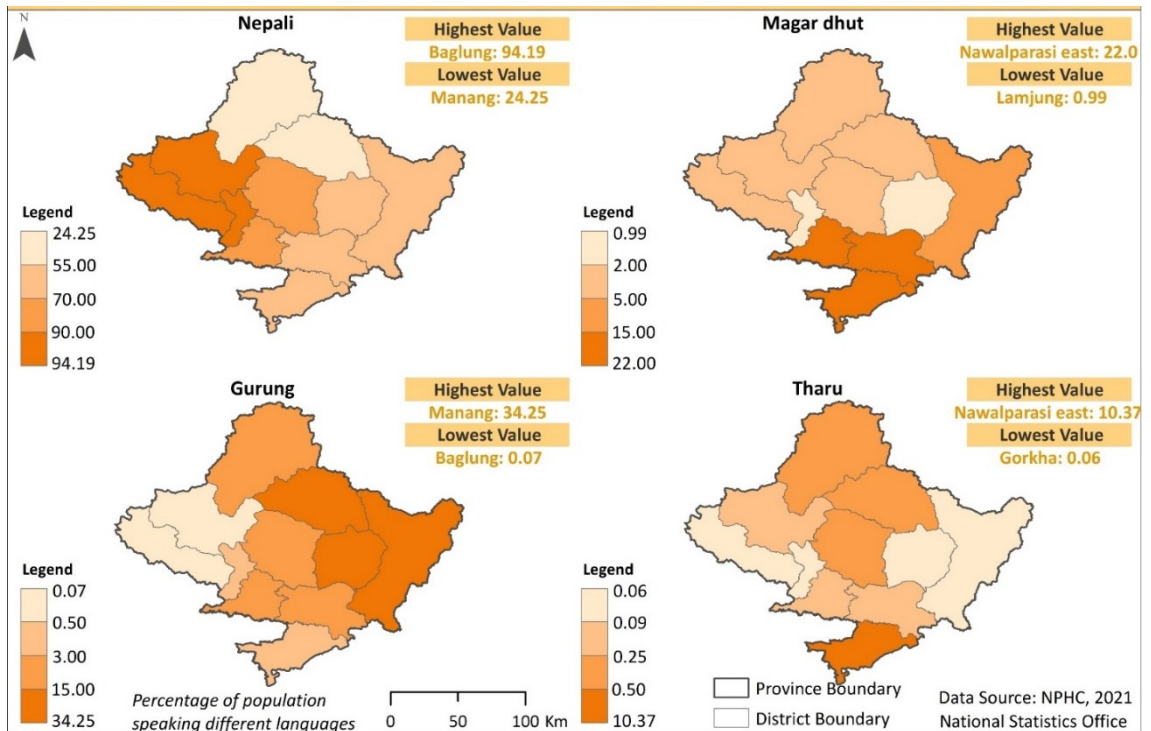
Table 3.12: Major languages of Gandaki Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Nepali	1,765,855	73.5	Nepali	1,810,003	73.4
Magar	237,582	9.9	Magar Dhut	236,729	9.6
Gurung	210,953	8.8	Gurung	208,088	8.4
Newar	41,739	1.7	Tharu	42,795	1.7
Tharu	36,134	1.5	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	37,801	1.5
Tamang	35,084	1.5	Tamang	33,471	1.4
Bhojpuri	10,551	0.4	Bhojpuri	15,090	0.6
Urdu	8,647	0.4	Magar Kham	8,030	0.3
Maithili	5,368	0.2	Ghale	7,997	0.3
Kumal	5,343	0.2	Kumal	6,027	0.2
Total	2,403,757		Total	2,466,427	100.00

Source: NSO 2021; CBS, 2011

As shown in Map 3.4, the concentration of Magar Dhut is found in Nawalpur, Tanahu, and Syngja of the southern, central and western part of Gandaki Province respectively. The Gurung speakers are mainly concentrated in Manang, and Lamjung of north-east of Gandaki Province and adjoining districts, and parts of Tanahu or bordering regions. The concentration of Tharu is found in Nawalpur district that is located in the southern part of Gandaki Province.

Map 3.4: Distribution of major languages in Gandaki Province by district



Gandaki Province accommodates a number of languages which are native to this province, such as Bhujel, Thakali, Chhantyal, Lhopa, Lowa, Manange, NarPhu, Chum/Nubri, and Baram. The IA languages spoken in this province include Kumal, Darai, Bote, Musalman.

Table 3.13: Major second languages of Gandaki Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second languages	Population	Percentage	Second languages	Population	Percentage
No second language	1,778,678	74	No second language	1,768,868	71.7
Nepali	580,442	24.1	Nepali	594,619	24.1
Gurung	13,356	0.6	Tamang	25,448	1
Magar	11,508	0.5	Magar Dhut	17,693	0.7
Newar	4,410	0.2	Gurung	13,069	0.5
English	3,476	0.1	English	12,449	0.5
Hindi	2,648	0.1	Hindi	7,048	0.3
Tamang	2,071	0.1	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	4,450	0.2
Tharu	1,003	0	Bhote	3,875	0.2
Urdu	727	0	Magar Kham	2,658	0.1
Sanskrit	663	0	Maithili	2,070	0.1
Total	2,403,757		Total	2,466,427	100

Source: NSO, 2021, CBS 2011

A total of 71 languages are spoken as second languages in this province. The share of Nepali as second language is limited around 25 percent because Nepali as a mother tongue is spoken by an overwhelming majority. The reporting of a total of second language decreases in 2021 compared to in 2011 (from 74.0% to 71.7%). In other words, the incidence of monolingualism increases in Gandaki Province.

A total of 90 ancestor's languages are reported in the census in Gandaki Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Nepali (60.6%), followed by Magar Dhut (14.1%), and Gurung (10.5%). The reporting of the ancestors' languages of Magar Dhut and Gurung is higher than the reporting of mother tongues.

3.2.5 Lumbini

A total of 66 mother tongues are spoken in Lumbini Province. The major ten languages of this province are given in Table 3.14. The population of Nepali, and Avadhi speakers slipped in 2021 compared to 2011 in Lumbini Province. By contrast, there is an increase in the population of Tharu speakers from 13.3 percent to 16.7 percent. The population of Bhojpuri marginally increases. Similarly, people of this province report a total of 83 languages as the languages of their ancestors.

The use of the second language decreases in 2021 in Lumbini Province showing the gain of incidence of monolingualism. The use of Nepali as a second language increases from 23.3 percent to 40.7 percent in 2011 to 2021.

Table 3.14: Major languages of Lumbini Province

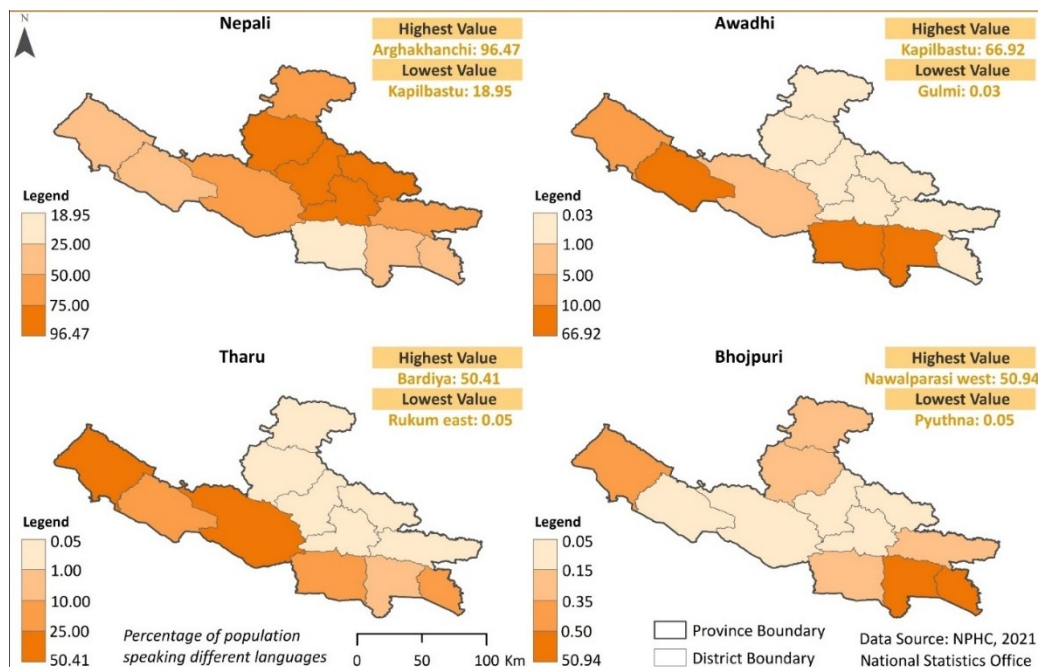
2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Nepali	2,301,305	51.1	Nepali	2,604,614	50.9
Tharu	597,163	13.3	Avadhi	855,264	16.7
Bhojpuri	509,192	11.3	Tharu	695,949	13.6
Avadhi	498,264	11.1	Bhojpuri	562,062	11.0
Urdu	228,671	5.1	Magar Dhut	194,948	3.8
Magar	205,080	4.6	Magar Kham	59,104	1.2
Maithili	54,826	1.2	Urdu	43,688	0.9
Newar	27,839	0.6	Hindi	27,792	0.5
Gurung	19,834	0.4	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	24,560	0.5
Kham	17,461	0.4	Gurung	20,263	0.4
Total	4,499,272		Total	5,122,078	100.0

Source: NSO, 2021; CBS, 2011

As shown in Map 3.5, Avadhi is concentrated mainly in Kapilbastu and Banke, followed by Rupandehi and Bardiya of the southern west part of Lumbini Province. The major concentration of Tharu people is found in Bardiya, followed by Banke, Dang, and Nawalparasi West to the east of Lumbini Province. The speakers of Bhojpuri is found in Bardiya and Nawalparasi West in the southern part of Lumbini Province.

Nepali is the largest language, constituting 50.9 percent speakers of the population within the province, followed by Avadhi (16.7%) and Tharu (13.6%). The remaining major languages have been concentrated in specific districts (areas). While the Avadhi speaking population have high concentration in Kapilbastu, and Banke, Tharu have high concentration in Dang and Banke. Similarly, Magar Kham and Magar Dhut are concentrated in Rolpa and Rukum - east and Palpa respectively.

Map 3.5: Distribution of major languages in Lumbini Province by district



There are some languages with relatively small number of speakers are the languages of this region. Kusunda, with just 13 speakers as a mother tongue, are reported in Dang. Similarly, the major concentration of Sonaha is found in Bardiya (639 out of a total of 121,182 speakers at national level). In addition, 63 languages are recorded as a second language in this province.

Table 3.15: Major second languages of Lumbini Province

Second languages	2011		2021		
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	
No second language	3,166,384	70.4	No second language	2,764,056	54.0
Nepali	1,049,363	23.3	Nepali	2,086,512	40.7
Hindi	157,447	3.5	Hindi	80,475	1.6
Avadhi	42,416	0.9	Avadhi	47,537	0.9
Tharu	31,761	0.7	Tharu	43,552	0.9
Bhojpuri	20,159	0.4	Bhojpuri	25,897	0.5
Urdu	10,818	0.2	Urdu	23,049	0.4
Magar	9,125	0.2	Magar Dhut	13,559	0.3
English	4,106	0.1	English	11,543	0.2
Newar	3,043	0.1	Magar Kham	9,892	0.2
Gurung	1,502	0.0	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	2,951	0.1
Total	4,499,272		Total	5,122,078	

Source: CBS, 2011; NPHC, 2021

A total of 40.7 percent speakers of the province use Nepali as a second language, and this is followed by Hindi (1.6%). Hindi is used as a second language because it is also used as a language of communication in the bordering areas of Nepal and India.

A total of 82 ancestor's languages are reported in the census in Lumbini Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Nepali (45.3%), followed by Avadhi (17.5%), and Tharu (13.9%). The reporting of Tharu and Avadhi as ancestors' languages is slightly higher than the reporting of their mother tongues respectively.

3.2.6 Karnali

A total of 48 languages are spoken in Karnali Province as mother tongues. Nepali is spoken as mother tongue by 88 percent people in this province. Khash, and Magar Dhut are in the second and the third positions respectively, and are the languages with more than one percentage of the languages in the province. The share of other languages is not sizeable. Compared to the 2011 census, the population of the Nepali speaking people decreases in 2021 census (from 95.6% in 2011 to 88.9% in 2021). This is because a sizeable percentage of people in Karnali Province report Khas as a mother tongue in 2021 and may imply that respondents from Karnali choose to demonstrate their identity via history and culture. As a result, there is higher reporting of Khas a mother tongue in Karnali.

Table 3.16: Major languages of Karnali Province

2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Nepali	1,500,553	95.6	Nepali	1,500,161	88.9
Magar	32,643	2.1	Khash	107,084	6.3
Tamang	11,328	0.7	Magar Dhut	27,072	1.6
Tharu	6,631	0.4	Magar Kham	13,535	0.8
Gurung	4,104	0.3	Tharu	7,791	0.5
Sherpa	2,911	0.2	Bhote	5,636	0.3
Kham	2,386	0.2	Jumli	5,259	0.3
Dolpali	1,614	0.1	Dolpali	3,048	0.2
Bote	1,403	0.1	Karmarong	2,483	0.1
Maithili	1,046	0.1	Mugali	1,724	0.1
Total	1,570,418		Total	1,688,412	

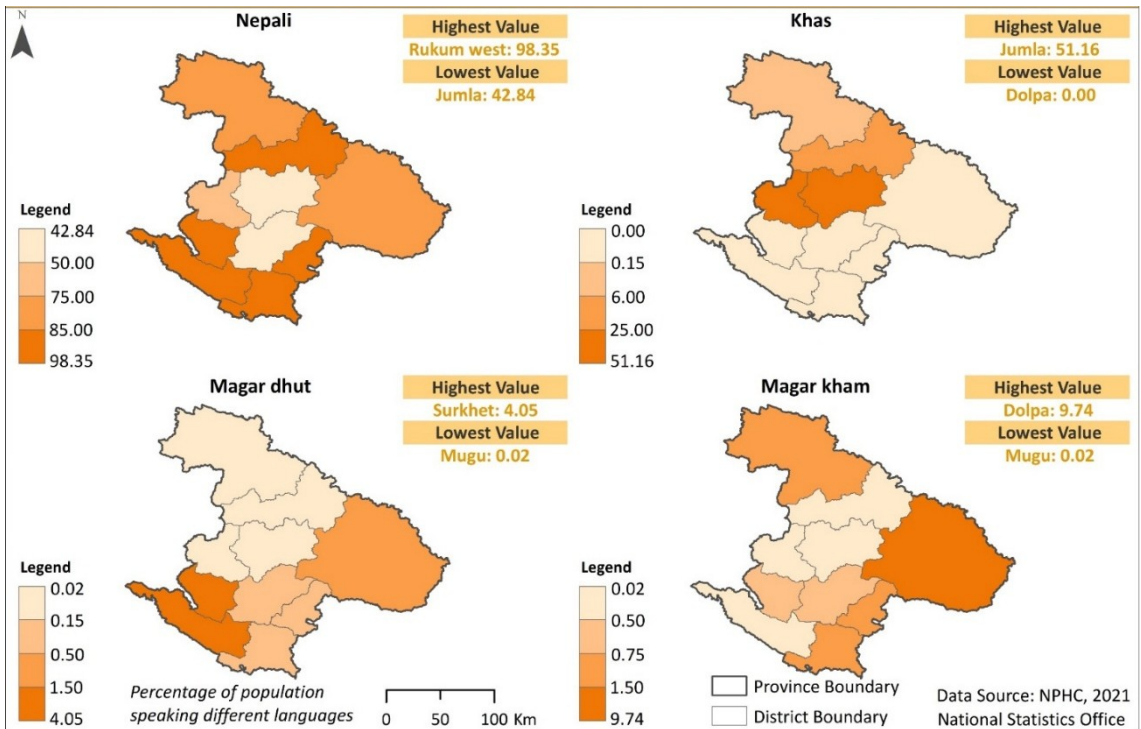
Source: CBS, 2011; NSO, 2021

Some languages are native to this province. A group of Raute people speak Khamchi (Raute), and this is considered one of the nomadic languages in South Asia. The concentration of Jumli and Khas are in Jumla, Dolpali, and Tichurong Poike in Dolpa, Karmarong and Mugali in Mugu. Although a majority of the Raji speakers live in Sudurpashchim Province, they also live in Surkhet,

and Bardiya. The languages with relatively smaller population, such as Dolpali, Raji, Khamchi (Raute), Karmarong, Mugali (spoken in Mugu), Tichurong-Poike, and Sonaha should be documented, and described for their preservation.

As shown in Map 3.6, Khas is mainly spoken in the northwestern districts of Jumla and Kalikot, Magar Dhut is spoken in the southern districts of Surkhet and Dailekh, and Magar Kham is found in the southwestern districts of Rolpa and Rukum West in Karnali Province.

Map 3.6: Distribution of major languages in Karnali Province by district



A total of 37 languages are used as a second language in the province. The share of Nepali as a second language is limited to 10.7% of total population in this province. The rate of people speaking the second language is larger in 2021 at nearly 11%, compared to just 4% in 2011. There is an increase in the use of Nepali as a second language in 2021 (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17: Second languages of Karnali Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second language	Population	Percentage	Second language	Population	Percentage
No second language	1,503,265	95.7	No second language	1,492,627	88.4
Nepali	61,087	3.9	Nepali	181,191	10.7
Magar	1,696	0.1	Hindi	2,196	0.1
Sherpa	1,661	0.1	Magar Dhut	2,008	0.1
Hindi	1,197	0.1	Magar Kham	1,760	0.1
English	326	0.0	Urdu	1,040	0.1
Tharu	264	0.0	Bhote	848	0.1
Tamang	214	0.0	Jumli	846	0.1
Gurung	210	0.0	Tibetan	793	0.0
Maithili	152	0.0	Khash	754	0.0
Bote	103	0.0	English	706	0.0
Total	1570418		Total	1688412	100.0

Source: NSO, 2011; NPHC, 2021

A total of 55 ancestor's languages are reported in the census in Karnali Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Nepali (74.6%), followed by Khash (15.1%), and Magar Dhut (3.6%). The reporting of Nepali as mother tongue is higher than the ancestor's language. Conversely, the Khash and Magar Dhut have higher share of percentages as ancestral languages than mother tongues.

3.2.7 Sudurpashchim

A total of 72 languages are spoken as a mother tongue in Sudurpashchim Province. The Nepali language is the largest language in this province with 42.4 percent speakers as mother tongues (Table 3.18). The size of Nepali as a mother tongue increased from 30.2 percent in 2011 to 42.4 percent in 2021. Conversely, the size of Doteli decreased from 30.2 percent in 2011 to 18.1 percent in 2021.

Table 3.18: Major languages of Sudurpashchim Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Doteli	777,247	30.5	Nepali	1,143,562	42.4
Nepali	770,322	30.2	Doteli	486,868	18.1
Tharu	434,304	17.0	Tharu	398,914	14.8
Baitadeli	271,838	10.6	Baitadeli	151,571	5.6
Achhami	142,516	5.6	Achhami	138,474	5.1

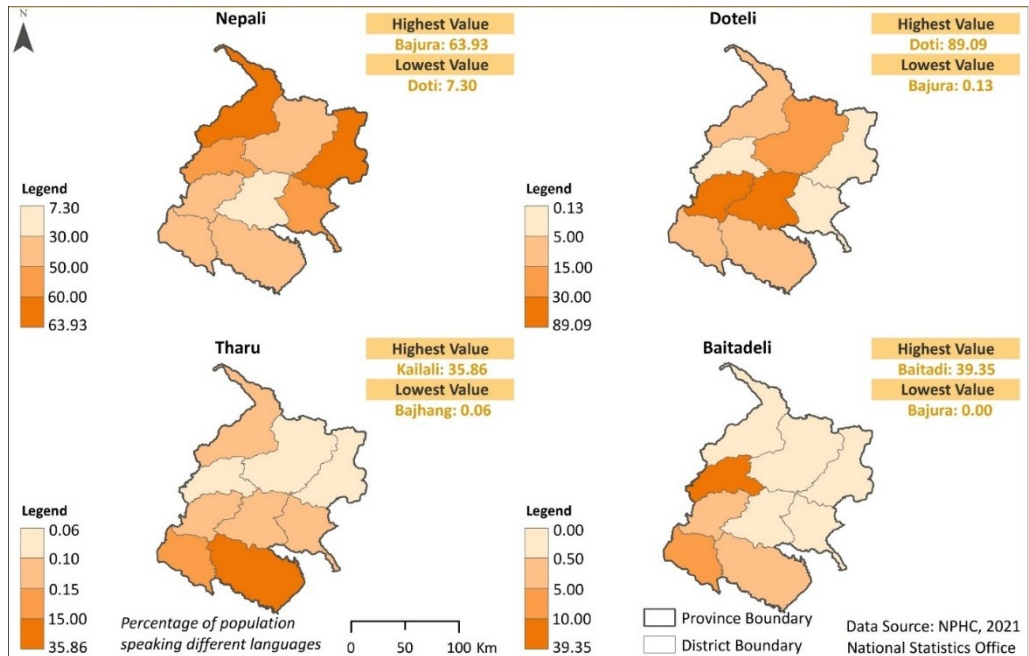
2011			2021		
Languages	Population	Percentage	Languages	Population	Percentage
Bajhangi	67,440	2.6	Bajhangi	99,334	3.7
Magar	23,246	0.9	Ranatharu	77,727	2.9
Bajureli	10,685	0.4	Bajureli	56,396	2.1
Maithili	8,895	0.3	Darchuleli	45,562	1.7
Hindi	8,294	0.3	Dadeldhuri	21,289	0.8
Total	2,552,517		Total	2,694,783	

Source: NSO, 2011; NSO, 2021

Byangshi, and Dhuleli belonging to Tibeto-Burman language family are spoken in Darchula and Bajhang respectively. Similarly, the settled Rautes live in Dadeldhura. Like in Karnali Province, the Rajis live in Kailali and Kanchanpur and their description is at preliminary level, with further documentation needed.

As shown in Map 3.7, Doteli is spoken in Doti and Dadeldhura in the western part of Sudurpashchim Province, while Tharu is mainly spoken in Kailali and Kanchanpur in the southern part of the province. It is also to be noted that Rana Tharu is enumerated as a different language in this census. The major concentration of Batitadeli is found in Baitadi and Kanchanpur. The major concentration of Batitadeli is found in Baitadi in the eastern part and Kanchanpur in the southern part.

Map 3.7: Distribution of major languages in Sudurpashchim Province by district



A total of 49 languages are spoken as second language in this province. A total of 95.7 percent of the total population reported that they did not speak the second language in 2011. In other words, this group of population is monolingual. The major second language in the province is Nepali, with a rate of 55.3 percent of the province in 2021.

Table 3.19: Major 10 second languages of Sudurpashchim Province (2011, 2021)

2011			2021		
Second languages	Population	Percentage	Second languages	Population	Percentage
No second language	1,503,265	95.7	No second language	1,137,165	42.2
Nepali	61,087	3.9	Nepali	1,490,151	55.3
Magar	1,696	0.1	Doteli	13,141	0.5
Sherpa	1,661	0.1	Tharu	10,239	0.4
Hindi	1,197	0.1	Hindi	6,273	0.2
English	326	0.0	Avadhi	5,564	0.2
Tharu	264	0.0	Dadeldhuri	5,516	0.2
Tamang	214	0.0	Achhami	5,392	0.2
Gurung	210	0.0	Baitadeli	5,088	0.2
Maithili	152	0.0	Darchuleli	4,184	0.2
Bote	103	0.0	Bajhanghi	2,335	0.1
Total	2,552,517		Total	2,694,783	100.0%

Source: CBS, 2011: NSO, 2021

The share of other languages than Nepali is less than one percent of the population within the province, although Doteli and Tharu rank the second and third respectively.

A total of 72 ancestor's languages are reported in the census in Sudurpashchim Province. The largest population of the ancestor's language is Doteli (19.1%), followed by Baitadeli (15%), and Tharu (13.9%).

3.3 Nepali as mother tongue and second language

In order to gauge the total proficiency in the Nepali, the use of Nepali as mother tongue, and second language should be calculated. Table 3.20 reports the sum of the percentage of Nepali used as a mother tongue, and as a second language within the province.

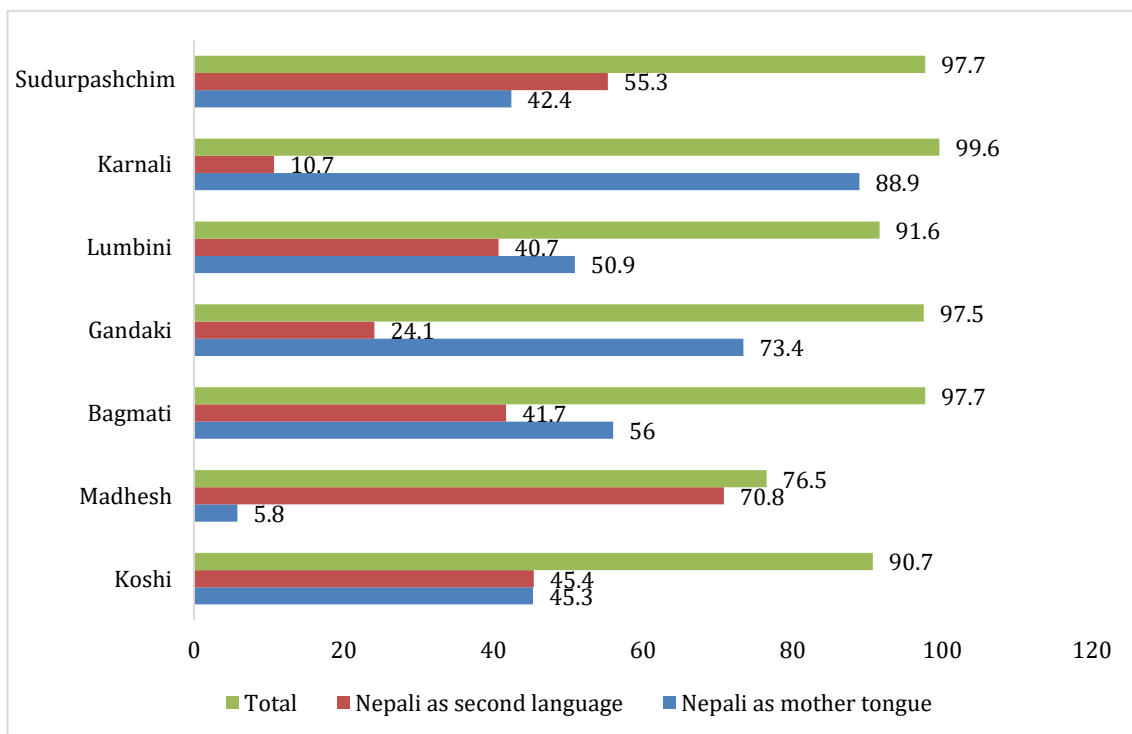
Table 3.20: Nepali as mother tongue and second language combined in provinces, NPHC 2021

Province	Total population	Nepali as mother tongue	%	Nepali as second language	%	Combined percentage of Nepali as mother tongue and second language
Koshi	4,961,412	2,246,027	45.3	2,254,267	45.4	90.7
Madhesh	6,114,600	352,109	5.8	4,327,951	70.8	76.5
Bagmati	6,116,866	3,427,981	56	2,548,213	41.7	97.7
Gandaki	2,466,427	1,810,003	73.4	594,619	24.1	97.5
Lumbini	5,122,078	2,604,614	50.9	2,086,512	40.7	91.6
Karnali	1,688,412	1,500,161	88.9	181,191	10.7	99.6
Sudurpashchim	2,694,783	1,143,562	42.4	1,490,151	55.3	97.7

Source: CBS, 2011; NSO, 2021

The use of Nepali is highest in Karnali (99.6%) followed by Sudurpashchim and Bagmati (97.7% each) and Gandaki (97.5%). Conversely, the use of Nepali is least in Madhesh Province (76.6%). The relation between the mother tongue and second language of the Nepali in different province is shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Combined Nepali as a mother tongue and second language



Source: Table (3.20)

The population of the mother tongues and of the second language is inversely related. In Madhesh province, although Nepali as mother tongue within the province constitutes 5.8 percent of the population, Nepali as the second language is at a rate of 70.8 percent. By contrast, Nepali constitutes 88.9 percent of the population in Karnali, but constitutes 10.7 percent as second language. The higher the share of Nepali as mother tongue, the lower the share of Nepali as a second language, and vice versa.

3.4 Major languages in district by language family

The TB languages are of a majority in twelve districts (Table 3.21). The districts are in the mountainous areas of the Gandaki Province, and all other districts are east of the Kathmandu Valley. Most of the districts are in the eastern Hill region of Nepal.

Table 3.21: Distribution of the languages in districts by language family, NPHC 2021

Particulars	Majority in districts			No. of the districts
	Tibeto-Burman	No. of the districts	Indo-Aryan	
Very high (Over 91%)			Mugu (93.1%), Sarlahi (93.8%), Myagdi (93.8%), Rupandehi (93.9%), Nawalparasi- West (94.5%), Parbat (94.5%), Gaglung (94.7%), Surkhet (95.1%), Pyuthan (95.3%), Bara (95.6%), Gulmi (96%), Dialekh (96.2%), Dang (96.3%), Dadeldhura (96.6%), Mahottari (97%), Doti (97.4%), Rautahat (97.8%), Parsa (97.8%), Kailali (97.8%), Kanchanpur (98%), Siraha (98.1%), Arghakhanchi (98.1%), Banke (98.3%), Dhanusa (98.3%), Slaya (98.4%), Jumla (98.4%), Rukum-West (98.5%), Kapilbastu (98.6%), Bardiya (98.6%), Bajura (98.9%), Jajarkot (98.9%), Darchula (98.9%), Darchula (98.9%), Bajhang (99.3%), Achham (99.3%), Saptari (99.4%), Kalikot (99.5%), Baitadi (100%)	36
High (86-90%)			Humla (87.8%)	1
(81-85%)			Jhapa (82%), Chitawan (82.6%), Sunsari (83.8%), Morang (84.3%), Rolpa (85.5%)	5
Moderately high (76-80%)			Dolpa (78%), Kaski (80.1%)	2

Particulars	Majority in districts			No. of the districts
	Tibeto-Burman	No. of the districts	Indo-Aryan	
(71-75%)	Manang (74%), Rasuwa (75%)	2	Nawalparasi- East (73.9%), Syngja (75.6%)	2
Moderate (61-70%)	Solukhumbu (64.7%), Taplejung (65.8%), Panchthar (69.9%)	3	Sindhuli (60.7%), Dolakha (61.9%), Dolakha (62.9%), Palpa (64.5%), Rukum- East (64.7%), Udayapur (66%), Tanahu (66.7%), Kathmandu (67.4%), Dhading (68.4%), Gorkha (69.2%)	10
Low (Below 60%)	Sindhupalchowk (50.4%), Mustang (51.2%), Khotang (51.5%), Bhojpur (51.6%), Dhankuta (53.5%), Sankhuwasabha (54.2%), Makwanpur (55.3%)	7	Lamjung (60.7%), Okhaldhunga (53.3%), Tehrathum (51.4%), Lalitpur (52.5%), Kavrepalanchok (53.3%), Nuwakot (53.4%), Bhaktapur (53.9%), Ilam (55.1%), Ramechhap (58.9%)	9
Total		12		65

Source: NSO, 2021

3.5 Languages in local levels

The language at a majority at local level are shown in Table 3.22. Nepali is at a majority in 359 local levels and it is the largest language with less than 50 percent of the share in 70 local level (total of 429 local levels).⁴⁰ Overall, Nepali is the largest language in nearly 57 percent of the local levels. In the remaining 324 local levels, 34 languages are largest (with less than 50 percent of the population) and in majority. The eleven languages are greater in size in only one local level each – these being Chamling, Khaling, Wambule, Rana Tharu, Yamphu/Yamphe, Nar-Phu, Manange, Baragunwa, and Magar Kaike.

⁴⁰ The population above 50% is reported as ‘majority’, whereas the population largest within the local level but below 50% are presented as ‘larger but not in majority’.

Table 3.22: Language position in local levels, NPHC 2021

S.No.	Languages	No. of local level		
		Majority (more than 50% population)	Largest (but with less than 50% population)	Total
1.	Nepali	360	79	439
2.	Maithili	66	14	80
3.	Bhojpuri	25	14	39
4.	Tamang	32	7	39
5.	Bajjika	31	3	34
6.	Doteli	13	1	14
7.	Awadhi	12	4	16
8.	Tharu	11	4	15
9.	Magar Dhut	8	1	9
10.	Khas	7		7
11.	Bajhangi	4	1	5
12.	Yakthung/Limbu	3	13	16
13.	Gurung	3	3	6
14.	Magar kham	3		3
15.	Kulung	2		2
16.	Bhote	2	1	3
17.	Nepalbhasa (Newari)	1	1	2
18.	Bantawa	1	2	3
19.	Sherpa	1	2	3
20.	Rajbanshi		2	2
21.	Chum/Nubri	1		1
22.	Dolpali	1	1	2
23.	Lhopa	1	1	2
24.	Chamling		1	1
25.	Khaling	1	-	1
26.	Wambule		1	1
27.	Sampang	1	-	1
28.	Rana Tharu	1		1
29.	Urdu		1	1
30.	Yamphu/Yamphe		1	1
31.	Nar-phu	1		1
32.	Manange	1		1
33.	Baragunwa	1		1
34.	Magar Kaike		1	1
Total		594	159	753

Source: NSO, 2021

The remaining languages are not of significant size to rank as the biggest languages at local level. The programs associated with language documentation, revitalization, and literacy should be underscored for those languages which are confined in specific locations and confined within smaller areas than local level (urban municipalities/rural municipalities).

Koshi Province

The languages in majority and the largest in Koshi Province at local level are given in Annex 12. It presents the details of the mother tongues which in the 2021 census held as majorities, or as largest (but less than 50%) at municipal level in Koshi Province. Among 137 local bodies in the Koshi Province, Nepali is in majority in 90 municipalities/rural municipalities, whereas it largest (but less than 50%) in 30 local levels (Annex 12). The share of the largest languages and language in majority in each local level, is also included. For example, Nepali is in majority in Sirijanga Rural Municipality, with 55.8 percent speakers within Sirijanga Rural municipality. Only a total of 15 languages are largest (ie: largest but less than 50%) in the Koshi province. The remaining languages have small number of speakers, and do not appear in majority at municipalities/rural municipalities.

Madhesh Province

Maithili is in majority in 62 local levels, and it is largest in 9 municipalities in Madhesh Province (Annex 13). Similarly, Bajjika is in majority in 32 local levels, and is the largest in 2 local levels (total of 34 municipalities). There are a few languages which are mainly spoken in the Madhesh Province. In addition to Nepali, Bhojpuri and Tharu are the largest. Maithili is in majority in Kanchanpur municipality with 71.7 percent speakers within the municipality. The Magahi language is mainly spoken in this province is neither the largest within the province nor in majority.

Bagmati Province

Only four languages, namely Nepali, Tamang, Sherpa and Nepalbhasa, are the largest languages (not in majority) at urban municipality/rural municipality level in Bagmati Province (Annex 14). Sherpa and Nepalbhasa are largest in one municipal each, but at less than 50 percent. The share of the largest language (less than 50 percent) and the languages in majority in each local level is also included. For example, Nepali is in majority in Gaurishankar Rural Municipality with 57.87 percent speakers within the rural municipality (Annex 14).

Gandaki Province

A total of eight languages, namely Nepali, Gurung, Magar Dhut, Chum/Nubri, Nar-Phu, Manange, Lhopa, and Baragaunwa, are largest but at less than 50 percent at local level in Gandaki Province (Annex 15). Sherpa, and Nepalbhasa are in majority in one local level each.

Additionally, Chum/Nubri, Nar-Phu, Manange, Lhopa, and Baragaunwa are in majority in one local level each. Nepali is largest (less than 50 percent) in 64 local levels and in majority in three municipalities. For example, Nepali is in majority in Arughat Rural Municipality with 71.7 percent speakers within the rural municipality.

Lumbini Province

A total of six languages, namely Nepali, Magar Kham, Magar Dhut, Bhojpuri, Avadhi and Tharu, are largest but at less than 50 percent at local level in Lumbini Province (Annex 16). Nepali is in majority in total in 60 local levels, followed by Bhojpuri and Avadhi in 18 and 16 local levels respectively.

Karnali Province

A total of six languages, namely Nepali, Bhote, Dolpali, Magar Kaike, Karmarong and Khas, are largest but at less than 50 percent at local level in Karnali Province (Annex 17). Nepali is in majority in a total of 60 local levels. Two languages, Karmarong and Magar Kaike, are in majority in one rural municipality each (Annex 17).

A number of mother tongues spoken in this province do not have a great enough population to rank in the majority languages, or to be the largest languages.

Sudurpashchim Province

A total of five languages, namely Nepali, Bajhang, Doteli, Tharu and Rana Tharu, are in majority at local level in Sudurpashchim Province. Nepali is in absolute majority in a total of 48, and in majority in 14 local levels. A number of mother tongues spoken in this province do not have bigger population to rank in the majority languages (Annex 18).

3.6 Languages at community level

Some languages with a small population size and uneven distribution have led to their absence as a majority at the municipal level. Only 34 languages are in 'majority' and 'largest but less than 50 percent' in municipalities (urban and rural municipalities). The local levels are one of the units of government that can implement the language policy. Unless these languages receive access to the formal spheres of use, they further shrink in the domains of use. The constitution thus offers equal status to all mother tongues irrespective of the number of speakers each language have and this guarantees the right of all languages, irrespective of their number to conserve their linguistic tradition.

However, the languages with smaller numbers of speakers are vulnerable to the language shift and endangerment. Among UNESCO's (2003) factors to gauge language endangerment, an 'absolute number of speakers' and a 'proportion of speakers within the total population' are two relevant factors in the context of the languages with a small number of speakers. The constitutional provisions have given the use of the domains of all languages. However, it is not easy to use these languages for official use because of the small size of speakers in local levels. As a consequence, the use of these languages is restricted to the home domains and intra-group communication (Pandharipande, 2002, p. 221).

CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-CULTURAL DIFFERENTIALS IN LANGUAGE

4.1 Outline

This section presents the crosscutting themes of language with other related areas. The information is presented highlighting language and other areas, such as language and caste/ethnic groups, language and religion, language and educational attainment, language and literacy, among others. Since literacy and educational development are also associated with writing systems, the writing tradition of the languages of Nepal are also considered (section 1.14). The relationship of the language to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is additionally contextualized (section 1.12).

4.2 Languages and castes/ethnic groups

Among 142 distinct castes living in Nepal, many caste/ethnic groups live in the Mountain zones such as Sherpa, Thakali, Lhopa, Lhomi, Dolpo, Byasi/Sauka and Bhote. Similarly, Magar, Tamang, Gurung, Limbu, Sunuwar, Thakali and Thami belong to the Hill caste/ethnic groups. This group also comprises the castes/ethnic groups of a number of Rai and Kirati groups in the eastern Nepal. There are other caste/ethnic groups living in this region, such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Sarki and Churete. A number of caste/ethnic groups belong to the inner Tarai, such as Bote, Danuwar, Darai, Kumal and Majhi.⁴¹ Some caste/ethnic groups living in the Tarai are Yadav, Teli, Chamar, Baniya, Dusadh and Mallah. Some of these castes groups have their own mother tongues, whereas others share a common tongue.

Regarding the relations of mother tongues and caste-ethnic groups and mother tongues in Nepal, the following relations can be considered: One caste and one language, One caste and several languages, Several castes and one language, One caste-ethnic groups and several languages, and Several caste-ethnic groups and one language (NLPRC, 2008, p. 11-12).

Due to increased multilingualism through in-migration to cities, it is uncommon to find a situation where one caste/ethnic groups merely speaks one language. This shows that all the castes reported in the census speak Nepali as their mother tongues. Nepali is spoken by at least one member of all caste/ethnic groups (Table 4.1). Similarly, Maithili is spoken by at least one

⁴¹ The inner Tarai is comprised of several elongated river valleys in the southern lowland part of the country.

member of 130 caste/ethnic groups, and Bhojpuri by 127 caste/ethnic groups. However, Urdu is spoken by Musalman alone. The bigger the language in population size, the higher number of caste/ethnic groups that speak the languages. There are 11 languages which are spoken by above 81 caste groups.

Table 4.1: Languages spoken (used) by caste/ethnic groups, NPHC 2021

S. N.	Frequency of castes speaking the languages	Languages spoken according to the frequency category of castes speaking the languages
1	Very high (above 80)	Nepali (142), Maithili (130), Bhojpuri (127), Hindi (119), Avadhi (115), Tharu (108), Tamang (103), Nepalbhasa/Newari (99), Bajjika (98), Magar Dhut (89), Magahi (82)=11
2	High (61-80)	Khash (78), Yakthung/Limbu (77), Rai (77), Chamling (77), Sign language (77), Rajbanshi (73), Marwadi (71), Doteli (66), Gurung (65), Bangla (65), Magar Kham (64), Ganagai (64)=12
3	Moderate (41-60)	Tibetan (58), Majhi (57), Bantawa (56), Sherpa (56), Sherpa (56), Santhali (51), Angika (50), Thulung (46), Thami (45), Bhote (45), Baitadeli (43), Achami (41), Kulung (41)=12
4	Moderately low (21-40)	Oraon/Kudukh (40), Sampang (40), Sunuwar (39), Tajpuriya (37), Bote (37), English (37), Sanskrit (37), Danuwar (36), Kagate (35), Khaling (33), Dumi (33), Lohorong (32), Bajhangi (31), Dadeldhuri (31), Chepang (30), Yakkha (30), Bhujel (29), Wambule (29), Bahing/Bayung (29), Ghale (29), Darchuleli (29), Pahari (29), Hyolmo/Yholmo (28), Dhimal (27), Bajureli (27), Mewahang (26), Nachhiring (25), Yamphu/Yamphe (25), Manange (25), Thakali (24), Dailekhi (24), Koche (24), Koyee (22), Jumli (21), Ranatharu (21)=35
5	Low (1-20)	Kumal (20), Darai (20), Chhiling (20), Athpariya (19), Chhantyal (19), Waling/Walung (19), Sadhani (19), Sadri (19), Dura (18), Lapcha (17), Dungmali (17), Jirel (17), Chhintang (16), Puma (15), Lhopa (15), Meche (14), Dolpali (14), Punjabi (14), Balkura/Baram (14), Magar Kaike (14), Jero/Jerung (13), Hayu/Vayu (13), Musalman (13), Hariyanwi (12), Sindhi (12), NarPhu (12), Mugali (12), Raji (11), Lhomi (11), Belhare (11), Sonaha (11), Karmarong (11), Kurmali (10), Bankariya (10), Chuj/Nubri (10), Tilung (9), Kisan (9), Byansi (9), Sam (9), Dhuleli (9), Munda/Mundariya (9), Kewarat (9), Lowa (8), Barangunwa (7), Phangduwali (6), Surel (6), Malpande (6), Tichhurong Poike (6), Kusunda (6), Lungkhim (4), Done (4), Khariya (3), Khamchi (Raute) (2), Urdu (1)=54

Source: NSO, 2021

There are 54 languages which are spoken by less than 20 caste/ethnic groups. The next category of languages (at a rate between 21-40) consists of 35 languages. A total of 12 languages are spoken by moderate caste/ethnic groups (between 41 to 60). The next group of languages consisting of 12 languages are spoken by 61-80 caste/ethnic groups. Finally, a total of 11 languages are spoken by more than 80 ethnic groups.

Some ethnic languages are predominantly spoken by the same ethnic/caste groups. There are a few languages speakers who speak these languages as a mother tongue. For example, Tamang as the mother tongue is spoken by 99.6 percent of Tamang. However, there are another 102 other caste/ethnic groups who speak Tamang (only 0.4%) as their mother tongues. Similarly, Gurung is spoken by 98.87 percent of the Gurung people as their mother tongue. However, a total number of 65 caste/ethnic groups have at least one person speaking Gurung as their mother tongue.

4.3 Language and literacy

4.3.1 Mother tongues and literacy

The association between the mother tongue and the literacy rate is calculated on the basis of the population that speak a different mother tongue compared against different levels of literacy. The national average of literacy is 76.2% (Table 4.2). Among the languages with a population of more than 300,000 speakers, the high literacy is reported in Nepalbhasa/Newari (84.1%), followed by Nepali (84%) and Yakthung/Limbu (83.2%).⁴² Nepalbhasa (Newari) is a language with long literate tradition (NLPRC Report, 1994, p. 12). Additionally, Gurung and Yakthung (Limbu) have higher literacy rate than national average (76.2%).

Table 4.2: Mother tongue and literacy (5 years and above), NPHC 2021

Mother tongues more than 300,000	Total	Literate (can read and write) population	Literacy rate
Total	26,725,295	20,377,980	76.2
Nepali	12,147,450	10,212,670	84.1
Maithili	2,913,424	1,999,641	68.6
Bhojpuri	1,646,582	1,134,157	68.9
Tharu	1,591,419	1,190,346	74.8
Tamang	1,316,343	955,092	72.6
Bajjika	996,827	536,143	53.8
Avadhi	764,332	489,218	64.0
Nepalbhasa (Newari)	823,525	701,710	85.2
Magar Dhut	757,869	607,016	80.1
Doteli	447,544	336,560	75.2
Urdu	358,676	226,788	63.2

⁴² There are no comparable data for mother tongue and literacy. Sharma (2014, pp. 53-54) mentions, "The Tarai caste groups, Marwari and Kayastha, are among those ranking highest in all the censuses. Hill Bahuns rank 5th, 6th and 4th while Tarai Brahmans rank 4th, 8th, and 5th respectively in the last three censuses. Thakali and Newar are the two ethnic groups that have consistently remained among the top 10 since 1991."

Mother tongues more than 300,000	Total	Literate (can read and write) population	Literacy rate
Yakthung/Limbu	326,188	271,396	83.2
Gurung	311,012	248,379	79.9
Others	2,323,779	1,468,582	63.2
Not stated	325	282	86.8

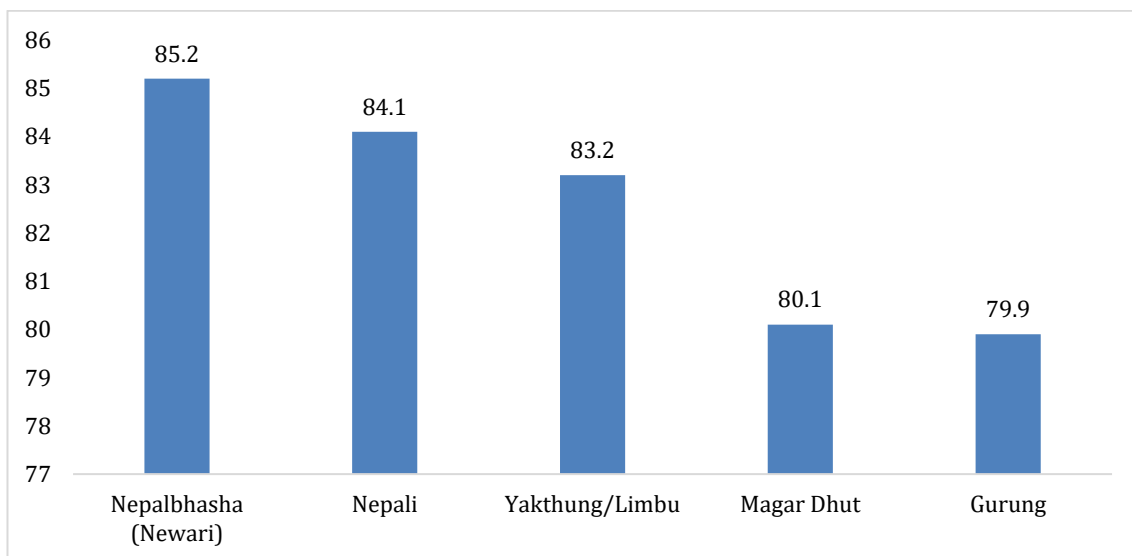
Source: NSO, 2021.

The high literacy rate in Nepalbhasha is expected due to its long literacy tradition. The lowest rate of literacy is reported among Urdu (63.2%), Avadhi (64%), and Maithili (68.6%). Even though Maithili has long tradition of literacy (NLPRC report, 1994, p. 12), the literacy rate is limited to 68.6%. Seel, Yadava, and Kandel (2005, p. 25) state:

“The high education status of Newar and some other Tibeto-Burman language groups is probably related to a range of socio-economic factors as well as levels of exposure to Nepali and English. It can perhaps be concluded that language ‘barriers’ constrain attainment when they are part of a set of wider dimensions of poverty, disadvantage and remote location.”

Some languages, especially the languages spoken in the Tarai region, have a lower literacy rate than national average. Maithili, the second largest language, has a 68.6 percent literacy rate. Similarly, Tharu, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Bajjika, and Urdu have lower literacy rates than the national average. Tamang and Doteli also fall within this category. The relation of major mother tongues and literacy in provinces is further given in Annex 19.

Figure 4.1: Mother tongue and literacy (5 years and above), NPHC 2021



Source: Table (4.2)

The fact that Nepalbhasa has highest literacy rate is expected because Newars generally live in cities, and in the Kathmandu Valley in particular. Nepali ranks second in terms of literacy.

4.3.2 Second language and literacy

In bilingual and multilingual societies, individuals tend to learn a second language to fulfill their communicative needs. In addition, they have a strong motive to learn a second language if it is used in formal purposes, for example in government offices or in education. The literacy in second language with more than 50,000 speakers and above are given in Table 4.3. The information on literacy in the second language is calculated on the basis of the population that speaks different second languages compared against different levels of literacy.

Table 4.3: Second language and literacy (5 years and above), NPHC 2021

Second languages	Total population (5+)	Literacy rate	Illiteracy rate
Total	26,725,295	76.2	23.8
No second language	12,675,284	79.5	20.5
Nepali	12,515,059	73.4	26.6
Maithili	237,982	60.5	39.5
Hindi	212,092	70.5	29.5
Bhojpuri	125,708	64.4	35.6
English	101,365	99.2	0.8
Tharu	84,519	78.8	21.2
Bajjika	75,488	53.1	46.9
Avadhi	69,315	73.5	26.5
Urdu	64,987	67.1	32.9
Tamang	66,963	74.8	25.2
Magar Dhut	51,262	82.3	17.7
Others	437,843	77.0	23.0
Not stated	7,428	87.5	12.5

Source: NSO, 2021

The highest percentage of literacy in a second language is reported in English (99.2%). This is followed by Magar Dhut (82.3%), Tharu (78.8%), and Tamang (74.8%). The motivation to learn English as a second language is clear as English is used as a medium of instruction at some private schools and at university level. However, socio-linguistic and socio-cultural contexts should be analyzed to analyse discern the reasons for a higher percentage of reporting Magar Dhut, Tharu, and Tamang as a second language.

4.4 Language and religion

Among the ten religions reported in Nepal in the 2021 census, more than three-quarters of the Indo-European language speaking population (81.2%) are reported to be Hindu, followed by Islam (6.1%) Buddhism (1.7%), and Christian (1.3%). Conversely, the highest number of people speaking Sino-Tibetan languages follow Buddhism (40.7%), and it is followed by Hinduism (36.5%), and Kirat (16.5%). Majority of the AA and Dravidian population follow Hinduism. The Sign language users follow Hinduism (67.9%), followed by Kirat (17.2%), and Buddhism (10.6%).

Table 4.4: Language family by religion, NPHC 2021

MTs	Total	Hindu	Bouddha	Islam	Kirat	Christian	Prakarti	Bon	Jain	Bahai	Shikh
Total	29,164,578	81.2	8.2	5.1	3.2	1.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
IE languages	24,225,295	90.1	1.7	6.1	0.5	1.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ST languages	4,838,140	36.4	40.7	0.0	16.5	4.0	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
AA languages	55,916	77.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.8	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dravidian languages	38,873	92.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SL	1,784	67.9	10.6	1.0	17.2	2.6	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Language isolate	23	87.0	8.7	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others	4,201	51.4	16.4	11.1	1.4	19.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.2
Not stated	346	40.2	35.3	13.9	0.0	9.8	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0

Source: NSO, 2021

The population of Nepali speaking mother tongue groups are predominant across many religious groups. A total of 51.6 percent population of Nepali speakers are reported to be Hindu. Similarly, the share of Hinduism by Maithili speaking population is 12.5 percent, and Tharu speaking population at 7 percent. In other words, 12 percent of the Maithili speaking population and 7 percent of Tharu speaking population practice Hinduism. The share of Buddhism is 8.2 percent at national level. The major mother tongue groups which follow Buddhism are Tamang speaking population (51.9%), Gurung speaking population (8.1%) and Magar Dhut speaking population (8.7%) in descending order.

The religions that have consistently grown above national average of religious groups are Christianity and Islam (Sharma, 2014, p. 39). Tamang (8.7%) carries the largest share of Christianity among the mother tongue groups after Nepali (49.1%). Islam covers a total of 5.1 percent population of the national population. Urdu covers the highest percentage of the Islam population (27.9%) followed by Bhojpuri (19.9%) and Maithili (16.6%).

The total share of Kirat at the national level is 3.2 percent. The largest percentage of the Kirat religion is shared by Yakthung (Limbu) speaking population (32.1%), followed by Nepali (13.3%),

and Bantawa (13.1%). Moreover, the share of Prakrit at the national share is 0.3 percent. The largest share of Prakrit is by Magar Kham (28%), followed by Nepali (23.3%) and Magar Dhut (20.1%). The remaining religions – Bon, Jain, Bahai and Shikh – have less than 100,000 population.

4.5 Language and disability

Language, culture and disability are often interrelated issues. People with disabilities often face stigma in societies. Persons with disabilities face discrimination with regard to access to the labour market, transportation, among others. As noted in Shrestha and Santangelo (2014, p. 2500), 40 percent of the total disabled population in Nepal are children.⁴³ Table 4.5 shows the percentage of each type of disability recorded amongst the population of persons with disabilities. Among 12 distinct kinds of disabilities were categorized in the census, with some areas directly associated with language. A total of 2.2 percent (or 647,744 of the population) reports some type of disability in the 2021 census. Of these, disabilities reported with association to language in the census are of a smaller number. Deafness, blindness, hard of hearing, and autism are disability types which are associated with language. Persons with language associated disabilities find it difficult to communicate. Deaf people use non-verbal modalities, such as signs and gestures, to communicate with other speakers. Programs are needed in order to provide these groups with the constitutional provision (Article 31.4) which mentions that “visually impaired citizens shall have the right to get free education through brail script and the citizens with hearing or speaking impairment, to get free education through Sign language, in accordance with law.” Children with disability require and are entitled to inclusive education. In order to facilitate the needs of persons with communication-based disabilities, necessary facilities should be arranged.

Table 4.5: Type of disability, NPHC 2021

Types of disability	Number	%	Types of disability	Number	%
Physical disability	240,609	37.1	Mental or psychosocial	28,045	4.3
Low vision	110,525	17.1	Intellectual disability	11,358	1.8
Blind	35,142	5.4	Hemophilia	4,937	0.8
Deaf	51,373	7.9	Autism	4,886	0.8
Hard of hearing	51,520	8.0	Multiple disability	57,486	8.9
Deaf and blind	10,187	1.6	Total	6,47,744	100
Speech problem	41,676	6.4			

Source: NSO, 2021

⁴³ They also note that the autism is rarely diagnosed in Nepal (p. 2506). Thus, there is a need to make studies on language and disabilities.

The share of deaf population is 7.9 percent of the total disabled population, followed by blind individuals (5.4%). Similarly, the autistic population reported in the census is 0.8 percent of the total disabled population. The details of disability types and mother tongues are given in Annex 20. Some types of disability, such as autism, deafness and blindness, and speech problems are directly associated with language. This group of people are dispersed across the provinces, and across caste/ethnic groups.

4.6 Language and educational attainment

The medium of instruction and the mother tongue is not always the same in multilingual countries. UNESCO (1950, p. 11) mentions the axiomatic nature of teaching a child in their mother tongue as the best medium and textbooks and learning materials written in the child's mother tongue are easy to understand. Languages with a population of speakers of 50,000 and above (consisting of a total of 12 languages) with educational attainments are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Mother tongues and educational attainment, NPHC 2021

Mother Tongue	Total	SLC or equivalent	Intermediate or equivalent	Bachelors or equivalent	Masters or equivalent	Others	Levels not stated	Not stated
	Count	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	6,436,335	30.1	40.4	14.5	6.9	0.3	5.6	2.3
Nepali	3,721,062	29.2	41.0	15.3	7.7	0.2	4.6	2.0
Maithili	554,796	31.0	43.2	16.2	6.8	0.1	1.5	1.1
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	375,104	24.8	36.3	23.3	11.1	0.3	3.2	1.2
Tharu	343,133	32.4	37.5	9.0	3.3	0.5	13.7	3.5
Tamang	241,170	34.1	41.9	8.3	2.8	0.5	9.6	2.8
Bhojpuri	217,309	30.8	43.5	13.9	5.9	0.2	3.1	2.6
Magar Dhut	172,391	35.8	40.9	8.6	3.0	0.4	7.8	3.6
Gurung	87,029	32.5	42.3	9.8	3.4	0.4	7.1	4.4
Doteli	85,010	25.1	42.0	14.6	8.8	0.2	6.4	2.9
Yakthung/Limbu	78,313	39.5	39.5	9.7	3.9	0.3	5.4	1.7
Avadhi	66,983	24.3	40.7	12.6	5.3	0.7	9.3	7.1
Bajjika	63,820	57.1	24.9	5.4	2.7	0.2	5.7	3.8

Source: NSO, 2021

The national average of educational attainment of SLC (or equivalent) and above is 30.1 percent. The highest attainment rate is reported in Bajjika (57.1%), whereas the lowest is reported in Nepali (24.3%). The highest rate of educational attainment is reported in Bhojpuri (43.5%) for Intermediate or equivalent, and the lowest is reported in Bajjika (24.9%). In Bachelor's and Masters level, Nepalbhasha ranks first in educational attainment (23.3% and 11.1% respectively). The attainment of educational level differs among languages.

In multilingual societies, the medium of instruction in the education is mainly in the language of wider communication. The medium of instruction is mainly in Nepali and in English in some private schools in Nepal. Since the medium of instruction is in the second language in some cases, the question is whether the language of instruction is a decisive element in attaining the academic degree.

Table 4.7: Second language and educational attainment, NPHC 2021

Second language	Count	SIC or equivalent	Intermediate or equivalent	Bachelors or equivalent	Masters or equivalent	Others	No level/level not stated	Not stated
Total	6,436,335	30.1	40.4	14.5	6.9	0.3	5.6	2.3
No second language	3,593,983	29.4	41.0	14.9	7.5	0.2	4.9	2.1
Nepali	2,486,479	31.6	39.8	13.5	5.7	0.3	6.4	2.6
English	70,958	16.6	36.9	27.0	19.0	0.1	0.3	0.3
Hindi	44,851	29.2	38.4	17.8	7.5	0.4	4.5	2.2
Maithili	30,429	34.5	36.6	14.1	6.5	0.4	5.2	2.7
Bhojपुरi	21,305	27.5	40.7	16.3	7.6	0.2	5.3	2.3
Tharu	21,057	31.5	38.7	12.7	6.2	0.3	8.1	2.5
Tamang	15,121	30.6	41.9	10.7	4.5	0.8	8.1	3.3
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	14,203	28.0	36.4	21.0	10.4	0.3	2.7	1.2
Magar Dhut	13,472	36.3	40.3	10.0	3.9	0.3	5.7	3.4
Avadhi	13,331	26.8	41.4	16.1	7.3	0.3	5.4	2.7
Bantawa	10,194	38.6	38.2	9.8	5.1	0.2	6.3	1.8

Source: NSO, 2021

English as a second language has highest percentage of educational attainment (19%) at Master's level, and at Bachelor's level (27%). This is higher than the national average of 6.9 percent and 14.5 percent respectively.

Of every 100 Nepali mother tongue speakers, 22.1 percent of the population has attained (passed) SEE level or above (Table 4.8). Nepalbhasha (Newari) has the highest level of academic attainment (43.4%). It shows that the medium of instruction alone is not responsible for the attainment of the educational attainment. Other socio-cultural elements of the people are also determining factors for higher degree of the educational attainment. Although the medium of instruction is different from mother tongue with Nepalbhasha speakers in a majority of cases, the educational attainment is highest with this group. The two other mother tongue groups with higher educational attainments include Nepali (28.4%), and Gurung (26.5%). Among these fifteen mother tongues, the lowest educational attainment is reported in Bajjika (5.6%), Baitadeli (5.7%) Avadhi (7.8%), and Urdu (8.2%).

Table 4.8: Mother tongue, second language, and higher educational attainment (all SEE and above), major languages, NPHC 2021

Mother tongue				Second Language			
Language	Total population	Population completing SEE and above	%	Language	Total population	Population completing SEE and above	%
Nepal (total)	29,164,578	6,436,335	22.1	Total	6,436,335	1,939,631	30.1
Nepali	13,084,457	3,721,062	28.4	No second language	3,593,983	1,055,179	29.4
Maithili	3,222,389	554,796	17.2	Nepali	2,486,479	786,354	31.6
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	217,309	11.9	English	70,958	11,751	16.6
Tharu	1,714,091	343,133	20.0	Hindi	44,851	13,112	29.2
Tamang	1,423,075	241,170	16.9	Maithili	30,429	10,494	34.5
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	375,104	43.4	Bhojpuri	21,305	5,854	27.5
Bajjika	1,133,764	63,820	5.6	Tharu	21,057	6,628	31.5
Magar Dhut	810,315	172,391	21.3	Tamang	15,121	4,625	30.6
Doteli	494,864	85,010	17.2	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	14,203	3,973	28.0
Urdu	413,785	34,075	8.2	Magar Dhut	13,472	4,895	36.3
Avadhi	864,276	66,983	7.8	Avadhi	13,331	3,573	26.8
Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	78,313	22.3	Bantawa	10,194	3,939	38.6
Gurung	328,074	87,029	26.5	Bajjika	8,502	1,954	23.0
Baitadeli	152,666	8,641	5.7	Bhote	8,112	1,784	22.0
Rai	144,512	36,900	25.5	Urdu	7,605	2,150	28.3

Source: NSO, 2021

There is complex relationship of the use of language both as a mother tongue and a second language and with educational attainment, as revealed in (Table 4.8).

The educational attainment of the Nepali mother tongue group is reported 28.4 percent, which is above national average (22.1%). Among the major languages (Table 4.8), the languages with educational attainment above national average are Gurung (26.5%), Rai (25.5%), and Yakthung/Limbu (22.3%) in descending order. The educational attainment of Nepali second language user is reported 31.6 percent, which is above national average (30.1%). The languages with educational attainment (all SEE and above) above national average include Bantawa, Magar Dhut, Maithili, Tharu, Maithili, and Nepali in descending order (Table 4.8).

4.7 Language and economic activities

Discussions on linkages between languages and the economic activities are new in the Nepalese context. The economic factors sometimes determine language maintenance and shifts, including migration and employment (see Grin, 1996, p. 1). All mother tongues and their involvement in economic activities – defined by employee, employer, own worker, family support and not reported – are given in 4.9. The national average of employees is 28.6 percent. The highest rate for employees is reported among Nepalbhasa (Newari) speakers (40.3%) followed by Bhojpuri (38.1%) and Maithili (36.9%) mother tongue speakers.

Table 4.9: Mother tongues (major ten) and their involvement in economic activities (10 years and above), NPHC 2021

Mother tongue	Number	Employee	Employer	Own work	Family support	Not reported
Total	14,983,310	28.6	1.4	55.3	14.5	0.1
Nepali	6,950,718	27.0	1.6	56.0	15.3	0.1
Maithili	1,409,617	36.9	1.2	47.1	14.8	0.0
Tharu	1,034,789	34.7	0.9	52.5	11.8	0.1
Tamang	824,522	22.8	1.0	63.6	12.5	0.0
Bhojpuri	789,198	38.1	1.4	46.6	13.9	0.1
Magar Dhut	478,439	22.1	1.0	62.1	14.7	0.1
Nepalbhasa (Newari)	461,632	40.3	3.4	45.2	11.1	0.0
Bajjika	424,420	37.8	0.9	46.7	14.6	0.0
Avadhi	380,856	24.1	0.9	58.8	16.2	0.1
Doteli	252,975	16.3	1.0	66.2	16.4	0.0

4.8 Modelling social factors in using Nepali as a mother tongue

This section introduces a quantitative approach to study how a number of socio-economic factors determine in using Nepali as a mother tongue and second language. The use of Nepali as a mother tongue varies with the socio-economic status of population. The factors include the ecological belts where the language is spoken, urbanization, the province where Nepali is spoken, as well as sex, family structure, religion, age group of speakers, and educational level of the speakers. A statistical approach is employed to analyze the demographic and socio-economic data. Taking the use of Nepali is taken as a sociolinguistic variant, various social factors that influence having Nepali as a mother tongue, and as a second language are examined.

Table 4.10: Social factors in using Nepali as mother tongue, NPHC 2021

Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio	P value
1. Urban/Rural		
Urban (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Peri-urban	0.887	0.000
Rural	2.219	0.000
2. Ecological zone		
Mountain (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Hill	1.288	0.000
Tarai	0.651	0.000
3. Province		
Koshi (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Madhesh	0.078	0.000
Bagmati	0.759	0.000
Gandaki	1.622	0.000
Lumbini	0.887	0.000
Karnali	4.356	0.000
Sudurpashchim	0.503	0.000
4. Sex		
Male (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Female	1.157	0.000
5. Age groups		
0-9 (Ref.)	1.000	
10-19	0.946	0.000
20-29	0.800	0.000
30-39	0.855	0.000
40-49	0.955	0.000
50-59	1.114	0.000
60-69	1.260	0.000
70-79	1.349	0.000
80+	1.688	0.000
6. Wealth quintile		
Lowest (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Lower	1.250	0.000
Middle	1.559	0.000
Higher	2.452	0.000
Highest	3.324	0.000
7. Family structure		
Nuclear family (Ref.)	1.000	
Extended family	0.818	0.000
8. Religion		
Hindu (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Buddhism	0.071	0.000
Islam	0.111	0.000
Kirat	0.055	0.000
Christian	0.476	0.000
Prakriti	0.114	0.000
Bon	0.024	0.000
Jain	0.047	0.000
Bahai	0.243	0.000
Sikh	0.077	0.000
9. Level of education		
Illiterate	1.000	
ECD (Ref.)	1.715	0.000
Basic (1-8)	2.028	0.000
Secondary (9-Inter)	2.559	0.000
Higher (Bachelor +)	2.694	0.000
Others/Not stated	1.483	0.000
Constant	0.531	

Source: NSO, 2021

Compared to the urban population, the population living in peri-urban are less likely to use Nepali as a mother tongue (with an odds ratio of 0.887). This shows negative association with the reference status of population. Conversely, living in rural areas implies a 2.2 times greater likelihood of speaking Nepali as a mother tongue than in urban areas (with an odds ratio of 2.219). Compared to the Mountain zone, the population in the Hill has a slightly higher degree of using Nepali (with an odds ratio of 1.288). By contrast, the Tarai zone has a smaller population who tend to use Nepali as mother tongue (with an odds ratio of 0.651).

Gandaki has a one and half time higher possibility (AOR 1.622) of using Nepali as mother tongue compared to Koshi Province. Compared to Koshi Province, the population of Karnali Province

has more than one and half times higher possibility of speaking Nepali as mother tongue. Madhesh (AOR 0.078), Bagmati (AOR 0.759), Lumbini (AOR 0.887) and Sudurpashchim (0.503) provinces have a lower AOR than in Koshi Province. In other words, living in Karnali entails a 4.3 times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali compared to the reference category (Koshi Province).

The female population (AOR 1.157) is more likely to use Nepali as a mother tongue when compared against the male population. By age quintile, all age groups have a higher AOR than the lowest population. There is a clear positive association between the likelihood of speaking Nepali and wealth status: the wealthier the household, the higher the likelihood of speaking Nepali. The wealthier population has nearly more than 2.5 times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali. Similarly, the wealthiest population has more than three times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali. Nuclear families (AOR 1.000) are less likely to speak Nepali as a mother tongue compared to an extended family (AOR 0.818). Compared to the illiterate population, all categories of people with some levels of education are more likely to speak Nepali as a mother tongue. The higher the educational level, the more likely that the individual speaks Nepali as mother tongue. The highest AOR (2.694) is associated with Higher (Bachelor+) education level.

The same variables are used to regress the use of Nepali as a second language in Table 4.11. Some relevant findings are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 4.11: Social factors in using Nepali as a second language, NPHC 2021

Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio	Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio
1. Urban/Rural		4. Sex	
Urban (Ref.)	1.000	Male (Ref.)	1.000
Peri-urban	1.016	Female	0.884
Rural	0.572	5. Age groups	
2. Ecological zone		10-19 (Ref.)	1.000
Mountain (Ref.)	1.000	20-29	1.027
Hill	0.820	30-39	1.162
Tarai	1.634	40-49	1.000
3. Province		50-59	0.696
Koshi (Ref.)	1.000	60-69	0.629
Madhesh	3.244	70-79	0.556
Bagmati	1.379	80+	0.518
Gandaki	0.666	6. Wealth quintile	
Lumbini	1.126	Lowest (Ref.)	1.000
Karnali	0.290	Lower	1.250
Sudurpashchim	2.174	Middle	1.559

Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio
Higher	2.452
Highest	3.324
7. Family structure	
Nuclear family (Ref.)	1.000
Extended family	0.818
8. Religion	
Hindu (Ref.)	1.000
Buddhism	0.071
Islam	0.111
Kirat	0.055
Christian	0.476
Prakriti	0.114

Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio
Bon	0.024
Jain	0.047
Bahai	0.243
Sikh	0.077
9. Level of education	
Illiterate	1.000
ECD (Ref.)	1.715
Basic (1-8)	2.028
Secondary (9-Inter)	2.559
Higher (Bachelor +)	2.694
Others/Not stated	1.483
Constant	0.531

Source: NSO, 2021

The population residing in peri-urban regions (AOR 1.016) slightly lead in use of Nepali as a second language compared against urban areas. The population of Tarai leads as one and half times greater (AOR 1.634) in use of Nepali as a second language compared to Hill and Mountain zones. Living in Madhesh Province produces a larger likelihood (AOR AOR 3.244) in using Nepali as a second language than in Koshi. The other three provinces which lead in the use of Nepali as a second language are Sudurpashchim Province (AOR 2.174), Bagmati Province (AOR 1.379), followed by Lumbini Province (AOR 1.126). Gandaki (AOR 0.666) and Karnali (AOR 0.290) fall behind in the rate of using Nepali as a second language.

All age groups above 40 are less likely to speak Nepali as a second language. The higher the age categories, the less these individuals tend to speak Nepali as a second language. The population above the age of 70 are half as likely to speak Nepali as a second language than the reference category . In terms of wealth quintile, all categories fall behind the reference group AOR. This shows that the more wealthy the population, the less they likely they are to speak Nepali as a second language. Compared against the nuclear family, the extended family (AOR 1.157) slightly lead in speaking Nepali as a second language. Populations with formal education from class one to higher education implies a likelihood of nearly two times more of speaking Nepali as a second language compared against the illiterate population.

4.9 Social-economic factors to determine monolingualism

A sizable percentage of Nepal’s population is monolingual. There are some factors that determine their language use. Socio-cultural factors determine whether a person speaks a single

language, or s/he also makes use of second languages. The same variables mentioned in the previous section are also considered for this section (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Social factors that decide being monolingualism, NPHC 2021

Independent variables	Adjusted odds ratio	P value
1. Rural/urban		
Urban (Ref.)	1.000	0.363
Peri-urban	1.001	0.000
Rural	1.821	0.000
2. Ecological zone		
Mountain (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Hill	1.274	0.000
Tarai	1.821	0.000
3. Province		
Koshi (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Madhesh	0.237	0.000
Bagmati	0.824	0.000
Gandaki	1.580	0.000
Lumbini	0.936	0.000
Karnali	4.168	0.000
Sudurpashchim	0.513	0.000
4. Sex		
Male (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Female	1.141	0.000
5. Age groups		
1-9 (Ref.)	1.000	
10-19	0.966	0.000
20-29	0.830	0.000
30-39	0.969	0.000
40-49	1.413	0.000
50-59	1.574	0.000
60-69	1.808	0.000
70-79	1.977	0.000
80+	2.058	0.000
6. Wealth quintile		
Lowest (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Lower	1.132	0.000
Middle	1.290	0.000
Higher	1.717	0.000
Highest	2.108	0.000
7. Family structure		
Nuclear family (Ref.)	1.000	
Extended family	0.868	0.000
8. Religion		
Hindu (Ref.)	1.000	0.000
Buddhism	0.084	0.000
Islam	0.301	0.000
Kirat	0.070	0.000
Christian	0.481	0.000
Prakriti	0.142	0.000
Bon	0.031	0.000
Jain	0.064	0.000
Bahai	0.186	0.000
Sikh	0.097	0.000
9. Level of education		
Illiterate	1.000	
ECD (Ref.)	1.170	0.000
Basic (1-8)	1.312	0.000
Secondary (9-Inter)	1.618	0.000
Higher (Bachelor +)	1.585	0.000
Others/Not stated	0.944	0.000
Constant	0.757	

Source: NSO, 2021

Living in a rural area implies a 1.8 times greater likelihood of speaking a single language (or being monolingual). Living in Karnali entails a 4 times greater (AOR 4.168) likelihood of speaking a single language than in Koshi. Conversely, living in Madhesh Province shows the lowest

likelihood of being monolingual compared to Koshi. The female population shows a slightly higher rate of monolingualism (AOR 1.141) compared to the male population. In terms of age categories, people above the age of 80 (AOR 2.058) tend to show the greatest rate of monolingualism amongst all individuals.

Some results obtained from the logistic regression correlate with the results obtained from bivariate analysis in earlier sections. Firstly, 88 percent of the population within the province in Karnali speak Nepali as a mother tongue. This is corroborated by the conclusion obtained from the logistic regression, as it shows that living in Karnali shows a 4.3 times higher likelihood of speaking Nepali as compared to the reference category (Koshi Province). Similarly, only 5.8 percent of the population in Madhesh Province use Nepali as a mother tongue. This is aligned with the result of the logistic regression (with an odds ratio of 0.078). The population living in Madhesh has lowest likelihood of speaking Nepali as a mother tongue.

The results obtained from the logistic regression corroborate the results discussed in earlier sections regarding the use of Nepali as a second language. For example, a total of 70.8 percent of the population living in Madhesh Province use Nepali as a second language. This is attested from the results obtained through the logistic regression, in which living in Madhesh Province is shown to imply a 3.244 times greater likelihood of speaking Nepali as a second language when compared to Koshi Province. As shown in Table 4.6, the share of the population speaking Nepali as a second language is greater with formal schooling (or with the degree of SLC/SEE, and above), which is also confirmed by logistic regression with an odds ratio of 2.559 and 2.694 for secondary and higher education.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This thematic report has presented the situation of languages spoken in Nepal largely based on data obtained from the census 2021. The data analyzed with reference to language are associated with three questions concerning the respondents' mother tongue, second language, and the language of ancestors. The first two questions mentioned above are associated with the language use, whereas the last question is associated more with identity. The census data show that Nepal is a multilingual country with a number of minority languages. Linguistic consciousness of the ethnic groups seems to be rising and this is attested by the enumeration of a small number of languages.

5.1 Major findings

For the first time in 2021, three questions related to the language were used in the national census. It has been found that 124 languages are reported in use as a mother tongue in the 2021 census. At a glance, it seems that there is simply an addition of only one language compared to data from the previous census, in which a total of 123 languages had been reported as a mother tongue. However, some languages largely spoken in other countries but enumerated in the 2011 census have been left out, whereas some other languages have been included as a mother tongue in subsequent census recordings.

Some languages enumerated as mother tongue in the 2011 census, such as Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and French, are left out. Additionally, some languages such as Dzonkha, Mizo, Kuki, Assamese, Oriya, Garhwali, and Nagamese are not included in the 2021 census. Instead some languages spoken in Nepal, such as the ST family languages of NarPhu, Chum-Nubri, Mugali, Karmarong, TichurongPoike, and Baragaunwa have been included as mother tongues. Additionally, the IA family languages of Marwari, Done, Kewarat, Sadri, and Rana Tharu are enumerated for the first time as mother tongue languages in 2021. These mother tongue languages belong to four language families, in addition to Kusunda, a language isolate, and Sign language. Among these languages, 21 are classified as major languages with a population of more than 100,000, and constitute 95 percent of the total population. Conversely, the rest of the 124 languages constitute 5 percent of the total population.

Nepali has the largest population as a mother tongue, or 44.9 percent in 2021 (13,084,457 total). A total of 117 languages are recorded as a second language in the 2021 census. Nepali is the

largest second language, at a rate of 46.2 percent of the population (13,482,904 in total). There is a substantial increase in the recording of Nepali as a second language compared to the 2011 census, rising from 32.8 percent in 2011 to 46.2 percent in 2021. A total of 48.1 percent of Nepal's population (14,023,086 speakers) does not speak a second language and are thus classified as a monolingual population. A total of 124 languages are reported as the languages of ancestors. These languages are identical to a mother tongue despite the fact that the shares of individual languages differ. The language diversity indexes show that Koshi has the highest diversity index (0.788), whereas Karnali has the lowest diversity index (0.206). The highest diversity index is attested in Solukhumbu district (0.813), whereas the lowest diversity index is reported in Jajarkot (0.025).

The 2021 census was conducted for the first time since the promulgation of the 2015 Constitution of Nepal. Nepali is the largest language in six provinces, with the exception of Madhesh Province where Maithili is the largest language. A number of languages with small populations are largely concentrated in specific provinces, districts, and local levels. Madhesh Province has high degree of bilingualism, whereas Karnali has the lowest incidence of bilingualism. Compared to the 2011 census, growth of bilingualism is reported in Lumbini Province, from 29.6 percent in 2011 to 46.0 percent in 2021. Rates of bilingualism are highest reported in Doti (93.5%), whereas the lowest incidence of bilingualism is reported in Jajarkot (1.4%). Only 34 languages are classified as being in majority, or largest within the administrative units (provinces, districts and local levels).

Following the analysis of census data, several cross-cutting themes associated with language were examined. Nepali is the language spoken by all 142 caste/ethnic groups in Nepal. All caste and ethnic groups are found to speak Nepali as a mother tongue. This can largely be attributed to recognition of national language and its widespread diversity. In addition, migration and urbanization are two other potential factors which can be attributed to this incidence. Some languages, which used to be spoken by respective caste/ethnic groups, are also spoken by other caste/ethnic groups as a mother tongue. Among major mother tongue languages, Newari (Nepalbhasa) has the highest literacy rate (85.2%), much greater than the national average (76.2%). English has the highest literacy rate among second languages (99.2%).

Among the ten religions reported in Nepal in the 2021 census, more than three-quarters of the Indo-European language speaking population (81.2%) are reported to be Hindu, followed by Islam (6.1%) Buddhism (1.7%), and Christian (1.3%). Conversely, the highest number of people speaking Sino-Tibetan languages follow Buddhism (40.7%), and it is followed by Hinduism (36.5%), and Kirat (16.5%).

Among the major mother tongues, the educational attainment is reported highest with Nepalbhasa (Newari) mother tongue speakers (43.4%). The results obtained from logistic regression also corroborate the aforementioned results.

5.2 Policy recommendations

5.2.1 Language questions in census

The wording of the questions used in upcoming census seems subject to revision. Since initiating the inclusion of the question regarding mother tongue languages in the Nepali census, the question has focused on naming a mother tongue rather than the language which an individual often uses.

5.2.2 Studies on Nepalese languages

In past decades, the emphasis of data recording has focused on the precise enumeration of languages (see Yadava 2003, 2014) and the past three censuses offer closer focus on the enumeration of languages spoken in Nepal. Onward attention should be shifted to the description of the languages enumerated in the census which will help lay the foundation for comparing the possible language/dialect distinction which exists across the country. With greater availability of the descriptions of all languages and their dialects, there will be reduced uncertainty regarding the question on the number of languages and their variations. In addition, studies on the sign language(s), and the languages used by persons with speech disorders should be emphasized in order to enhance their inclusion.

5.2.3 Expanding the language uses for language vitality

Demographically, the languages enumerated in the 2021 census show a wide range of variations with regard to strength of speaker population. Some languages have a relatively small population and their distribution is scattered across local level and districts. The all level of governments should have policies regarding the preservation of languages spoken by these fewer population. Multiple positive results can be seen as a result of expanding language use. Firstly, in the case of the languages which have never been written, it instills confidence in communities that their languages can be written and recorded. Secondly, it helps increase a language's functional domain in social contexts. The more functional domains language are used in, the more vital they are.

5.2.4 Implementation framework of language policies

The Constitution of Nepal is the main source of the official language policy concerning languages spoken in Nepal. Given the status planning of the country at present, the implementation plan

of language policies should be made based on the information from the census. All levels of government (federal, provincial, and local) are encouraged to give thoughtful attention to the implementation of official language policy.

5.2.5 Language documentation and revitalization

The United Nations General Assembly, in Resolution A/RES/74/135, proclaimed the period from 2022 to 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032). The initiative aims to raise global awareness about the critical challenges facing small and endangered languages, calling for action to preserve, revitalize, and promote them.

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ANNEX TABLES

Annex 1: Distribution of population of Nepal by mother tongue, 2021

S. N	Language	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Cumulative %
Indo-European						
1	Nepali	6,337,538	6,746,919	13,084,457	44.9	44.9
2	Maithili	1,632,669	1,589,720	3,222,389	11.0	55.9
3	Bhojpuri	950,296	870,499	1,820,795	6.2	62.2
4	Tharu	832,470	881,621	1,714,091	5.9	68.1
5	Bajjika	570,380	563,384	1,133,764	3.9	72.0
6	Avadhi	430,498	433,778	864,276	3.0	74.9
7	Doteli	228,905	265,959	494,864	1.7	76.6
8	Urdu	200,738	213,047	413,785	1.4	78.0
9	Magahi	109,155	120,962	230,117	0.8	78.8
10	Rajbanshi	63,168	66,995	130,163	0.4	79.3
11	Baitadeli	60,575	92,091	152,666	0.5	79.8
12	Khash	58,429	59,082	117,511	0.4	80.2
13	Hindi	57,244	41,155	98,399	0.3	80.5
14	Achhami	54,163	87,281	141,444	0.5	81.0
15	Bajhangsi	40,506	59,125	99,631	0.3	81.4
16	Ranatharu	38,088	39,678	77,766	0.3	81.6
17	Danuwar	23,984	26,008	49,992	0.2	81.8
18	Bajureli	21,824	34,662	56,486	0.2	82.0
19	Angika	17,911	18,041	35,952	0.1	82.1
20	Darchuleli	16,854	28,795	45,649	0.2	82.3
21	Majhi	16,114	16,803	32,917	0.1	82.4
22	Bangla	14,008	9,766	23,774	0.1	82.5
23	Ganagai	12,502	13,779	26,281	0.1	82.6
24	Marwadi	11,074	10,259	21,333	0.1	82.6
25	Tajpuriya	9,619	10,730	20,349	0.1	82.7
26	Kumal	8,869	9,566	18,435	0.1	82.8
27	Sanskrit	8,179	5,727	13,906	0.0	82.8
28	Musalman	6,974	9,278	16,252	0.1	82.9
29	Dadeldhuri	6,860	14,440	21,300	0.1	82.9

S. N	Language	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Cumulative %
30	Darai	5,866	6,290	12,156	0.0	83.0
31	Bote	3,792	3,895	7,687	0.0	83.0
32	Jumli	3,169	5,169	8,338	0.0	83.0
33	Dailekhi	1,677	3,312	4,989	0.0	83.1
34	Kewarat	1,630	1,839	3,469	0.0	83.1
35	Done	1,461	1,639	3,100	0.0	83.1
36	English	702	621	1,323	0.0	83.1
37	Sadri	669	678	1,347	0.0	83.1
38	Sonaha	587	595	1,182	0.0	83.1
39	Punjabi	496	375	871	0.0	83.1
40	Kisan	471	533	1,004	0.0	83.1
41	Kurmali	203	194	397	0.0	83.1
42	Sindhi	142	149	291	0.0	83.1
43	Malpande	79	82	161	0.0	83.1
44	Sadhani	66	56	122	0.0	83.1
45	Hariyanwi	63	51	114	0.0	83.1
Sino-Tibetan						
46	Tamang	695,486	727,589	1,423,075	4.9	87.9
47	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	424,296	439,084	863,380	3.0	90.8
48	Magar Dhut	381,586	428,729	810,315	2.8	93.6
49	Yakthung/Limbu	169,889	180,547	350,436	1.2	94.8
50	Gurung	153,388	174,686	328,074	1.1	95.9
51	Rai	68,357	76,155	144,512	0.5	96.4
52	Bantawa	67,300	70,703	138,003	0.5	96.9
53	Sherpa	58,314	59,582	117,896	0.4	97.3
54	Magar Kham	43,884	47,869	91,753	0.3	97.6
55	Chamling	43,512	45,525	89,037	0.3	97.9
56	Chepang	29,652	28,740	58,392	0.2	98.1
57	Kulung	18,713	19,199	37,912	0.1	98.2
58	Sunuwar	16,182	16,526	32,708	0.1	98.4
59	Thami	13,034	13,771	26,805	0.1	98.4
60	Thulung	12,139	12,266	24,405	0.1	98.5
61	Ghale	11,225	11,824	23,049	0.1	98.6
62	Sampang	10,503	11,094	21,597	0.1	98.7

S. N	Language	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Cumulative %
63	Dhimal	9,758	10,825	20,583	0.1	98.8
64	Khaling	8,274	8,240	16,514	0.1	98.8
65	Wambule	7,494	7,791	15,285	0.1	98.9
66	Bahing/Bayung	7,099	7,350	14,449	0.0	98.9
67	Yakkha	6,946	7,295	14,241	0.0	99.0
68	Bhote	6,622	6,273	12,895	0.0	99.0
69	Bhujel	6,424	6,662	13,086	0.0	99.1
70	Yamphu/Yamphe	5,354	5,390	10,744	0.0	99.1
71	Nachhiring	4,927	4,979	9,906	0.0	99.1
72	H Yolmo/Yholmo	4,865	4,793	9,658	0.0	99.2
73	Dumi	4,265	4,373	8,638	0.0	99.2
74	Mewahang	3,730	3,698	7,428	0.0	99.2
75	Puma	3,300	3,463	6,763	0.0	99.2
76	Pahari	3,047	2,899	5,946	0.0	99.3
77	Dungmali	2,655	2,748	5,403	0.0	99.3
78	Athpahariya	2,651	2,929	5,580	0.0	99.3
79	Jirel	2,531	2,636	5,167	0.0	99.3
80	Tibetan	2,406	2,647	5,053	0.0	99.3
81	Koyee	2,084	2,068	4,152	0.0	99.3
82	Chum/Nubri	2,071	2,213	4,284	0.0	99.4
83	Raji	2,054	2,193	4,247	0.0	99.4
84	Thakali	2,053	2,167	4,220	0.0	99.4
85	Chhantyal	2,052	2,230	4,282	0.0	99.4
86	Meche	1,975	2,228	4,203	0.0	99.4
87	Lohorung	1,876	2,008	3,884	0.0	99.4
88	Dolpali	1,393	1,851	3,244	0.0	99.4
89	Jero/Jerung	1,380	1,437	2,817	0.0	99.4
90	Mugali	1,329	1,505	2,834	0.0	99.5
91	Chhintang	1,327	1,237	2,564	0.0	99.5
92	Karmarong	1,213	1,406	2,619	0.0	99.5
93	Lapcha	1,147	1,093	2,240	0.0	99.5
94	Lhopa	1,127	1,221	2,348	0.0	99.5
95	Tilung	1,017	952	1,969	0.0	99.5
96	Chhiling	992	1,019	2,011	0.0	99.5

S. N	Language	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Cumulative %
97	Manange	937	1,085	2,022	0.0	99.5
98	Dura	930	1,061	1,991	0.0	99.5
99	Byansi	838	868	1,706	0.0	99.5
100	Baragunwa	732	804	1,536	0.0	99.5
101	Balkura/Baram	725	814	1,539	0.0	99.5
102	Magar Kaike	577	648	1,225	0.0	99.5
103	Hayu/Vayu	540	593	1,133	0.0	99.5
104	Dhuleli	402	384	786	0.0	99.5
105	Khamchi(Raute)	375	366	741	0.0	99.5
106	Lungkhim	362	340	702	0.0	99.6
107	Kagate	330	281	611	0.0	99.6
108	Lowa	320	304	624	0.0	99.6
109	Waling/Walung	271	274	545	0.0	99.6
110	Lhomi	200	213	413	0.0	99.6
111	Nar-Phu	193	235	428	0.0	99.6
112	Tichhurong Poike	187	223	410	0.0	99.6
113	Koche	166	166	332	0.0	99.6
114	Phangduwali	142	105	247	0.0	99.6
115	Surel	89	85	174	0.0	99.6
116	Belhare	84	93	177	0.0	99.6
117	Sam	62	44	106	0.0	99.6
118	Bankariya	45	41	86	0.0	99.6
Austro-Asiatic						
119	Santhali	26,094	27,583	53,677	0.2	99.8
120	Munda/Mudiyari	1,012	1,095	2,107	0.0	99.8
121	Khariya	63	69	132	0.0	99.8
Dravidian						
122	Oraon/Kudukh	18,511	20,362	38,873	0.1	99.9
Others						
123	Sign Language	936	848	1,784	0.0	100.0
124	Kusunda	11	12	23	0.0	100.0
	Others	2,670	1,531	4,201	0.0	100.0
	Not stated	182	164	346	0.0	100.0
	Total	14,253,551	14,911,027	29,164,578	100.0	

Annex 2: Language among age groups

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
1	Nepali	13,084,457	937,007	2,515,607	2,663,055	2,115,745	1,727,909	2,234,583	890,551
	%	100	7.2	19.2	20.4	16.2	13.2	17.1	6.8
2	Maithili	3,222,389	308,965	710,139	680,367	503,087	390,572	444,897	184,362
	%	100	9.6	22	21.1	15.6	12.1	13.8	5.7
3	Bhojpuri	1,820,795	174,213	401,078	396,080	287,889	226,629	238,148	96,758
	%	100	9.6	22	21.8	15.8	12.4	13.1	5.3
4	Tharu	1,714,091	122,672	264,219	348,509	321,569	251,248	301,506	104,368
	%	100	7.2	15.4	20.3	18.8	14.7	17.6	6.1
5	Tamang	1,423,075	106,732	256,008	286,186	240,563	186,308	243,106	104,172
	%	100	7.5	18	20.1	16.9	13.1	17.1	7.3
6	Bajjika	1,133,764	136,937	294,447	213,309	140,353	126,703	153,138	68,877
	%	100	12.1	26	18.8	12.4	11.2	13.5	6.1
7	Avadhi	864276	99944	218830	159791	119952	98329	114660	52770
	%	100	11.6	25.3	18.5	13.9	11.4	13.3	6.1
8	Nepal-bhasha (Newari)	863,380	39,855	100,310	125,718	142,869	144,366	220,045	90,217
	%	100	4.6	11.6	14.6	16.5	16.7	25.5	10.4
9	Magar Dhut	810,315	52,446	133,666	162,285	137,483	111,593	149,199	63,643
	%	100	6.5	16.5	20	17	13.8	18.4	7.9
10	Doteli	494,864	47,320	116,538	102,370	68,718	54,973	72,536	32,409
	%	100	9.6	23.5	20.7	13.9	11.1	14.7	6.5
11	Urdu	413,785	55,109	112,633	85,223	55,478	40,756	46,040	18,546
	%	100	13.3	27.2	20.6	13.4	9.8	11.1	4.5
12	Yakthung/L imbu	350,436	24,248	59,918	68,500	58,301	46,434	65,582	27,453
	%	100	6.9	17.1	19.5	16.6	13.3	18.7	7.8
13	Gurung	328,074	17,062	46,732	57,750	51,420	45,857	71,176	38,077
	%	100	5.2	14.2	17.6	15.7	14	21.7	11.6
14	Magahi	230,117	43,528	38,689	14,412	22,167	29,400	56,890	25,031
	%	100	18.9	16.8	6.3	9.6	12.8	24.7	10.9
15	Baitadeli	152,666	36,356	25,694	2,095	7,344	15,015	38,057	28,105
	%	100	23.8	16.8	1.4	4.8	9.8	24.9	18.4

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
16	Rai	144,512	8,796	23,056	29,103	27,613	21,808	24,734	9,402
	%	100	6.1	16	20.1	19.1	15.1	17.1	6.5
17	Achhami	141,444	35,029	15,783	2,877	8,879	16,669	36,414	25,793
	%	100	24.8	11.2	2	6.3	11.8	25.7	18.2
18	Bantawa	138,003	8,751	22,671	26,094	22,785	18,216	27,307	12,179
	%	100	6.3	16.4	18.9	16.5	13.2	19.8	8.8
19	Rajbanshi	130,163	9,408	22,373	25,296	21,194	19,192	24,468	8,232
	%	100	7.2	17.2	19.4	16.3	14.7	18.8	6.3
20	Sherpa	117,896	7,967	20,469	23,895	19,726	15,786	21,241	8,812
	%	100	6.8	17.4	20.3	16.7	13.4	18	7.5
21	Khash	117,511	11,675	27,481	26,118	16,757	12,300	17,549	5,631
	%	100	9.9	23.4	22.2	14.3	10.5	14.9	4.8
22	Bajhangi	99,631	18,799	21,830	2,190	6,307	11,310	25,076	14,119
	%	100	19	22	2	6	11	25	14
23	Hindi	98,399	6,693	15,603	20,790	20,389	15,561	15,349	4,014
	%	100	7	16	21	21	16	16	4
24	Magar Kham	91,753	7,658	19,268	18,756	13,565	10,415	15,226	6,865
	%	100	8	21	20	15	11	17	8
25	Chamling	89,037	6,177	16,135	17,525	13,739	11,404	16,428	7,629
	%	100	7	18	20	15	13	19	9
26	Ranatharu	77,766	5,581	13,018	17,670	14,599	10,705	11,929	4,264
	%	100	7	17	23	19	14	15	6
27	Chepang	58,392	6,681	14,409	13,067	8,716	5,640	6,919	2,960
	%	100	11	25	22	15	10	12	5
28	Bajureli	56,486	16,035	2,037	1,190	4,474	7,973	15,526	9,251
	%	100	28	4	2	8	14	28	16
29	Santhali	53,677	5,090	11,262	11,937	8,263	6,146	8,489	2,490
	%	100	10	21	22	15	11	16	5
30	Danuwar	49,992	4,489	9,331	10,758	8,303	6,301	8,067	2,743
	%	100	9	19	22	17	13	16	6
31	Darchuleli	45,649	12,568	1,877	1,309	2,573	4,810	12,814	9,698
	%	100	28	4	3	6	11	28	21

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
32	Oraon/ Kudukh	38,873	3,565	7,468	8,177	6,480	5,058	6,235	1,890
	%	100	9	19	21	17	13	16	5
33	Kulung	37,912	2,741	7,471	7,925	6,037	4,555	6,405	2,778
	%	100	7	20	21	16	12	17	7
34	Angika	35,952	3,117	6,851	7,208	5,395	4,815	6,293	2,273
	%	100	9	19	20	15	13	18	6
35	Majhi	32,917	2,734	6,435	6,903	5,517	4,240	5,259	1,829
	%	100	8	20	21	17	13	16	6
36	Sunuwar	32,708	2,194	5,328	6,483	5,581	3,889	6,317	2,916
	%	100	7	16	20	17	12	19	9
37	Thami	26,805	2,447	5,462	5,584	4,165	2,962	4,079	2,106
	%	100	9	20	21	16	11	15	8
38	Ganagai	26,281	2,448	5,580	5,183	3,572	3,446	4,397	1,655
	%	100	9	21	20	14	13	17	6
39	Thulung	24,405	1,744	4,166	4,689	3,767	3,051	4,729	2,259
	%	100	7	17	19	15	13	19	9
40	Bangla	23,774	1,837	3,842	4,939	5,065	3,598	3,524	969
	%	100	8	16	21	21	15	15	4
41	Ghale	23,049	1,510	3,866	4,257	3,539	2,980	4,474	2,423
	%	100	7	17	19	15	13	19	11
42	Sampang	21,597	1,539	3,879	4,067	3,488	2,589	4,041	1,994
	%	100	7	18	19	16	12	19	9
43	Marwadi	21,333	986	2,573	3,109	3,532	3,485	5,594	2,054
	%	100	5	12	15	17	16	26	10
44	Dadeldhuri	21,300	6,849	574	206	867	2,378	6,295	4,131
	%	100	32	3	1	4	11	30	19
45	Dhimal	20,583	1,239	3,005	3,236	3,356	3,396	4,780	1,571
	%	100	6	15	16	16	17	23	8
46	Tajpuriya	20,349	1,650	3,693	3,795	3,317	2,935	3,722	1,237
	%	100	8	18	19	16	14	18	6
47	Kumal	18,435	1,320	3,384	3,476	3,085	2,482	3,462	1,226
	%	100	7	18	19	17	14	19	7
48	Khaling	16,514	1,262	3,128	3,193	2,564	2,074	2,923	1,370
	%	100	8	19	19	16	13	18	8

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
49	Musalman	16,252	4,576	1,258	1,401	1,994	2,189	3,242	1,592
	%	100	28	8	9	12	14	20	10
50	Wambule	15,285	1,124	3,017	3,197	2,310	1,821	2,734	1,082
	%	100	7	20	21	15	12	18	7
51	Bahing/ Bayung	14,449	937	2,442	2,786	2,373	1,758	2,823	1,330
	%	100	7	17	19	16	12	20	9
52	Yakkha	14,241	850	2,332	2,563	2,103	1,970	2,990	1,433
	%	100	6	16	18	15	14	21	10
53	Sanskrit	13,906	662	2,484	2,648	2,115	1,864	2,774	1,359
	%	100	5	18	19	15	13	20	10
54	Bhujel	13,086	1,001	2,268	2,525	2,161	1,732	2,435	964
	%	100	8	17	19	17	13	19	7
55	Bhote	12,895	861	2,563	2,348	1,901	1,709	2,431	1,082
	%	100	7	20	18	15	13	19	8
56	Darai	12,156	803	1,798	2,314	2,185	1,906	2,416	734
	%	100	7	15	19	18	16	20	6
57	Yamphu/ Yamphe	10,744	741	1,863	2,169	1,805	1,322	1,968	876
	%	100	7	17	20	17	12	18	8
58	Nachhiring	9,906	761	1,969	1,952	1,435	1,205	1,737	847
	%	100	8	20	20	15	12	18	9
59	Holmo/ Yholmo	9,658	526	1,234	1,443	1,396	1,416	2,419	1,224
	%	100	5	13	15	15	15	25	13
60	Dumi	8,638	610	1,574	1,554	1,381	1,013	1,684	822
	%	100	7	18	18	16	12	20	10
61	Jumli	8,338	2,280	204	210	850	1,355	2,381	1,058
	%	100	27	2	3	10	16	29	13
63	Mewahang	7,428	504	1,284	1,425	1,225	914	1,417	659
	%	100	7	17	19	17	12	19	9
64	Puma	6,763	453	1,330	1,333	1,030	752	1,255	610
	%	100	7	20	20	15	11	19	9
65	Pahari	5,946	344	974	1,220	1,140	831	1,026	411
	%	100	6	16	21	19	14	17	7

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
66	Athpahariya	5,580	375	839	1,018	860	714	1,258	516
	%	100	7	15	18	15	13	23	9
67	Dungmali	5,403	341	912	983	802	644	1,169	552
	%	100	6	17	18	15	12	22	10
68	Jirel	5,167	276	713	937	965	729	1,094	453
	%	100	5	14	18	19	14	21	9
69	Tibetan	5,053	206	733	949	675	759	1,123	608
	%	100	4	15	19	13	15	22	12
70	Dailekhi	4,989	1,306	124	69	248	635	1,576	1,031
	%	100	26	3	1	5	13	32	21
71	Chum/ Nubri	4,284	381	719	564	651	574	949	446
	%	100	9	17	13	15	13	22	10
72	Chhantyal	4,282	239	720	761	588	569	890	515
	%	100	6	17	18	14	13	21	12
73	Raji	4,247	439	937	969	624	555	565	158
	%	100	10	22	23	15	13	13	4
74	Thakali	4,220	112	393	515	503	597	1,226	874
	%	100	3	9	12	12	14	29	21
75	Meche	4,203	299	674	770	750	702	792	216
	%	100	7	16	18	18	17	19	5
76	Koyee	4,152	268	843	776	656	488	721	400
	%	100	7	20	19	16	12	17	10
77	Lohorung	3,884	211	589	619	630	553	856	426
	%	100	5	15	16	16	14	22	11
78	Kewarat	3,469	257	575	621	503	516	723	274
	%	100	7	17	18	15	15	21	8
79	Dolpali	3,244	355	193	315	554	639	919	269
	%	100	11	6	10	17	20	28	8
80	Done	3,100	257	545	651	588	421	472	166
	%	100	8	18	21	19	14	15	5
81	Mugali	2,834	172	534	562	391	325	548	302
	%	100	6	19	20	14	12	19	11

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
82	Jero/ Jerung	2,817	204	567	630	424	293	491	208
	%	100	7	20	22	15	10	17	7
83	Karmarong	2,619	222	736	487	352	250	353	219
	%	100	9	28	19	13	10	14	8
84	Chhintang	2,564	136	441	493	348	348	561	237
	%	100	5	17	19	14	14	22	9
85	Lhopa	2,348	109	258	259	381	367	687	287
	%	100	5	11	11	16	16	29	12
86	Lapcha	2,240	141	314	382	429	332	462	180
	%	100	6	14	17	19	15	21	8
87	Munda/ Mudiyari	2,107	162	365	452	350	306	373	99
	%	100	8	17	22	17	15	18	5
88	Manange	2,022	84	184	219	306	366	504	359
	%	100	4	9	11	15	18	25	18
89	Chhiling	2,011	129	277	356	321	315	428	185
	%	100	6	14	18	16	16	21	9
90	Dura	1,991	88	272	419	323	292	392	205
	%	100	4	14	21	16	15	20	10
91	Tilung	1,969	144	454	454	323	227	281	86
	%	100	7	23	23	16	12	14	4
92	Sign Language	1,784	194	340	310	188	194	445	113
	%	100	11	19	17	11	11	25	6
93	Byansi	1,706	126	316	262	210	248	387	157
	%	100	7	19	15	12	15	23	9
94	Balkura/ Baram	1,539	92	205	259	227	208	348	200
	%	100	6	13	17	15	14	23	13
95	Barangunwa	1,536	68	157	127	212	252	453	267
	%	100	4	10	8	14	16	30	17
96	Sadri	1,347	107	236	283	253	185	225	58
	%	100	8	18	21	19	14	17	4
97	English	1,323	82	233	243	239	228	206	92
	%	100	6	18	18	18	17	16	7

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
98	Magar	1,225	82	226	227	206	167	233	84
	Kaike								
	%	100	7	18	19	17	14	19	7
99	Sonaha	1,182	103	240	251	193	150	192	53
	%	100	9	20	21	16	13	16	5
100	Hayu/Vayu	1,133	98	256	247	166	134	161	71
	%	100	9	23	22	15	12	14	6
101	Kisan	1,004	63	178	239	169	118	192	45
	%	100	6	18	24	17	12	19	5
102	Punjabi	871	40	106	136	159	137	219	74
	%	100	5	12	16	18	16	25	9
103	Dhuleli	786	75	263	148	92	72	94	42
	%	100	10	34	19	12	9	12	5
104	Khamchi (Raute)	741	80	220	145	114	64	88	30
	%	100	11	30	20	15	9	12	4
105	Lungkhim	702	48	136	126	122	86	138	46
	%	100	7	19	18	17	12	20	7
106	Lowa	624	5	289	216	54	26	24	10
	%	100	1	46	35	9	4	4	2
107	Kagate	611	59	105	128	96	68	101	54
	%	100	10	17	21	16	11	17	9
108	Waling/Walung	545	23	85	103	86	86	103	59
	%	100	4	16	19	16	16	19	11
109	Nar-Phu	428	19	47	43	72	68	114	65
	%	100	4	11	10	17	16	27	15
110	Lhomi	413	38	90	73	85	42	53	32
	%	100	9	22	18	21	10	13	8
111	Tichhurong Poike	410	53	50	84	74	38	88	23
	%	100	13	12	21	18	9	22	6
112	Kurmali	397	35	74	75	77	49	66	21
	%	100	9	19	19	19	12	17	5
113	Koche	332	26	60	83	42	42	61	18
	%	100	8	18	25	13	13	18	5

S.N.	Mother tongue	Total	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
114	Sindhi	291	22	40	51	43	53	67	15
	%	100	8	14	18	15	18	23	5
115	Phang-duwali	247	20	47	38	41	26	53	22
	%	100	8	19	15	17	11	22	9
116	Belhare	177	14	28	40	18	20	43	14
	%	100	8	16	23	10	11	24	8
117	Surel	174	6	39	31	26	21	36	15
	%	100	3	22	18	15	12	21	9
118	Malpande	161	13	30	34	22	29	26	7
	%	100	8	19	21	14	18	16	4
119	Khariya	132	9	14	30	29	12	32	6
	%	100	7	11	23	22	9	24	5
120	Sadhani	122	9	17	31	19	24	20	2
	%	100	7	14	25	16	20	16	2
121	Hariyanwi	114	4	16	23	13	18	30	10
	5	100	4	14	20	11	16	26	9
122	Sam	106	6	13	24	18	14	23	8
	%	100	6	12	23	17	13	22	8
123	Bankariya	86	8	18	15	15	12	15	3
	%	100	9	21	17	17	14	17	4
124	Kusunda	23	2	3	6	5	5	2	0
	%	100	9	13	26	22	22	9	0
	Others	4,201	216	442	611	978	847	950	157
	%	100	5	11	15	23	20	23	4
	Not stated	346	21	39	63	115	33	59	16
	%	100	6	11	18	33	10	17	5

Annex 3: Mother tongues by sex, 2021

Mother tongue	Total	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
All MTongues	29,164,578	14,253,551	48.9	14,911,027	51.1
Nepali	13,084,457	6,337,538	48.4	6,746,919	51.6
Maithili	3,222,389	1,632,669	50.7	1,589,720	49.3
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	950,296	52.2	870,499	47.8
Tharu	1,714,091	832,470	48.6	881,621	51.4
Tamang	1,423,075	695,486	48.9	727,589	51.1
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	424,296	49.1	439,084	50.9
Bajjika	1,133,764	570,380	50.3	563,384	49.7
Magar Dhut	810,315	381,586	47.1	428,729	52.9
Doteli	494,864	228,905	46.3	265,959	53.7
Urdu	413,785	200,738	48.5	213,047	51.5
Avadhi	864,276	430,498	49.8	433,778	50.2
Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	169,889	48.5	180,547	51.5
Gurung	328,074	153,388	46.8	174,686	53.2
Baitadeli	152,666	60,575	39.7	92,091	60.3
Rai	144,512	68,357	47.3	76,155	52.7
Achhami	141,444	54,163	38.3	87,281	61.7
Bantawa	138,003	67,300	48.8	70,703	51.2
Rajbanshi	130,163	63,168	48.5	66,995	51.5
Sherpa	117,896	58,314	49.5	59,582	50.5
Hindi	98,399	57,244	58.2	41,155	41.8
Chamling	89,037	43,512	48.9	45,525	51.1
Bajhangsi	99,631	40,506	40.7	59,125	59.3
Santhali	53,677	26,094	48.6	27,583	51.4
Chepeng	58,392	29,652	50.8	28,740	49.2
Danuwar	49,992	23,984	48.0	26,008	52.0
Sunuwar	32,708	16,182	49.5	16,526	50.5
Magahi	230,117	109,155	47.4	120,962	52.6
Uranw/Urau	38,873	18,511	47.6	20,362	52.4
Kulung	37,912	18,713	49.4	19,199	50.6
Magar Kham	91,753	43,884	47.8	47,869	52.2
Marwadi	21,333	11,074	51.9	10,259	48.1
Majhi	32,917	16,114	49.0	16,803	51.0
Thami	26,805	13,034	48.6	13,771	51.4
Bhujel	13,086	6,424	49.1	6,662	50.9
Bangla	23,774	14,008	58.9	9,766	41.1

Mother tongue	Total	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Thulung	24,405	12,139	49.7	12,266	50.3
Yakkha	14,241	6,946	48.8	7,295	51.2
Dhimal	20,583	9,758	47.4	10,825	52.6
Tajpuriya	20,349	9,619	47.3	10,730	52.7
Angika	35,952	17,911	49.8	18,041	50.2
Sampang	21,597	10,503	48.6	11,094	51.4
Khaling	16,514	8,274	50.1	8,240	49.9
Wambule	15,285	7,494	49.0	7,791	51.0
Kumal	18,435	8,869	48.1	9,566	51.9
Darai	12,156	5,866	48.3	6,290	51.7
Bahing/Bayung	14,449	7,099	49.1	7,350	50.9
Bajureli	56,486	21,824	38.6	34,662	61.4
H yolmo/Yholmo	9,658	4,865	50.4	4,793	49.6
Nachhiring	9,906	4,927	49.7	4,979	50.3
Yamphu/Yamphe	10,744	5,354	49.8	5,390	50.2
Bote	7,687	3,792	49.3	3,895	50.7
Ghale	23,049	11,225	48.7	11,824	51.3
Dumi	8,638	4,265	49.4	4,373	50.6
Lapcha	2,240	1,147	51.2	1,093	48.8
Puma	6,763	3,300	48.8	3,463	51.2
Dungmali	5,403	2,655	49.1	2,748	50.9
Darchuleli	45,649	16,854	36.9	28,795	63.1
Athpahariya	5,580	2,651	47.5	2,929	52.5
Thakali	4,220	2,053	48.6	2,167	51.4
Jirel	5,167	2,531	49.0	2,636	51.0
Mewahang	7,428	3,730	50.2	3,698	49.8
Sign Language	1,784	936	52.5	848	47.5
Tibetan	5,053	2,406	47.6	2,647	52.4
Meche	4,203	1,975	47.0	2,228	53.0
Chhantyal	4,282	2,052	47.9	2,230	52.1
Raji	4,247	2,054	48.4	2,193	51.6
Lohorung	3,884	1,876	48.3	2,008	51.7
Chhintang	2,564	1,327	51.8	1,237	48.2
Ganagai	26,281	12,502	47.6	13,779	52.4
Pahari	5,946	3,047	51.2	2,899	48.8
Dailekhi	4,989	1,677	33.6	3,312	66.4
Lhopa	2,348	1,127	48.0	1,221	52.0

Mother tongue	Total	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Dura	1,991	930	46.7	1,061	53.3
Koche	332	166	50.0	166	50.0
Chhiling	2,011	992	49.3	1,019	50.7
English	1,323	702	53.1	621	46.9
Jero/Jerung	2,817	1,380	49.0	1,437	51.0
Khash	117,511	58,429	49.7	59,082	50.3
Sanskrit	13,906	8,179	58.8	5,727	41.2
Dolpali	3,244	1,393	42.9	1,851	57.1
Hayu/Vayu	1,133	540	47.7	593	52.3
Tilung	1,969	1,017	51.7	952	48.3
Koyee	4,152	2,084	50.2	2,068	49.8
Kisan	1,004	471	46.9	533	53.1
Waling/Walung	545	271	49.7	274	50.3
Musalman	16,252	6,974	42.9	9,278	57.1
Hariyanwi	114	63	55.3	51	44.7
Jumli	8,338	3,169	38.0	5,169	62.0
Punjabi	871	496	56.9	375	43.1
Lhomi	413	200	48.4	213	51.6
Belhare	177	84	47.5	93	52.5
Sonaha	1,182	587	49.7	595	50.3
Sindhi	291	142	48.8	149	51.2
Dadeldhuri	21,300	6,860	32.2	14,440	67.8
Byansi	1,706	838	49.1	868	50.9
Khamchi (Raute)	741	375	50.6	366	49.4
Sam	106	62	58.5	44	41.5
Manange	2,022	937	46.3	1,085	53.7
Dhuleli	786	402	51.1	384	48.9
Phangduwali	247	142	57.5	105	42.5
Surel	174	89	51.1	85	48.9
Malpande	161	79	49.1	82	50.9
Khariya	132	63	47.7	69	52.3
Kurmali	397	203	51.1	194	48.9
Balkura/Baram	1,539	725	47.1	814	52.9
Lungkhim	702	362	51.6	340	48.4
Sadhani	122	66	54.1	56	45.9
Kagate	611	330	54.0	281	46.0
Bankariya	86	45	52.3	41	47.7

Mother tongue	Total	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Magar Kaike	1,225	577	47.1	648	52.9
Kusunda	23	11	47.8	12	52.2
Bhote	12,895	6,622	51.4	6,273	48.6
Lowa	624	320	51.3	304	48.7
Chum/Nubri	4,284	2,071	48.3	2,213	51.7
Baragunwa	1,536	732	47.7	804	52.3
Nar-Phu	428	193	45.1	235	54.9
Ranatharu	77,766	38,088	49.0	39,678	51.0
Karmarong	2,619	1,213	46.3	1,406	53.7
Mugali	2,834	1,329	46.9	1,505	53.1
Tichhurong Poike	410	187	45.6	223	54.4
Sadri	1,347	669	49.7	678	50.3
Done	3,100	1,461	47.1	1,639	52.9
Munda/Mudiyari	2,107	1,012	48.0	1,095	52.0
Kewarat	3,469	1,630	47.0	1,839	53.0
Others	4,201	2,670	63.6	1,531	36.4
Not stated	346	182	52.6	164	47.4

Annex 4: Second language by sex

Second Language	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Total	29,164,578	14,253,551	48.9	14,911,027	51.1
No Second Language	14,023,086	6,754,119	48.2	7,268,967	51.8
Nepali	13,482,904	6,681,669	49.6	6,801,235	50.4
Maithili	267,621	127,757	47.7	139,864	52.3
Bhojpuri	138,572	68,405	49.4	70,167	50.6
Tharu	89,606	44,424	49.6	45,182	50.4
Tamang	71,569	34,596	48.3	36,973	51.7
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	32,604	15,981	49.0	16,623	51.0
Bajjika	86,062	41,014	47.7	45,048	52.3
Magar Dhut	54,143	25,663	47.4	28,480	52.6
Doteli	14,344	6,377	44.5	7,967	55.5
Urdu	72,128	34,054	47.2	38,074	52.8
Avadhi	75,651	37,272	49.3	38,379	50.7
Yakthung/Limbu	19,705	9,302	47.2	10,403	52.8
Gurung	23,698	11,108	46.9	12,590	53.1
Baitadeli	9,521	4,020	42.2	5,501	57.8
Rai	14,398	6,996	48.6	7,402	51.4
Achhami	6,522	2,481	38.0	4,041	62.0
Bantawa	43,536	21,409	49.2	22,127	50.8
Rajbanshi	4,103	1,962	47.8	2,141	52.2
Sherpa	9,435	4,633	49.1	4,802	50.9
Hindi	223,106	115,654	51.8	107,452	48.2
Chamling	29,253	14,253	48.7	15,000	51.3
Bajhangsi	2,641	1,008	38.2	1,633	61.8
Santhali	703	352	50.1	351	49.9
Chepeng	833	429	51.5	404	48.5
Danuwar	845	430	50.9	415	49.1
Sunuwar	1,597	757	47.4	840	52.6
Magahi	29,191	13,750	47.1	15,441	52.9
Uranw/Urau	245	113	46.1	132	53.9
Kulung	6,039	2,980	49.3	3,059	50.7
Magar Kham	16,814	7,917	47.1	8,897	52.9
Marwadi	3,449	1,723	50.0	1,726	50.0
Majhi	971	465	47.9	506	52.1
Thami	859	430	50.1	429	49.9
Bhujel	740	362	48.9	378	51.1

Second Language	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Bangla	5,447	2,628	48.2	2,819	51.8
Thulung	17,187	8,432	49.1	8,755	50.9
Yakkha	704	316	44.9	388	55.1
Dhimal	999	459	45.9	540	54.1
Tajpuriya	209	100	47.8	109	52.2
Angika	6,127	2,961	48.3	3,166	51.7
Sampang	14,261	7,004	49.1	7,257	50.9
Khaling	10,370	5,180	50.0	5,190	50.0
Wambule	5,227	2,543	48.7	2,684	51.3
Kumal	615	289	47.0	326	53.0
Darai	591	295	49.9	296	50.1
Bahing/Bayung	15,104	7,484	49.5	7,620	50.5
Bajureli	1,076	455	42.3	621	57.7
H Yolmo/Yholmo	508	234	46.1	274	53.9
Nachhiring	3,176	1,534	48.3	1,642	51.7
Yamphu/Yamphe	494	230	46.6	264	53.4
Bote	3,891	2,169	55.7	1,722	44.3
Ghale	963	440	45.7	523	54.3
Dumi	5,870	2,852	48.6	3,018	51.4
Lapcha	242	122	50.4	120	49.6
Puma	4,271	2,071	48.5	2,200	51.5
Dungmali	1,271	589	46.3	682	53.7
Darchuleli	4,272	1,794	42.0	2,478	58.0
Athpahariya	320	146	45.6	174	54.4
Thakali	733	357	48.7	376	51.3
Jirel	332	144	43.4	188	56.6
Mewahang	3,669	1,778	48.5	1,891	51.5
Sign Language	828	432	52.2	396	47.8
Tibetan	3,134	2,079	66.3	1,055	33.7
Meche	75	34	45.3	41	54.7
Chhantyal	394	190	48.2	204	51.8
Raji	76	25	32.9	51	67.1
Lohorung	622	301	48.4	321	51.6
Chhintang	2,135	1,048	49.1	1,087	50.9
Ganagai	644	287	44.6	357	55.4
Pahari	142	69	48.6	73	51.4
Dailekhi	434	204	47.0	230	53.0

Second Language	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Lhopa	129	74	57.4	55	42.6
Dura	278	135	48.6	143	51.4
Koche	335	188	56.1	147	43.9
Chhiling	685	323	47.2	362	52.8
English	102,561	57,494	56.1	45,067	43.9
Jero/Jerung	1,245	636	51.1	609	48.9
Khash	2,607	1,276	48.9	1,331	51.1
Sanskrit	6,615	4,355	65.8	2,260	34.2
Dolpali	127	64	50.4	63	49.6
Hayu/Vayu	349	188	53.9	161	46.1
Tilung	1,762	853	48.4	909	51.6
Koyee	928	459	49.5	469	50.5
Kisan	33	17	51.5	16	48.5
Waling/Walung	304	144	47.4	160	52.6
Musalman	6,084	2,853	46.9	3,231	53.1
Hariyanwi	84	34	40.5	50	59.5
Jumli	1,125	537	47.7	588	52.3
Punjabi	1,274	588	46.2	686	53.8
Belhare	1,491	702	47.1	789	52.9
Sonaha	35	24	68.6	11	31.4
Sindhi	217	112	51.6	105	48.4
Dadeldhuri	5,535	2,213	40.0	3,322	60.0
Byansi	32	14	43.8	18	56.3
Khamchi (Raute)	526	217	41.3	309	58.7
Sam	79	41	51.9	38	48.1
Manange	304	149	49.0	155	51.0
Dhuleli	187	87	46.5	100	53.5
Phangduwali	85	44	51.8	41	48.2
Surel	64	32	50.0	32	50.0
Malpande	78	35	44.9	43	55.1
Kurmali	60	29	48.3	31	51.7
Balkura/Baram	307	156	50.8	151	49.2
Lungkhim	28	12	42.9	16	57.1
Sadhani	125	70	56.0	55	44.0
Kagate	615	301	48.9	314	51.1
Bankariya	42	21	50.0	21	50.0
Magar Kaike	515	233	45.2	282	54.8

Second Language	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Kusunda	32	16	50.0	16	50.0
Bhote	45,292	23,043	50.9	22,249	49.1
Baragunwa	89	43	48.3	46	51.7
Ranatharu	871	429	49.3	442	50.7
Karmarong	34	14	41.2	20	58.8
Mugali	23	9	39.1	14	60.9
Tichhurong Poike	72	33	45.8	39	54.2
Sadri	106	45	42.5	61	57.5
Kewarat	38	14	36.8	24	63.2
Others	159	103	64.8	56	35.2
Not stated	8,105	3,952	48.8	4,153	51.2

Annex 5: Monolingual population by sex, NPHC 2021

Mother tongue	Total	Male		Female	
	count	count	%	count	%
Total	14,023,086	6,754,119	48.2	7,268,967	51.8
Nepali	12,496,587	6,035,308	48.3	6,461,279	51.7
Maithili	491,692	232,452	47.3	259,240	52.7
Bhojpuri	257,322	118,947	46.2	138,375	53.8
Tharu	84,957	37,034	43.6	47,923	56.4
Tamang	53,546	25,814	48.2	27,732	51.8
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	25,369	11,694	46.1	13,675	53.9
Bajjika	195,516	95,649	48.9	99,867	51.1
Magar Dhut	26,915	12,685	47.1	14,230	52.9
Doteli	15	7	46.7	8	53.3
Urdu	39,961	18,587	46.5	21,374	53.5
Avadhi	181,554	84,157	46.4	97,397	53.6
Yakthung/Limbu	9,557	4,587	48.0	4,970	52.0
Gurung	11,912	5,517	46.3	6,395	53.7
Rai	5,105	2,411	47.2	2,694	52.8
Bantawa	5,368	2,621	48.8	2,747	51.2
Rajbanshi	5,399	2,331	43.2	3,068	56.8
Sherpa	4,569	2,252	49.3	2,317	50.7
Hindi	13,980	8,781	62.8	5,199	37.2
Chamling	3,286	1,588	48.3	1,698	51.7
Santhali	2,454	1,137	46.3	1,317	53.7
Chepang	684	338	49.4	346	50.6
Danuwar	2,159	1,046	48.4	1,113	51.6
Sunuwar	1,115	550	49.3	565	50.7
Magahi	55,936	26,195	46.8	29,741	53.2
Oraon/Kudukh	3,304	1,472	44.6	1,832	55.4
Kulung	1,084	550	50.7	534	49.3
Magar Kham	4,228	1,989	47.0	2,239	53.0
Marwadi	655	332	50.7	323	49.3
Majhi	1,479	717	48.5	762	51.5

Mother tongue	Total	Male		Female	
	count	count	%	conut	%
Thami	1,315	639	48.6	676	51.4
Bhujel	350	169	48.3	181	51.7
Bangla	1,651	991	60.0	660	40.0
Thulung	651	334	51.3	317	48.7
Yakkha	339	172	50.7	167	49.3
Dhimal	400	191	47.8	209	52.3
Tajpuriya	851	381	44.8	470	55.2
Angika	7,035	2,968	42.2	4,067	57.8
Sampang	945	441	46.7	504	53.3
Khaling	359	174	48.5	185	51.5
Wambule	522	260	49.8	262	50.2
Kumal	403	194	48.1	209	51.9
Darai	169	88	52.1	81	47.9
Bahing/Bayung	936	447	47.8	489	52.2
Bajureli	1	0	0.0	1	100.0
H Yolmo/Yholmo	147	78	53.1	69	46.9
Nachhiring	256	128	50.0	128	50.0
Yamphu/Yamphe	89	49	55.1	40	44.9
Bote	131	79	60.3	52	39.7
Ghale	1,180	559	47.4	621	52.6
Dumi	156	74	47.4	82	52.6
Lapcha	82	44	53.7	38	46.3
Puma	222	106	47.7	116	52.3
Dungmali	105	47	44.8	58	55.2
Darchuleli	688	323	46.9	365	53.1
Athpahariya	124	56	45.2	68	54.8
Thakali	115	58	50.4	57	49.6
Jirel	336	161	47.9	175	52.1
Mewahang	215	100	46.5	115	53.5
Sign Language	1,784	936	52.5	848	47.5
Tibetan	445	172	38.7	273	61.3

Mother tongue	Total	Male		Female	
	count	count	%	count	%
Meche	34	13	38.2	21	61.8
Chhantyal	177	84	47.5	93	52.5
Raji	77	42	54.5	35	45.5
Lohorung	39	16	41.0	23	59.0
Chhintang	171	94	55.0	77	45.0
Ganagai	2,175	803	36.9	1,372	63.1
Pahari	75	36	48.0	39	52.0
Dailekhi	406	140	34.5	266	65.5
Lhopa	366	124	33.9	242	66.1
Dura	83	33	39.8	50	60.2
Koche	14	4	28.6	10	71.4
Chhiling	65	33	50.8	32	49.2
English	309	177	57.3	132	42.7
Jero/Jerung	34	19	55.9	15	44.1
Khash	3	0	0.0	3	100.0
Hayu/Vayu	71	32	45.1	39	54.9
Tilung	64	33	51.6	31	48.4
Koyee	100	50	50.0	50	50.0
Kisan	8	5	62.5	3	37.5
Waling/Walung	23	12	52.2	11	47.8
Musalman	3	1	33.3	2	66.7
Hariyanwi	12	8	66.7	4	33.3
Punjabi	46	30	65.2	16	34.8
Lhomi	1	1	100.0	0	0.0
Belhare	3	1	33.3	2	66.7
Sonaha	36	18	50.0	18	50.0
Sindhi	17	10	58.8	7	41.2
Khamchi (Raute)	468	235	50.2	233	49.8
Sam	10	6	60.0	4	40.0
Manange	55	21	38.2	34	61.8
Dhuleli	15	6	40.0	9	60.0

Mother tongue	Total	Male		Female	
	count	count	%	conut	%
Surel	2	2	100.0	0	0.0
Malpande	2	1	50.0	1	50.0
Khariya	1	1	100.0	0	0.0
Kurmali	17	8	47.1	9	52.9
Balkura/Baram	143	67	46.9	76	53.1
Lungkhim	20	10	50.0	10	50.0
Sadhani	10	7	70.0	3	30.0
Kagate	88	42	47.7	46	52.3
Bankariya	7	5	71.4	2	28.6
Magar Kaike	12	6	50.0	6	50.0
Bhote	518	284	54.8	234	45.2
Lowa	12	8	66.7	4	33.3
Chum/Nubri	372	163	43.8	209	56.2
Baragunwa	101	38	37.6	63	62.4
Nar-Phu	1	0	0.0	1	100.0
Ranatharu	7,970	3,483	43.7	4,487	56.3
Karmarong	100	24	24.0	76	76.0
Mugali	154	63	40.9	91	59.1
Sadri	4	3	75.0	1	25.0
Others	792	607	76.6	185	23.4
Not stated	90	43	47.8	47	52.2

Annex 6: Share of individual language as the second language (excluding 'No second language')

S.N.	Language	Speaker	Percentage	Cumulative %
1	Nepali	13,482,904	89.0	89.0
2	Maithili	267,621	1.8	90.8
3	Hindi	223,106	1.5	92.2
4	Bhojpuri	138,572	0.9	93.2
5	English	102,561	0.7	93.8
6	Tharu	89,606	0.6	94.4
7	Bajjika	86,062	0.6	95.0
8	Avadhi	75,651	0.5	95.5
9	Urdu	72,128	0.5	96.0
10	Tamang	71,569	0.5	96.4
11	Magar Dhut	54,143	0.4	96.8
12	Bhote	45,292	0.3	97.1
13	Bantawa	43,536	0.3	97.4
14	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	32,604	0.2	97.6
15	Chamling	29,253	0.2	97.8
16	Magahi	29,191	0.2	98.0
17	Gurung	23,698	0.2	98.1
18	Yakthung/Limbu	19,705	0.1	98.3
19	Thulung	17,187	0.1	98.4
20	Magar Kham	16,814	0.1	98.5
21	Bahing/Bayung	15,104	0.1	98.6
22	Rai	14,398	0.1	98.7
23	Doteli	14,344	0.1	98.8
24	Sampang	14,261	0.1	98.9
25	Khaling	10,370	0.1	99.0
26	Baitadeli	9,521	0.1	99.0
27	Sherpa	9,435	0.1	99.1
28	Sanskrit	6,615	0.0	99.1
29	Achhami	6,522	0.0	99.2
30	Angika	6,127	0.0	99.2
31	Musalman	6,084	0.0	99.2
32	Kulung	6,039	0.0	99.3
33	Dumi	5,870	0.0	99.3

S.N.	Language	Speaker	Percentage	Cumulative %
34	Dadeldhuri	5,535	0.0	99.4
35	Bangla	5,447	0.0	99.4
36	Wambule	5,227	0.0	99.4
37	Darchuleli	4,272	0.0	99.5
38	Puma	4,271	0.0	99.5
39	Rajbanshi	4,103	0.0	99.5
40	Bote	3,891	0.0	99.5
41	Mewahang	3,669	0.0	99.6
42	Marwadi	3,449	0.0	99.6
43	Nachhiring	3,176	0.0	99.6
44	Tibetan	3,134	0.0	99.6
45	Bajhangi	2,641	0.0	99.6
46	Khash	2,607	0.0	99.7
47	Chhintang	2,135	0.0	99.7
48	Tilung	1,762	0.0	99.7
49	Sunuwar	1,597	0.0	99.7
50	Belhare	1,491	0.0	99.7
51	Punjabi	1,274	0.0	99.7
52	Dungmali	1,271	0.0	99.7
53	Jero/Jerung	1,245	0.0	99.7
54	Jumli	1,125	0.0	99.7
55	Bajureli	1,076	0.0	99.7
56	Dhimal	999	0.0	99.8
57	Majhi	971	0.0	99.8
58	Ghale	963	0.0	99.8
59	Koyee	928	0.0	99.8
60	Ranatharu	871	0.0	99.8
61	Thami	859	0.0	99.8
62	Danuwar	845	0.0	99.8
63	Chepang	833	0.0	99.8
64	Sign Language	828	0.0	99.8
65	Bhujel	740	0.0	99.8
66	Thakali	733	0.0	99.8
67	Yakkha	704	0.0	99.8

S.N.	Language	Speaker	Percentage	Cumulative %
68	Santhali	703	0.0	99.8
69	Chhiling	685	0.0	99.8
70	Ganagai	644	0.0	99.8
71	Lohorung	622	0.0	99.8
72	Kumal	615	0.0	99.8
73	Kagate	615	0.0	99.8
74	Darai	591	0.0	99.8
75	Khamchi (Raute)	526	0.0	99.8
76	Magar Kaike	515	0.0	99.9
77	H Yolmo/Yholmo	508	0.0	99.9
78	Yamphu/Yamphe	494	0.0	99.9
79	Dailekhi	434	0.0	99.9
80	Chhantyal	394	0.0	99.9
81	Hayu/Vayu	349	0.0	99.9
82	Koche	335	0.0	99.9
83	Jirel	332	0.0	99.9
84	Athpahariya	320	0.0	99.9
85	Balkura/Baram	307	0.0	99.9
86	Waling/Walung	304	0.0	99.9
87	Manange	304	0.0	99.9
88	Dura	278	0.0	99.9
89	Oraon/Kudukh	245	0.0	99.9
90	Lapcha	242	0.0	99.9
91	Sindhi	217	0.0	99.9
92	Tajpuriya	209	0.0	99.9
93	Dhuleli	187	0.0	99.9
94	Pahari	142	0.0	99.9
95	Lhopa	129	0.0	99.9
96	Dolpali	127	0.0	99.9
97	Sadhani	125	0.0	99.9
98	Sadri	106	0.0	99.9
99	Baragunwa	89	0.0	99.9
100	Phangduwali	85	0.0	99.9
101	Hariyanwi	84	0.0	99.9

S.N.	Language	Speaker	Percentage	Cumulative %
102	Sam	79	0.0	99.9
103	Malpande	78	0.0	99.9
104	Raji	76	0.0	99.9
105	Meche	75	0.0	99.9
106	Tichhurong Poike	72	0.0	99.9
107	Surel	64	0.0	99.9
108	Kurmali	60	0.0	99.9
109	Bankariya	42	0.0	99.9
110	Kewarat	38	0.0	99.9
111	Sonaha	35	0.0	99.9
112	Karmarong	34	0.0	99.9
113	Kisan	33	0.0	99.9
114	Byansi	32	0.0	99.9
115	Kusunda	32	0.0	99.9
116	Lungkhim	28	0.0	99.9
117	Mugali	23	0.0	99.9
118	Lhomi	0	0.0	99.9
119	Khariya	0	0.0	99.9
120	Lowa	0	0.0	99.9
121	Chum/Nubri	0	0.0	99.9
122	Nar-Phu	0	0.0	99.9
123	Done	0	0.0	99.9
124	Munda/Mudiyari	0	0.0	99.9
	Not stated	8,105	0.1	100.0
	Others	159	0.0	100.0
	Total	15,141,492	100	

Annex 7: Relationships between the mother tongues and the major 10 second languages

Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojpuri	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Total	29,164,578	14,023,086	13,482,904	267,621	223,106	138,572	102,561	89,606	86,062	75,651	72,128	71,569	523,607	8,105
Nepali	13,084,457	12,496,587	0	50,588	74,075	35,109	95,770	63,989	9,862	19,963	10,245	34,743	185,821	7,705
Maithili	3,222,389	491,692	2,623,800	0	36,946	5,284	583	9,382	12,970	6,770	16,752	76	18,115	19
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	257,322	1,503,020	2,363	32,591	0	286	4,176	1,817	6,869	8,842	90	3,412	7
Tharu	1,714,091	84,957	1,587,029	10,363	830	16,936	119	0	2,052	5,928	762	226	4,876	13
Tamang	1,423,075	53,546	1,343,837	1,414	155	120	434	341	83	975	474	0	21,641	55
Bajjika	1,133,764	195,516	805,824	42,455	21,615	41,819	100	852	0	3,073	16,816	3	5,687	4
Avadhi	864,276	181,554	621,968	352	34,708	7,282	215	1,738	173	0	15,412	16	854	4
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	25,369	827,944	628	172	153	1,350	181	27	2,249	161	2,516	2,529	101
Magar Dhut	810,315	26,915	764,892	436	198	260	259	456	13	1,579	200	2,198	12,891	18
Doteli	494,864	15	485,536	93	325	12	50	347	2	1,172	152	32	7,128	0
Urdu	413,785	39,961	126,812	111,670	10,852	25,680	585	505	53,536	21,242	0	6	22,935	1
Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	9,557	324,329	103	45	55	147	750	13	192	240	1,518	13,485	2
Gurung	328,074	11,912	285,200	366	84	104	154	242	140	301	25	22,830	6,710	6
Magahi	230,117	55,936	141,560	24,973	3,124	63	9	27	2,904	379	581	3	558	0
Baitadeli	152,666	0	149,610	17	152	4	3	32	0	367	49	3	2,429	0
Rai	144,512	5,105	134,750	119	23	10	67	297	22	154	120	224	3,619	2
Achhami	141,444	0	140,338	12	123	1	9	68	3	268	49	1	572	0
Bantawa	138,003	5,368	98,187	117	20	12	34	443	9	81	90	118	33,521	3
Rajbanshi	130,163	5,399	121,712	1,240	149	4	9	523	0	382	36	5	702	2
Sherpa	117,896	4,569	71,517	363	15	12	32	4	6	45	29	760	40,525	19

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Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojpuri	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Khash	117,511	3	115,910	37	178	43	49	36	4	284	19	2	946	0
Bajhangi	99,631	0	98,112	36	68	2	4	1	0	209	9	1	1,189	0
Hindi	98,399	13,980	75,741	2,156	0	2,225	1,170	473	600	938	336	20	732	28
Magar Kham	91,753	4,228	85,729	66	19	42	8	36	2	44	17	31	1,531	0
Chamling	89,037	3,286	51,811	103	8	17	24	603	33	68	49	129	32,905	1
Ranatharu	77,766	7,970	68,893	7	45	6	3	392	0	145	20	30	255	0
Chepang	58,392	684	57,279	17	2	2	1	9	2	65	38	82	210	1
Bajureli	56,486	1	55,702	3	119	2	13	16	2	201	7	0	420	0
Santhali	53,677	2,454	48,939	553	67	10	4	6	2	62	7	14	1,558	1
Danuwar	49,992	2,159	45,025	1,180	2	116	2	831	313	130	11	5	218	0
Darchuleli	45,649	688	43,997	17	16	1	3	8	0	76	24	1	818	0
Oraon/Kudukh	38,873	3,304	24,853	7,573	27	1,676	8	673	3	94	13	1	648	0
Kulung	37,912	1,084	27,305	12	16	3	15	84	4	13	6	159	9,211	0
Angika	35,952	7,035	24,979	3,539	121	170	0	14	0	53	6	0	35	0
Majhi	32,917	1,479	29,161	375	12	427	1	265	637	108	0	77	375	0
Sunuwar	32,708	1,115	24,670	22	0	11	9	102	0	50	25	115	6,586	3
Thami	26,805	1,315	25,100	3	7	22	0	19	0	48	13	18	260	0
Ganagai	26,281	2,175	22,325	286	799	6	6	6	0	149	31	1	497	0
Thulung	24,405	651	12,033	9	4	8	25	80	2	14	17	55	11,507	0
Bangla	23,774	1,651	17,931	1,871	1,941	28	45	21	3	51	64	11	150	7
Ghale	23,049	1,180	16,137	29	4	9	3	2	5	30	0	4,476	1,173	1
Sampang	21,597	945	13,816	8	0	2	3	137	10	8	7	30	6,631	0
Marwadi	21,333	655	18,410	177	1,770	98	13	2	5	148	7	0	44	4

Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojपुरी	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Dadeldhuri	21,300	0	20,502	1	33	3	0	4	1	37	15	2	702	0
Dhimal	20,583	400	19,592	7	2	0	6	101	1	28	1	12	433	0
Tajपुरीया	20,349	851	19,194	34	4	1	2	1	0	100	4	0	158	0
Kumal	18,435	403	17,860	2	4	1	1	81	1	34	6	0	42	0
Khaling	16,514	359	10,257	8	7	25	8	50	1	8	7	17	5,767	0
Musalman	16,252	3	12,030	1,262	962	174	44	192	708	12	194	0	667	4
Wambule	15,285	522	6,555	2	0	1	1	92	5	3	7	4	8,093	0
Bahing/Bayung	14,449	936	5,729	11	2	8	4	75	2	5	22	31	7,624	0
Yakkha	14,241	339	13,147	10	0	0	2	22	0	10	0	37	674	0
Sanskrit	13,906	0	13,653	49	9	23	27	5	11	31	4	0	94	0
Bhujel	13,086	350	12,242	15	5	4	10	30	0	19	10	6	395	0
Bhote	12,895	518	11,272	72	0	0	7	0	0	7	2	7	1,007	3
Darai	12,156	169	11,906	1	2	6	0	14	0	27	8	0	23	0
Yamphu/ Yamphe	10,744	89	9,810	2	0	0	13	8	2	4	4	123	689	0
Nachhiring	9,906	256	6,279	12	2	1	6	58	0	3	18	65	3,206	0
Holmo/ Yholmo	9,658	147	7,977	20	0	0	1	26	1	1	1	472	1,012	0
Dumi	8,638	156	3,725	30	19	302	62	107	0	6	4	32	4,195	0
Jumli	8,338	0	8,161	1	4	0	0	5	0	42	1	1	123	0
Bote	7,687	131	7,362	17	0	1	0	77	0	21	1	23	53	1
Mewahang	7,428	215	4,449	0	0	1	6	34	2	4	2	10	2,705	0
Puma	6,763	222	2,520	0	0	0	4	24	10	3	2	10	3,968	0
Pahari	5,946	75	5,814	2	0	0	0	1	10	18	1	3	22	0

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Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojपुरी	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Athpahariya	5,580	124	3,997	0	1	0	0	8	0	3	0	12	1,435	0
Dungmali	5,403	105	2,741	4	0	1	3	11	8	2	4	2	2,522	0
Jirel	5,167	336	4,807	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	4	1	11	0
Tibetan	5,053	445	4,374	14	26	9	18	0	0	4	0	12	148	3
Dailekhi	4,989	406	4,385	0	4	0	0	15	5	11	0	0	163	0
Chum/Nubri	4,284	372	815	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3,089	0
Chhantyal	4,282	177	3,980	0	0	33	1	20	0	5	0	2	64	0
Raji	4,247	77	3,987	4	0	1	0	26	0	8	1	0	143	0
Thakali	4,220	115	4,055	9	1	1	7	3	0	3	1	0	23	2
Meche	4,203	34	4,128	1	1	0	0	4	0	7	0	0	28	0
Koyee	4,152	100	1,740	1	0	13	0	1	1	4	2	15	2,275	0
Lohorung	3,884	39	3,530	1	1	0	1	5	0	3	0	3	301	0
Kewarat	3,469	0	3,345	95	11	1	0	1	0	10	0	0	6	0
Dolpali	3,244	0	2,417	8	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	813	0
Done	3,100	0	3,088	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	6	0
Mugali	2,834	154	2,408	2	0	0	3	15	0	1	1	0	247	3
Jero/Jerung	2,817	34	2,155	0	0	1	0	19	1	1	7	0	599	0
Karmarong	2,619	100	2,381	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	131	0
Chhintang	2,564	171	1,126	0	0	1	0	4	2	2	0	0	1,258	0
Lhopa	2,348	366	1,846	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	129	0
Lapcha	2,240	82	2,130	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	2	20	0
Munda/Mudiyari	2,107	0	1,983	77	0	1	0	7	0	2	0	1	36	0
Manange	2,022	55	1,879	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	5	3	72	0

Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojपुरी	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Chhiling	2,011	65	1,692	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	252	0
Dura	1,991	83	1,873	2	0	1	1	0	6	0	1	0	24	0
Tilung	1,969	64	1,090	1	111	0	2	3	0	1	0	4	693	0
Sign Language	1,784	1,784	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Byansi	1,706	0	1,695	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0
Balkura/Baram	1,539	143	1,317	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	74	0
Baragunwa	1,536	101	1,414	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	19	0
Sadri	1,347	4	1,321	5	11	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
English	1,323	309	932	9	26	3	5	2	10	2	0	10	13	2
Magar Kaike	1,225	12	1,157	10	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	42	0
Sonaha	1,182	36	670	0	1	71	0	245	0	138	0	0	21	0
Hayu/Vayu	1,133	71	998	1	0	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	56	0
Kisan	1,004	8	989	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	0
Punjabi	871	46	670	0	113	19	4	0	0	0	11	0	8	0
Dhuleli	786	15	766	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0
Khamchi(Raute)	741	468	221	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	0
Lungkhim	702	20	506	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	175	0
Lowa	624	12	391	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	218	0
Kagate	611	88	496	0	13	1	0	5	0	7	0	1	0	0
Waling/Walung	545	23	414	1	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	3	95	1
Nar-Phu	428	1	64	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	357	0
Lhomi	413	1	379	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	24	0
Tichhurong Poike	410	0	408	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

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Mother Tongues	Total	Second language												
		No second language	Nepali	Maithili	Hindi	Bhojpuri	English	Tharu	Bajjika	Awadhi	Urdu	Tamang	Others	Not stated
Kurmali	397	17	376	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Koche	332	14	307	0	1	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	2	0
Sindhi	291	17	218	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	49	0
Phangduwali	247	0	210	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	0
Belhare	177	3	162	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Surel	174	2	158	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	0
Malpande	161	2	130	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	0
Khariya	132	1	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	0
Sadhani	122	10	110	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hariyanwi	114	12	88	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	10	0
Sam	106	10	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0
Bankariya	86	7	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Kusunda	23	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Others	4,201	792	2,181	22	270	11	659	14	1	3	10	4	155	79
Not stated	346	90	178	11	22	2	22	1	3	0	0	0	17	0

Annex 8: Second languages, 2021

S.N	Mother tongues	Speakers	Percentage	Cumulative %
1	Nepali	13,482,904	46.2	46.2
2	Maithili	267,621	0.9	47.1
3	Hindi	223,106	0.8	47.9
4	Bhojpuri	138,572	0.5	48.4
5	English	102,561	0.4	48.7
6	Tharu	89,606	0.3	49.0
7	Bajjika	86,062	0.3	49.3
8	Avadhi	75,651	0.3	49.6
9	Urdu	72,128	0.2	49.8
10	Tamang	71,569	0.2	50.1
11	Magar Dhut	54,143	0.2	50.2
12	Bhote	45,292	0.2	50.4
13	Bantawa	43,536	0.1	50.6
14	Nepalbhasha (Newari)	32,604	0.1	50.7
15	Chamling	29,253	0.1	50.8
16	Magahi	29,191	0.1	50.9
17	Gurung	23,698	0.1	50.9
18	Yakthung/Limbu	19,705	0.1	51.0
19	Thulung	17,187	0.1	51.1
20	Magar Kham	16,814	0.1	51.1
21	Bahing/Bayung	15,104	0.1	51.2
22	Rai	14,398	0.0	51.2
23	Doteli	14,344	0.0	51.3
24	Sampang	14,261	0.0	51.3
25	Khaling	10,370	0.0	51.4
26	Baitadeli	9,521	0.0	51.4
27	Sherpa	9,435	0.0	51.4
28	Sanskrit	6,615	0.0	51.5
29	Achhami	6,522	0.0	51.5
30	Angika	6,127	0.0	51.5
31	Musalman	6,084	0.0	51.5
32	Kulung	6,039	0.0	51.5
33	Dumi	5,870	0.0	51.6

S.N	Mother tongues	Speakers	Percentage	Cumulative %
34	Dadeldhuri	5,535	0.0	51.6
35	Bangla	5,447	0.0	51.6
36	Wambule	5,227	0.0	51.6
37	Darchuleli	4,272	0.0	51.6
38	Puma	4,271	0.0	51.6
39	Rajbanshi	4,103	0.0	51.7
40	Bote	3,891	0.0	51.7
41	Mewahang	3,669	0.0	51.7
42	Marwadi	3,449	0.0	51.7
43	Nachhiring	3,176	0.0	51.7
44	Tibetan	3,134	0.0	51.7
45	Bajhangi	2,641	0.0	51.7
46	Khash	2,607	0.0	51.7
47	Chhintang	2,135	0.0	51.7
48	Tilung	1,762	0.0	51.7
49	Sunuwar	1,597	0.0	51.8
50	Belhare	1,491	0.0	51.8
51	Punjabi	1,274	0.0	51.8
52	Dungmali	1,271	0.0	51.8
53	Jero/Jerung	1,245	0.0	51.8
54	Jumli	1,125	0.0	51.8
55	Bajureli	1,076	0.0	51.8
56	Dhimal	999	0.0	51.8
57	Majhi	971	0.0	51.8
58	Ghale	963	0.0	51.8
59	Koyee	928	0.0	51.8
60	Ranatharu	871	0.0	51.8
61	Thami	859	0.0	51.8
62	Danuwar	845	0.0	51.8
63	Chepang	833	0.0	51.8
64	Sign Language	828	0.0	51.8
65	Bhujel	740	0.0	51.8
66	Thakali	733	0.0	51.8
67	Yakkha	704	0.0	51.8

S.N	Mother tongues	Speakers	Percentage	Cumulative %
68	Santhali	703	0.0	51.8
69	Chhiling	685	0.0	51.8
70	Ganagai	644	0.0	51.8
71	Lohorung	622	0.0	51.8
72	Kumal	615	0.0	51.8
73	Kagate	615	0.0	51.8
74	Darai	591	0.0	51.8
75	Khamchi(Raute)	526	0.0	51.8
76	Magar Kaike	515	0.0	51.8
77	H Yolmo/Yholmo	508	0.0	51.8
78	Yamphu/Yamphe	494	0.0	51.8
79	Dailekhi	434	0.0	51.8
80	Chhantyal	394	0.0	51.8
81	Hayu/Vayu	349	0.0	51.8
82	Koche	335	0.0	51.8
83	Jirel	332	0.0	51.8
84	Athpahariya	320	0.0	51.8
85	Balkura/Baram	307	0.0	51.8
86	Waling/Walung	304	0.0	51.8
87	Manange	304	0.0	51.8
88	Dura	278	0.0	51.8
89	Oraon/Kudukh	245	0.0	51.8
90	Lapcha	242	0.0	51.9
91	Sindhi	217	0.0	51.9
92	Tajpuriya	209	0.0	51.9
93	Dhuleli	187	0.0	51.9
94	Pahari	142	0.0	51.9
95	Lhopa	129	0.0	51.9
96	Dolpali	127	0.0	51.9
97	Sadhani	125	0.0	51.9
98	Sadri	106	0.0	51.9
99	Barangunwa	89	0.0	51.9
100	Phangduwali	85	0.0	51.9
101	Hariyanwi	84	0.0	51.9

S.N	Mother tongues	Speakers	Percentage	Cumulative %
102	Sam	79	0.0	51.9
103	Malpande	78	0.0	51.9
104	Raji	76	0.0	51.9
105	Meche	75	0.0	51.9
106	Tichhurong Poike	72	0.0	51.9
107	Surel	64	0.0	51.9
108	Kurmali	60	0.0	51.9
109	Bankariya	42	0.0	51.9
110	Kewarat	38	0.0	51.9
111	Sonaha	35	0.0	51.9
112	Karmarong	34	0.0	51.9
113	Kisan	33	0.0	51.9
114	Byansi	32	0.0	51.9
115	Kusunda	32	0.0	51.9
116	Lungkhim	28	0.0	51.9
117	Mugali	23	0.0	51.9
118	Lhomi	0	0.0	51.9
119	Khariya	0	0.0	51.9
120	Lowa	0	0.0	51.9
121	Chum/Nubri	0	0.0	51.9
122	Nar-Phu	0	0.0	51.9
123	Done	0	0.0	51.9
124	Munda/Mudiyari	0	0.0	51.9
	Not stated	8,105	0.0	51.9
	Others	159	0.0	51.9
	No second language	14,023,086	48.1	100.0
		29,164,578	100.0	

(Source NSO, 2024)

Annex 9: Comparison of ancestors' languages and mother tongues

S.N.	Ancestor's languages	Population	Percentage	Mother tongue population
1.	Nepali	10,137,006	34.76	1,308,4457
2.	Maithili	2,959,876	10.15	3,222,389
3.	Bhojpuri	1,768,618	6.06	1,820,795
4.	Tharu	1,764,709	6.05	1,714,091
5.	Tamang	1,602,875	5.50	1,423,075
6.	Magar Dhut	1,248,003	4.28	810,315
7.	Nepalbhasha(Newari)	1,179,946	4.05	863,380
8.	Bajjika	1,145,924	3.93	1,133,764
9.	Avadhi	911,800	3.13	8,642,76
10.	Urdu	569,626	1.95	413,785
11.	Doteli	526,910	1.81	494,864
12.	Gurung	467,697	1.60	328,074
13.	Magahi	423,568	1.45	230,117
14.	Baitadeli	410,602	1.41	152,666
15.	Yakthung/Limbu	408,577	1.40	350,436
16.	Achhami	396,503	1.36	141,444
17.	Khash	326,512	1.12	117,511
18.	Rai	228,502	0.78	144,512
19.	Bajhangi	212,108	0.73	99,631
20.	Darchuleli	154,156	0.53	45,649
21.	Bantawa	151,346	0.52	138,003
22.	Sanskrit	135,462	0.46	13,906
23.	Rajbanshi	134,198	0.46	130,163
24.	Magar Kham	129,021	0.44	91,753
25.	Sherpa	128,494	0.44	117,896
26.	Bajureli	120,224	0.41	56,486
27.	Chamling	100,,754	0.35	89,037
28.	Hindi	92295	0.32	98,399
29.	Ranatharu	78,049	0.27	77,766
30.	Chepang	77,958	0.27	58,392
31.	Dadeldhuri	75,044	0.26	21,300
32.	Majhi	63,069	0.22	32,917
33.	Danuwar	61,224	0.21	49,992

S.N.	Ancestor's languages	Population	Percentage	Mother tongue population
34.	Santhali	56,620	0.19	53,677
35.	Kumal	50,403	0.17	18,435
36.	Jumli	48,400	0.17	8,338
37.	Sunuwar	44,276	0.15	32,708
38.	Musalman	41,587	0.14	16,252
39.	Uranw/Urau	40,637	0.14	38,873
40.	Kulung	40,479	0.14	37,912
41.	Bhujel	38,257	0.13	13,086
42.	Thami	31,446	0.11	26,805
43.	Dailekhi	30,377	0.10	4,989
44.	Angika	29,285	0.10	35,952
45.	Ghale	28,942	0.10	23,049
46.	Thulung	27,246	0.09	24,405
47.	Bangla	26,535	0.09	23,774
48.	Sampang	26,108	0.09	21,597
49.	Ganagai	25,680	0.09	26,281
50.	Marwadi	25,131	0.09	21,333
51.	Dhimal	24,722	0.08	20,583
52.	Tajpuriya	20,787	0.07	20,349
53.	Khaling	18,173	0.06	16,514
54.	Yakkha	18,125	0.06	14,241
55.	Darai	15,938	0.05	12,156
56.	Wambule	15,932	0.05	15,285
57.	Bahing/Bayung	15,290	0.05	14,449
58.	Yamphu/Yamphe	12,024	0.04	10,744
59.	Bhote	11,904	0.04	12,895
60.	Nachhiring	10,957	0.04	9,906
61.	Pahari	10,619	0.04	5,946
62.	H Yolmo/Yholmo	10,440	0.04	9,658
63.	Dumi	10,009	0.03	8,638
64.	Bote	9,784	0.03	7,687
65.	Thakali	8,758	0.03	4,220
66.	Mewahang	8,214	0.03	7,428
67.	Chhantyal	7,528	0.03	4,282

S.N.	Ancestor's languages	Population	Percentage	Mother tongue population
68.	Puma	7,408	0.03	6,763
69.	Athpahariya	6,236	0.02	5,580
70.	Dungmali	6,067	0.02	5,403
71.	Jirel	5,849	0.02	5,167
72.	Balkura/Baram	5,230	0.02	1,539
73.	Tibetan	5,077	0.02	5,053
74.	Lohorung	4,925	0.02	3,884
75.	Dolpali	4,875	0.02	3,244
76.	Meche	4,747	0.02	4,203
77.	Raji	4,696	0.02	4,247
78.	Koyee	4,455	0.02	4,152
79.	Chum/Nubri	4,348	0.01	4,284
80.	Dura	4,146	0.01	1,991
81.	Done	3,519	0.01	3,100
82.	Kewarat	3,508	0.01	3,469
83.	Lapcha	3,410	0.01	2,240
84.	Jero/Jerung	3,007	0.01	2,817
85.	Mugali	2,914	0.01	2,834
86.	Chhintang	2,811	0.01	2,564
87.	Chhiling	2,679	0.01	2,011
88.	Karmarong	2,675	0.01	2,619
89.	Hayu/Vayu	2,492	0.01	1,133
90.	Lhopa	2,384	0.01	2,348
91.	Munda/Mudiyari	2,334	0.01	2,107
92.	Byansi	2,190	0.01	1,706
93.	Manange	2,130	0.01	2,022
94.	Tilung	2,123	0.01	1,969
95.	Magar Kaike	2,030	0.01	1,225
96.	Baragunwa	1,522	0.01	1,536
97.	Sonaha	1,223	0.00	1,182
98.	English	1,208	0.00	1,323
99.	Koche	1,180	0.00	332
100.	Kisan	1,161	0.00	1,004
101.	Punjabi	1,152	0.00	871

S.N.	Ancestor's languages	Population	Percentage	Mother tongue population
102.	Sadri	1,114	0.00	1,347
103.	Khamchi (Raute)	827	0.00	741
104.	Waling/Walung	753	0.00	545
105.	Dhuleli	745	0.00	786
106.	Lungkhim	738	0.00	702
107.	Lowa	648	0.00	624
108.	Sign Language	647	0.00	1,784
109.	Kagate	543	0.00	611
110.	Kurmali	526	0.00	397
111.	Nar-Phu	463	0.00	428
112.	Lhomi	435	0.00	413
113.	Tichhurong Poike	411	0.00	410
114.	Sindhi	398	0.00	291
115.	Phangduwali	241	0.00	247
116.	Khariya	220	0.00	132
117.	Malpande	207	0.00	161
118.	Surel	201	0.00	174
119.	Belhare	173	0.00	177
120.	Hariyanwi	171	0.00	114
121.	Sam	164	0.00	106
122.	Sadhani	130	0.00	122
123.	Kusunda	87	0.00	23
124.	Bankariya	82	0.00	86
	Others	5,200	0.02	4,201
	Not stated	2,474	0.01	346
	Total	29164578	100.00	

Annex 10: Language diversity index by districts: 2021, 2011, 2001

S.N.	District	2021	2011	2001
1	Achham	0.507	0.454	0.013
2	Arghakhanchi	0.069	0.051	0.075
3	Baglung	0.112	0.145	0.183
4	Baitadi	0.491	0.046	0.018
5	Bajhang	0.661	0.375	0.016
6	Bajura	0.476	0.019	0.027
7	Banke	0.668	0.733	0.658
8	Bara	0.438	0.463	0.402
9	Bardiya	0.605	0.598	0.591
10	Bhaktapur	0.628	0.605	0.564
11	Bhojpur	0.72	0.709	0.623
12	Chitawan	0.525	0.492	0.504
13	Dadeldhura	0.685	0.145	0.073
14	Dailekh	0.079	0.041	0.051
15	Dang	0.481	0.476	0.492
16	Darchula	0.533	0.08	0.053
17	Dhading	0.507	0.46	0.44
18	Dhankuta	0.752	0.77	0.729
19	Dhanusa	0.34	0.26	0.192
20	Dolakha	0.574	0.54	0.545
21	Dolpa	0.418	0.49	0.599
22	Doti	0.201	0.183	0.075
23	Gorkha	0.516	0.447	0.472
24	Gulmi	0.09	0.074	0.102
25	Humla	0.319	0.231	0.277
26	Ilam	0.674	0.775	0.656
27	Jajarkot	0.025	0.017	0.028
28	Jhapa	0.607	0.668	0.641
29	Jumla	0.553	0.027	0.046
30	Kailali	0.716	0.714	0.551
31	Kalikot	0.395	0.01	0.081
32	Kanchanpur	0.753	0.746	0.467
33	Kapilbastu	0.505	0.678	0.455

S.N.	District	2021	2011	2001
34	Kaski	0.382	0.369	0.387
35	Kathmandu	0.593	0.57	0.623
36	Kavrepalanchok	0.624	0.616	0.602
37	Khotang	0.733	0.712	0.658
38	Lalitpur	0.702	0.67	0.652
39	Lamjung	0.563	0.563	0.585
40	Mahottari	0.477	0.339	0.312
41	Makwanpur	0.631	0.616	0.611
42	Manang	0.787	0.619	0.428
43	Morang	0.779	0.793	0.806
44	Mugu	0.249	0.143	0.252
45	Mustang	0.734	0.737	0.783
46	Myagdi	0.139	0.111	0.346
47	Nawalparasi - East	0.581	0.618	0.708
48	Nawalparasi - West	0.637	0.611	0
49	Nuwakot	0.572	0.541	0.525
50	Okhaldhunga	0.69	0.639	0.591
51	Palpa	0.499	0.498	0.507
52	Panchthar	0.723	0.712	0.711
53	Parbat	0.118	0.159	0.222
54	Parsa	0.278	0.381	0.294
55	Pyuthan	0.099	0.077	0.1
56	Ramechhap	0.646	0.604	0.629
57	Rasuwa	0.482	0.473	0.537
58	Rautahat	0.46	0.592	0.691
59	Rolpa	0.26	0.247	0.302
60	Rukum - East	0.5	0.475	0.135
61	Rukum - West	0.033	0.013	0
62	Rupandehi	0.7	0.718	0.62
63	Salyan	0.034	0.013	0.016
64	Sankhuwasabha	0.779	0.76	0.742
65	Saptari	0.336	0.36	0.405
66	Sarlahi	0.615	0.694	0.643
67	Sindhuli	0.651	0.684	0.634

S.N.	District	2021	2011	2001
68	Sindhupalchok	0.642	0.604	0.613
69	Siraha	0.28	0.26	0.273
70	Solukhumbu	0.813	0.802	0.791
71	Sunsari	0.79	0.809	0.797
72	Surkhet	0.149	0.191	0.168
73	Syangja	0.412	0.418	0.457
74	Tanahu	0.56	0.564	0.597
75	Taplejung	0.713	0.703	0.691
76	Tehrathum	0.623	0.629	0.609
77	Udayapur	0.707	0.701	0.684

Annex 11: Distribution of different languages less than 100,000 by province

Languages	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Nepal
Bajhangi			0.2				99.7	99,631
Hindi	16.7	14.5	25.8	5.7	28.2	1.2	7.9	98,399
Magar Kham	0.2	0.3	1.6	8.8	64.4	14.8	10.0	91,753
Chamling	92.8	0.6	6.3	0.2				89,037
Ranatharu							99.9	77766
Chepang		0.4	94.0	5.5	0.1			58,392
Bajureli			0.1		0.1		99.8	56,486
Santhali	99.6	0.1	0.3		0.1			53,677
Danuwar	16.5	17.1	66.4					49,992
Darchuleli	0.1		0.1				99.8	45,649
Oraon/Kudukh	85.6	13.6	0.4				0.3	38,873
Kulung	95.9		3.8	0.2				37,912
Angika	99.9		0.1					35,952
Majhi	39.7	14.4	40.1	3.8	1.6	0.1	0.4	32,917
Sunuwar	41.1	2.3	55.5	0.6	0.1		0.2	32,708
Thami	4.6	1.5	93.6	0.1	0.1		0.1	26,805
Ganagai	99.8		0.2				0.1	26,281
Thulung	91.8	0.2	7.6	0.2				24,405
Bangla	71.3	3.5	17.7	3.1	3.8		0.5	23,774
Ghale	6.2	1.1	57.3	34.7	0.2	0.4	0.1	23,049
Sampang	95.8	0.1	3.7	0.1	0.2		0.1	21,597
Marwadi	48.0	18.4	28.4	0.6	4.1	0.1	0.4	21,333
Dadeldhuri							99.9	21300
Dhimal	97.3	0.1	2.4	0.1	0.1			20,583
Tajpuriya	99.1		0.8					20,349
Kumal	5.9	0.3	28.2	32.7	31.4	0.1	1.5	18,435
Khaling	92.8	0.1	7.0	0.1				16,514
Musalman	47.8	27.1	4.1	11.3	6.8	0.3	2.6	16,252
Wambule	86.5	1.6	11.2	0.5	0.1			15,285
Bahing/Bayung	91.5	0.3	7.8	0.3			0.1	14,449
Yakkha	95.8		3.9	0.1			0.1	14,241
Sanskrit	31.9	4.0	22.9	21.0	14.1	0.8	5.2	13,906
Bhujel	54.4	5.5	19.8	19.2	0.7		0.4	13,086
Bhote	35.7		12.0	1.4		43.7	7.2	12,895

Languages	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Nepal
Darai	0.4	0.1	62.3	35.7	1.4	0.1		12,156
Nachhiring	94.0		5.8				0.1	9,906
H Yolmo/Yholmo	8.3		85.4	6.2	0.1			9,658
Dumi	87.3	4.8	6.9	0.5	0.3		0.2	8,638
Jumli	0.5		0.2		3.9	63.1	32.2	8,338
Bote	3.6	2.3	37.3	32.7	8.5	14.1	1.4	7,687
Mewahang	97.0		2.4	0.1	0.1		0.5	7,428
Puma	97.1	0.1	2.5	0.3			0.1	6,763
Pahari		2.5	93.5	0.4	0.3	0.1	3.2	5,946
Athpahariya	97.8	0.1	1.7	0.2	0.1		0.2	5,580
Dungmali	98.1		1.6	0.1			0.2	5,403
Jirel	0.5	1.1	97.3	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	5,167
Tibetan	3.9	0.3	70.9	20.8	0.5	1.1	2.5	5,053
Dailekhi		0.5	0.1		12.5	7.3	79.6	4,989
Chum/Nubri			5.3	94.6				4,284
Chhantyal	0.6	0.1	13.0	72.2	12.4	1.6		4,282
Raji	1.0		0.8		17.5	23.4	57.4	4,247
Thakali	0.3		35.9	53.4	8.8	0.7	0.8	4,220
Meche	98.8		0.7		0.2		0.3	4,203
Koyee	96.7	0.0	3.1	0.2				4,152
Lohorung	93.8		5.2	0.5	0.2		0.4	3,884
Kewarat	99.7		0.3					3,469
Dolpali			2.5	3.4		94.0	0.2	3,244
Done	36.7		63.3			0.0	0.0	3,100
Mugali	21.1		9.3		4.7	60.8	4.1	2,834
Jero/Jerung	91.0	1.4	7.3	0.1		0.0	0.1	2,817
Karmarong			5.2			94.8		2,619
Chhintang	98.6		0.9	0.4				2,564
Lhopa	0.5		2.1	93.8		0.3	3.2	2,348
Lapcha	95.1	0.1	3.7	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.2	2,240
Munda/Mudiyari	99.7		0.1			0.1		2,107
Manange	9.0	0.2	43.7	47.0				2,022
Chhiling	80.9		8.7	0.6	0.1	4.0	5.5	2,011
Dura	2.8	0.4	26.1	67.2	0.4	0.3	3.1	1,991
Tilung	89.0	1.8	8.7	0.5	0.0		0.1	1,969

Languages	Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Nepal
Sign Language	35.0	3.5	19.5	17.7	13.5	3.3	7.5	1,784
Byansi	1.7		4.7	0.1		22.3	71.2	1,706
Balkura/Baram	0.2	0.1	15.9	83.6	0.1	0.1		1,539
Baragunwa				100.0				1,536
Sadri	99.1	0.6	0.1		0.1			1,347
English	11.5	3.4	55.4	12.5	9.1	1.2	6.8	1,323
Magar Kaike	4.8		3.3	0.4	2.7	78.2	10.5	1,225
Sonaha		0.1	1.1	0.8	82.3		15.7	1,182
Hayu/Vayu	5.6	12.4	69.0	1.4	11.0	0.4	0.2	1,133
Kisan	99.4		0.5	0.1				1,004
Punjabi	5.2	11.9	37.7	4.1	25.8	0.3	14.9	871
Dhuleli	1.3		1.5	1.1	1.7	1.0	93.4	786
Khamchi (Raute)						43.7	56.3	741
Lunxhim	98.7		1.3					702
Lowa			0.2	99.8				624
Kagate	4.1	0.3	60.2	0.2	34.9		0.3	611
Waling/Walung	50.3	0.2	35.0	0.2	1.1	0.7	12.5	545
Nar-Phu	0.9		5.4	93.7				428
Lhomi	32.7		65.6	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.5	413
Tichhurong Poike						100.0		410
Kurmali	95.0	0.5	3.3	0.3	0.8		0.3	397
Koche	66.0	4.8	11.4		0.6		17.2	332
Sindhi	68.0	12.4	13.4		5.2	0.7	0.3	291
Phangduwali	96.4		0.4		3.2			247
Belhare	83.6		5.1				11.3	177
Surel	12.1		87.4	0.6				174
Malpande	98.8						1.2	161
Khariya	99.2			0.8				132
Sadhani	67.2	3.3	0.8		27.9	0.8		122
Hariyanwi	61.4	5.3	15.8	1.8	15.8			114
Sam	88.7			5.7	1.9		3.8	106
Bankariya	9.3		72.1	5.8	12.8			86
Kusunda			30.4	8.7	56.5		4.3	23

Annex 12: Languages at municipalities/rural municipalities in Koshi Province, NPHC

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Sirijanga (55.8%), Sidingba (54.3%), Khandbari (55.7%), Panchakhapan (53.9%), Chainpur (50.5), Madi (67.7%), Dharmadevi (56.2%), Nechasalyan (50.2%), Likhu Pike (69.4%), Chisanku Gadhi (53.0%), Siddhicharan (63.3%) Molung (51.5%), Likhu (75.5%), Champadevi (71.3%), Sunkoshi (53.7%) Rawa Besi (59.0%), Diktel Rupkot Majhuwagadhi (51.3%), Diprung Chuichumma (64.6%), Khotehang (59.9%), Sadananda (57.8%), Bhojpur (62.8%), Arun (53.4%), Pauwa Dungma (50.8%), Mahalaxmi (74.8%), Pakhribas (56.7%), Dhankuta (56.6%), Phedap (50.4%), Myanglung (53.3%), Laligurans (53.9%), Chhathar (51.9%), Maijogmai (62.8%), Ilam(69.2%), Mai (56.6%), Suryodaya (60.9), Rong (61.4%), Mechinagar (65.2%), Buddhashanti (76.6%), Arjundhara (78.6%), Kankai (78.8%), Shivasatakshi (58.8%), Kamal (66.6%), Damak (73.2%), Gauradaha (64.7%), Birtamod (66.0%), Haldibari (52.7%), Bhadrapur (54.7%), Miklajung (62.0%), Kerabari (51.1%), Sundarharaicha (67.6%), Belbari (51.6%), Kanepokhari (56.0%), Pathari Sanischare (60.0%), Urlabari (72.4%), Dharan (52.3%), Barahchhetra (53.3%), Itahari (56.7%), Triyuga (55.2%), Katari (58.2%), Udayapurgadhi (54.8%)	Pathivara Yangwarak (41.3%), Chichila (21.2%), Sabhapokhari (32.4%), Sotang (40.0%), Thulung Dudhkoshi (39.6%), Solu Dudhkunda (42.7%), Aiselukharka (41.1%) Halesi Tuwachung (40.0%), Sakela (44.5%), Jante Dhunga (46.0%), Baraha Pokhari (37.2%), Temke Mayung (49.6%), Ramprasad Rai (42.9%), Chhathar Jorpati (41.9%), Aathrai (45.4%), Menchhayayem (46.7%), Yangbarak (46.7%), Hilihan (42.8%), Sandakpur (43.6%), Deumai (47.0%), Fakfokthum (43.6%), Jhapa (27.0%), Barhadashi (42.9%), Letang (49.0%), Ratuwamai (41.2%), Budhiganga (32.3%), Belaka (48.5%), Chaudandigadhi (46.6%), Rautamai (42.9%), Tapli (38.2%)

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Yakthung/ Limbu	Phaktalung (62.1%) Meringden (55.0 %), Falgunanda (63.7%)	Mikhuwakhola (44.9%), Maiwakhola (44.0%), Aatharai Tribeni (37.2%), Phungling (30.8%), Chaubise (36.1%), Phalelung (41.3%), Phidim (36.8%), Kummayak (49.8%), Chubewa (34.0%), Miklajung (35.8%), Mangsebung (41.7%)
Bhote	Bhotkhola (54.8%)	
Yamphu/ Yamphe		Makalu (29.7%)
Kulung	Silichong (66.2%), Mahakulung (85.0%)	Salpa Silicho (30.2%)
Sherpa	Khumbu Pasanglhamu (59.1%)	Khiji Demba (30.6%)
Khaling	Mapya Dudhkoshi (54.7%)	
Wambule		Manebhanjyag (32.6)
Sampang		Kepilashgadhi (30.4%)
Bantawa	Hatuwagadhi (60.8%)	Amchowk (40.8%),Sahidbhumi (40.1%),Sangurigadhi
Rajbanshi		Gauriganja (23.7%), Kanchankawal (38.6%),
Maithili	Katahari (58.4%), Koshi (67.0%), Bhokraha Narsingh (67.0%), Innarua (55.5%), Dewanganja (78.4%), Barju (60.9%),	Sunwarshi (38.%), Rangeli (42.4%), Biratnagar (43.6%), Dhanapalthan (39.8%), Jahada(34.4%), Duhabi (34.5%), Gadhi (49.2%)
Tharu	Gramthan (56.7%),	Ramduni (40.0%)
Urdu		Harinagar (39.5%)
Chamling		Limchungbung (45.0%)
Total = 137		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 13: Languages at municipalities/rural municipalities in Madhesh Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Absolute majority (A)	Majority (B)
Maithili	Kanchanrup (71.7%), Rupani (86.5), Shambhunath (51.1%), Khadak (59.9%) Surunga (55.4%), Bode Barsain (91.7%) Dakneshwori (87.5%), Rajgadh (96.2%), Bishnupur (96.4%), Rajbiraj (90.6%), Mahadewa (96.5%), Tirahut (98.5%), Hanumannagar kankalii (95.2%), Tilathi Koiladi 98.7%), Chhinnamasta (97.2%), Lahan (71.1%), Dhangadhimai (73.9%), Golbazar (74.1%), Mirchaiya (90.5%), Karjanha (79.2%), Kalyanpur (85.1%), Naraha (81.6%), Bishnupur (91.6%), Arnama (94.7%), Sukhipur (86.9%), Laxmipur (91.8%), Sakhuwa Nankarkatti (94.2%), Bhagawanpur (96.2%), Nawarajpur (98.2%), Bariyarpatti (99.2%), Aurahi(99.0%), Siraha (87.7%), Ganeshman Charnath (60.4%), Dhanushadham (68.1%), Bateshwor (53.8%), Chhireshwornath (72.7%), Laxminiya (82.8%), Mithila Bihari (85.5%), Hansapur (85.2%), Sabaila (87.0%), Shahidnagar (87.0%), Kamala (82.2%), Janak Nandini (90.4%), Bideha (806%), Aurahi (88.3%), Janakpur Dham (88.5%), Dhauji (84.5%), Nagarain (96.7%), Mukhiyapatti Musaharmiya (94.1%), Sonama (92.5%), Aurahi (89.1%), Bhangaha (76.6%), Loharpatti (79.4%), Balawa (69.4%), Ram Gopalpur (86.1), Manara Shinawa (77.9%), Ekadara (86.1%), Mahattari (86.2%), Pipara (89.2%), Matihani (86.2%), Jaleshwor (86.2)	Sapta Koshi (49.6%), Agnisair Krishna Balan-Bihul (48.9%) Mithila (43.2%), Gaushala (42.4%), Samsi (41.1%),
Bajjika	Barahathawa (68.1%), Haripurwa (77.8%), Parsa (79.2%), Brahmapuri (86.9%), Chandranagar (50.4%), Kabilashi (87.5%), Chakraghatta (79.1%), Basbariya (90.0%), Dhanakaul (94.0%), Ramnagar(94.0%), Balara (92.0%), Godaita (81.3%), Bishnu (93.4%), Kaudena (86.5%), Malangawa (76.3%), Phatuwa Bijayapur (57.0%), Katahariya (93.0%), Brindaban (78.9%),	Haripur (26.0%) Ishworpur (28.0%), Gajura (36.7%)

Languages	Absolute majority (A)	Majority (B)
	Gadhimai (86.6%), Madhav Narayan (94.1%), Garuda (86.6%), Dewahi Gonahi (86.7%), Maulapur (86.0%), Boudhimai (92.8%), Paroha (67.1%), Rajpur (68.6%), Yamunamai (83.1%), Durga Bhagawati (88.85), Rajdevi (91.4%), Gaur (80.0%), Ishanath (64.8%)	
Bhojpuri	Parawanipur (96.1%), Prasauni (98.5%), Bishrampur (98.8%), Pheta (99.0%), Kalaiya(93.2%), Karaiyamai (69.8%), Baragadhi (81.8%), Adarsha Kotwal (82.9%), Simrourgath (83.6%), Pacharauta (96.8%), Mahagadhimai (97.7%), Devtal (99.8%), Subarna (99.7%), Jirabhawani (89.6%), Jagarnathpur (98.0%),Paterwa Sugauli (69.4%), Sakhuwa Prasauni (64.4%),Parsagadhi (69.5%),Birgunj (83.6%), Bahaundarmai (99.7%), Pokhariya (98.3%), Kalikamai (99.6%), Dhobini (99.6%), Chhipaharmai (99.7%), Pokaha Mainpur (99.8%), Bindabasini (99.8%)	Jitpur Simara (39.3%)
Nepali	Thori (52%)	Bagmati (42.4%) Bardibas (39.1%), Hariwan (37.0%) Chandrapur (29.9%), Nijgadh (47.8%) Lalbandi (41.5%),
Tharu	Kolhabi (55.4%)	
Total = 136		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 14: Languages at local levels in Bagmati Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Gaurishankar(57.8%), Kalinchowk (58.4%), Baiteshwor(70.7%), Tamakoshi (82.6%), Melung(77.8%), Sailung (63.3%), Bhimeshwar (64.0%), Indrawoti (55.3%), Choutara Sangachowkgadhi (59.7%), Balephi (56.6%), Sunkoshi (80.0%), Tripurasundari (92.4%), NilkHantha (77.8%), Jwalamukhi (75.8%), Siddhalek (83.4%), Benighat Rorang (60.4%), Gajuri (72.2%), Galchhi (75.0%), Thakre (62.4%), Dhunibenshi (76.4%), Tarakeshwar (60.6%), Belkotgadhi (65.7%), Likhu (74.0%), Panchakanya (67.1%), Kageshwar Manahara (76.4%), Gokarneshwar (45.9%), Budhanilkantha (66.0%), Tokha (65.3%), Tarakeshwar (73.0%), Nagarjun (70.0%), Kathmandu (57.3%), Chandragiri (64.6%), Dakshinkali (56.6%), Changunaryan (56.6%), Madhyapur Thimi (53.9%), Suryabinayak (59.7%), Mahalaxmi (55.9%), Chauri Deurali (56.1%), Bhumlu (64.2%), Mandan Deupur(56.6%), Banepa (58.5%), Dhulikhel (58.5%), Panchkhal (56.7%), Panouti (62.7%), Gokulganga (64.5%), Likhu Tamakoshi(55.9%), Ramechhap(57.5%), Manthali (67.8%), Phikkal (64.7%), Tinpatan (60.0%), Golanjor (83.5%), Kamalimai (65.1%), Sunkoshi (64.4%), Hetouda (58.5%), Rapti (59.9%), Kalika (58.3%), Ichchha Kamana (64.0%), Bharatpur (73.3%), Ratnanagar (69.6%), Khairahani (58.7%), Madi (56.2%)	Bigu (38.9%), Jiri (45.5%) Bahrabise (41.2%), Tripurasundari (43.7%), Uttargaya (49.5%), Ganga Jamuna (46.4%), Shankarapura (40.8%), Lalitpur (41.1%), Godawari (48.7%), Mahankal (49.5%), Umakunda (49.8%), Khandadevi (47.9%), Doramba (36.8%), Sunapati (43.7%), Dudhouli (47.8%), Manahari (44.7%),
Tamang	Jugal (64.6%), Panchapokhari Thanpal (65.0%), Helambu (53.4%), Lisankhu Pokhar (56.3%), Gosaikunda (80.7%), Aamachhoingmo (73.3%), Kalika (84.5%), Naukunda (84.2%), Rubi valley (71.8%), Khaniyabas (87.7%), Dupcheshwar (81.9%), Tadii (59.8%), Bidur (73.8%), Kispang (69.0%), Myagang (80.7%), Shivapuri (54.7%), Kakani (57.0%), Mahabharat (68.5%), Konjyosom (79.4%), Bagmati (64.2%), Temal (74.0%), Bethanchowk (56.3%), Roshi (58.5%), Khanikhola (80.9%), Ghyanglekha (73.2%), Marin (54.3%), Hariharpurgadhi (66.0%), Indrasarowar (76.0%), Kailash (63.4%), Bhimpheedi (57.0%), Makawanpurgadhi (63.8%), Bakaiya (71.7%), Bagmati (58.6%)	Netrawati Dabjong (48.7%) Suryagathi (44.9%), Namobudha (44.4%), Thaha (49.5%), Raksirang (45.8%)
Sherpa		Bhotekoshi (40.0%)
Nepalbhasa (Newari)	Bhaktapur (72.3%)	Kirtipur (28.6%)
Total =119		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 15: Languages at local levels in Gandaki Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Arughat (71.7%), Bhimsen Thapa (71.7%), Siranchowk (71.7%), Palungtar (71.7%), Gorkha (71.7%), Shahid Lakhani (71.7%), Gandaki (71.7%), Gharpajhong (62.5%), Thasang (82.6%), Annapurna (79.6%), Raghuganga (93.4%), Dhawalagiri (95.0%), Kalika (94.2%), Mangala (97.4%), Beni (95.9%), Madi (64.7%), Machhapuchchhre (75.8%), Annapurna (80.4%), Pokhara (77.8%), Rupa (82.2%), Madhy Nepal (83.1%), Beshahar (63.2%), Sundarbazar (71.4%), Rainas (76.4%), Dudhapokhari (58.5%), Bhanu (81.5%), Byas (65.4%), Myagde (68.3%), Shuklagandaki (74.1%), Bhimad (56.7%), Bandipur (53.1%), Aanbu Khairani (59.2%), Gaijakot (76.7%), Devchuli (66.9%), Kawasoti (59.2%), Madhy Bindu (52.4%), Binayi Tribeni (58.3%), Putilibazar (82.8%), Phedikhola (90.4%), Aandhikhola (95.5%), Arjun Choupari (91.4%), Bhirkot (80.3%), Harinas (63.1%), Chapakot (81.2%), Waling (72.6%), Galyang (63.9%), Kaligandaki (58.8%), Modi (92.7%), Jaljala (95.6%), Kushma (98.4%), Phalebas (86.9%), Mahashila (96.6%), Bihadi (83.9%), Paiyu (94.1%), Baglung (94.1%), Kathekhola (98.3%), Tarakhola (89.6%), Tamankhola (93.3%), Dhorpatan (91.6%), Nisikhola (83.7%), Bedigad (99.1%), Galkot (97.0%), Bareng (95.9%), Jaimuni (96.9%)	Barpak Sulikot (45.8%), Devghat (37.2%), Biruwa (45.7%)
Gurung	Dharche (82.9%), Nason (73.9%), Kwhola sothar (66.8%)	Ajirkot (32.8%), Dordi (41.3%), Marsyangdi (44.2%)
Magar Dhut	Rishing (67.5%), Bulingtar (52.0%), Baudikali (55.7%), Hupsekot (53.7%)	Ghiring (44.9%)
Chum/Nubri	Chumnubrik (60.0%)	
Nar-Phu	Nar-Phu (86.9%)	
Manange	Manang Ngisyang (56.9%)	
Lhopa	Lo Ghekar Damodarkunda (95.3%)	Lomanthang (46.0%)
Baragunwa	Varagung Muktichhetra (65.5%)	
Total= 85		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 16: Languages at local levels in Lumbini Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Sisne (85.7%), Bhoome (60.0%), Pariwartan (87.7%), Gangadev (99.6%), Madi (90.9%), Tribeni (74.8%), Rolpa (97.9%), Rungtigadhi (97.5%), Sunil Smriti (85.7%), Lungri (98.6%), Naubahini (90.0%), Jhimaruk (99.7%), Pyuthan (96.8%), Sworgadwari (98.4%), Mandavi (99.5%), Mallarani (94.8%), Airawati (889.3%), Surumarani (84.5%), Kali Gandaki (93.3%), Satywoti (87.0%), Chandrakot (96.8%), Musikot (97.2%), Isma (97.3%), Malika (98.9%), Madane (99.9%), Dhurkot (89.9%), Resunga (97.4%), Gulmi Durbar (89.7%), Chhatrakot (87.2%), Ruruchhetra (87.2%), Chhatradev (94.6%), Malarani (99.6%), Panini (98.9%), Sandhikharka (97.5%), Panini (95.5%), Shitaganga (93.5%), Rampur (75.0%), Baganaskali (61.1%), Tansen (78.3%), Ribdikot (94.0%), Rainadevi Chhahara (89.2%), Tinau (70.4%), Bardaghat (60.0%), Sunawal (65.1%), Devdaha (59.1%), Butwal (78.7%), Sainamaina (80.7%), Kanchan (73.9%), Tillottama (68.1%), Banganga (59.3%), Rajpur (51.9%), Kohalpur (70.8%), Baijanath (63.5%), Khajura (57.0%), Bansgadhi (52.6%), Madhuwan (53.2%), Bardiyatal (50.7%)	Gaumukhi (46.3%), Suddodhan (33.2%) Rapti (45.8%)
Magar Kham	Purtha Uttarganga (53.1%), Sunchhari (61.0%), Thawang (77.8%)	
Magar Dhut	Purbakhola (75.0%), Rambha (74.6%) Mathagadhi (74.6%) Nisdi (74.6%)	
Bhojpuri	Ramgram (79.7%), Palhinandan (98.5%), Sarawal (63.2%), Pratapapur (81.3%), Susta (69.0%), Siyari (51.6%), Om Satiya (50.3%), Rohini (69.9%), Mayadevi (71.4%), Kotahimai (96.6%), Sammarimai (97.2%), Marchawari (97.1%)	Siddharthanagar (42.2%),
Awadhi	Lumbini Sanskrit (55.9%), Bijayanagar (70.0%), Krishnanagar (94.3%), Maharajganj (96.7%), kapilbastu (84.7%), Yashodhara (94.1%), Mayadevi (96.2%), Suddhodhan (94.1%), Bangalachuli (95.6%), Ghorahi (72.5%), Tulsipur (76.0%), Shantinagar (80.4%), Babai (90.3%), Dangisharan (56.2%), Janaki (75.2%), Duduwa (83.9%), Narainapur (92.2%), Gulariya (51.2%)	Gaidahawa (47.6%), Buddhabhumi (42.0%), Shivaraj (48.2%), Nepalganja (49.1%),
Tharu	Lamahi (52.1%), Barbardiya (72.0%), Thakurbaba (56.2%), Geruwa (63.7%), Rajpur (77.6%)	Gadhawa (42.2%), Rapti Sonari (47.7%)
Total= 109		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 17: Languages at local levels in Karnali Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Jagadulla (90.1%), Mudkechula (96.3%), ripurasundari(93.2%), Thulibheri (96.4%),Chhayanath Rara (81.6%), Soru (99.9%), Khatyad (99.8%), Chankheli (100%), Kharpunath (99.35%), Simkot (64.8%), Sarkegad (87.6%), Adanchuli(99.6%), Tanjakot(99.9%), Pattarasi (77.9%), Tila (56.4%), Tatopani (73.7%), Palata (91.5%),Pachal Jharana (99.9%), Raskot (69.8%), Sanni Tribeni (86.2%), Naraharinath (99.8%),Khandachakra (99.8%), Mahawai (68.0%),Shuva Kalika (96.0%), Naumule (85.0%), Mahabu (97.2%), Bhairabi (86.3%), Thantikadh (99.4%), Athbis (95.1%), Chamunda Bindrasaini (95.2%), Dullu (99.4%), Narayan (86.2%), Bhagawatimai (86.2%), Dungeshwor (86.2%), Gurans (86.2%), Barekot(99.3%), Kuse (98.0%), Junichade (95.2%), Chhedagad (99.7%), Shivalaya(99.4%), Bheri Malika (99.6%), Nalgad (99.8%), Aathabisakot(99.8%), Sanibheri (93.1%), Banphikot (99.9%), Musikot (99.2%), Tribeni (99.8%), Chaurjahari (98.7%), Dharma (99.9%), Kumakh (99.6%), Banagad Kupinde(99.2%), Siddha Kumakh(99.5%), Bagachour (99.6%), hhatreshwori(99.3%), Sharada(99.7%), Kalimati (99.3%), Tribeni (99.5%), Kapurkot (99.8%), Simta (99.8%), Chingad (97.3%), Lekhabeshi (89.9%), Gurbhakot (99.1%), Bheriganga(99.5%), Birendranagar (98.3%), Barahatal (89.5%), Panchapuri (90.7%), Chaukune(79.1%)	
Bhote	Namkha (87.7%)	Shey Phoksundo (28.5%)
Dolpali	Chharka Tangsong	Dolpa Buddha (43.8%)
Magar Kaike		Kaike (41.0%)
Karmarong		Mugumkarmarong (36.0%)
Khas	Kanada Sundari (94.0%), Sinja (87.6%), Guthichaur(57.6%), Hima (81.7%), Tilagupha (98.0%)	Chandannath (48.2%),
Total =79		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 18: Languages at local levels in Sudurpashchim Province, NPHC 2021

Languages	Majority (M)	Largest (but less than 50%)
Nepali	Himali (57.4%), Gaumul(66.9%),Budhinanda (59.0%), Swamikartik Khapar (59.0%), Jadannath(61.1%), Badimalika (68.1%),Khaptad Chhededada(63.9%),Budhinanda(66.0%), Tribeni(69.0%), Talkot (52.3%), Jayaprithibhi (53.0%), Chhabis Pathibhara (45.9%), Khaptad Chhanna (52.6%), Byas(62.6%), Duhun(57.3%),Mahakali(72.8%),Naugad(43.6%),Apihimal(70.6%), Marma(67.9%),Shailyashikhar(53.3%),Malikarjun (65.2%), Lekam(66.7%), Dilasaini (66.7%), DogadaKedar(59.4%), Pachaundi(57.5%), Surnaya(58.6%), Dasharathchand(64.1%), Pancheshwor(56.6%), Shivanath(57.2%), Melauli(60.1%), Patan(61.8%),Sigas (55.4%), Nawadurga (53.1%), Panchadebal Binayak (55.6%), Ramroshan(56.4%),Mellekh(60.2%), Saphebagar(59.5%), Chauripati(53.4%), Mangalsen(58.9%), Bannigadhi Jayagadh(60.3%), Kamal bazar(56.9%), Dhakari(55.1%), Turmakhand(57.9%), Mohanyal (82.5%), Chure (50.0%), Lamki Chuha (62.1%), Bhimdatta (55.2%), Dodhara Chandani (79.2%)	Kedarsyun (48.8%), Amargadhi (45.6%), Parashuram (44.9%), Alital (35.7%), Ganyapdhura (47.7%), Gauriganga (33.9%), Ghodaghodi (42.6%), Tikapur (45.1%), Dhangadi (36.3%), Krishnapur (31.6%), Shuklaphanta (38.1%), Bedkot (41.0%), Punarbas (45.1%), Beldandi (42.0%)
Bajhangi	Surma (58.1%), Masta (52.3%), Durgathali (52.8%), Thalara (52.2%)	Saipal (32.1%),
Doteli	Bungal (87.9%), Bitthadchir (60.0%), Ajauameru (53.6%), Bhageshwor (94.3%), Purbichouki (95.5%), Sayal (98.5%), Aadarsha(98.4%), Shikhar(98.6%), Dipayal(60. (87.2%), K.I. Singh(96.6%), Bogatan Phudsilv (91.8%), Badi Kedar (66.0%), Jorayal (65.3%)	Godawai (42.6)
Tharu	Janaki (59.5%),Joshipur (79.2%), Bhajani (65.5%), Kailari (87.2%)	Bardagoriya (39.7%), Belouri (40.3%)
Rana Tharu	Laljhadi (59.2%)	
Total =88		

Source: NSO, 2021

Annex 19: Mother tongues and literacy by province

Area	Total	Can read and write	Literacy rate	Illiteracy rate
Nepal	26,725,295	20,377,980	76.2	23.8
Koshi				
Total	4,578,440	3,648,225	79.7	20.3
Nepali	2,079,985	1,745,378	83.9	16.1
Maithili	525,412	374,004	71.2	28.8
Bhojpuri	20,424	17,417	85.3	14.7
Tharu	203,385	151,979	74.7	25.3
Tamang	162,850	126,320	77.6	22.4
Bajjika	526	431	81.9	18.1
Avadhi	895	752	84.0	16.0
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	58,782	49,517	84.2	15.8
Magar Dhut	133,251	103,881	78.0	22.0
Doteli	190	173	91.1	8.9
Urdu	99,291	69,088	69.6	30.4
Yakthung/Limbu	309,095	255,674	82.7	17.3
Gurung	25,666	21,377	83.3	16.7
Others	958,647	732,201	76.4	23.6
Not stated	41	33	80.5	19.5
Madhesh				
Total	5,473,478	3,477,413	63.5	36.5
Nepali	327,946	253,747	77.4	22.6
Maithili	2,302,209	1,549,028	67.3	32.7
Bhojpuri	1,030,305	665,087	64.6	35.4
Tharu	234,983	170,075	72.4	27.6
Tamang	93,300	63,587	68.2	31.8
Bajjika	990,690	530,455	53.5	46.5
Avadhi	905	538	59.4	40.6
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	12,025	9,646	80.2	19.8
Magar Dhut	41,406	29,700	71.7	28.3
Doteli	135	103	76.3	23.7
Urdu	215,753	124,987	57.9	42.1
Yakthung/Limbu	204	171	83.8	16.2
Gurung	1,257	980	78.0	22.0

Area	Total	Can read and write	Literacy rate	Illiteracy rate
Others	222,331	79,286	35.7	64.3
Not stated	29	23	79.3	20.7
Bagmati				
Total	5,718,388	4,692,353	82.1	17.9
Nepali	3,201,487	2,715,597	84.8	15.2
Maithili	72,106	64,746	89.8	10.2
Bhojpuri	64,902	53,223	82.0	18.0
Tharu	89,291	73,233	82.0	18.0
Tamang	1,016,548	731,552	72.0	28.0
Bajjika	4,580	4,339	94.7	5.3
Avadhi	2,224	1,982	89.1	10.9
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	690,764	588,455	85.2	14.8
Magar Dhut	138,200	111,638	80.8	19.2
Doteli	6,076	5,919	97.4	2.6
Urdu	3,670	3,222	87.8	12.2
Yakthung/Limbu	15,909	14,654	92.1	7.9
Gurung	64,742	54,043	83.5	16.5
Others	347,839	269,700	77.5	22.5
Not stated	50	50	100.0	0.0
Gandaki				
Total	2,297,497	1,875,910	81.7	18.3
Nepali	1,679,451	1,390,544	82.8	17.2
Maithili	3,435	3,058	89.0	11.0
Bhojpuri	14,016	11,373	81.1	18.9
Tharu	40,061	31,943	79.7	20.3
Tamang	31,500	24,032	76.3	23.7
Bajjika	764	686	89.8	10.2
Avadhi	820	709	86.5	13.5
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	36,147	30,770	85.1	14.9
Magar Dhut	222,227	177,083	79.7	20.3
Doteli	206	195	94.7	5.3
Urdu	981	836	85.2	14.8
Yakthung/Limbu	598	557	93.1	6.9
Gurung	197,261	153,192	77.7	22.3

Area	Total	Can read and write	Literacy rate	Illiteracy rate
Others	69,946	50,849	72.7	27.3
Not stated	84	83	98.8	1.2
Lumbini				
Total	4,682,237	3,655,933	78.1	21.9
Nepali	2,392,316	2,001,222	83.7	16.3
Maithili	5,396	4,731	87.7	12.3
Bhojpuri	515,251	385,724	74.9	25.1
Tharu	645,050	485,158	75.2	24.8
Tamang	3,640	2,942	80.8	19.2
Bajjika	189	174	92.1	7.9
Avadhi	756,121	483,007	63.9	36.1
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	23,386	21,106	90.3	9.7
Magar Dhut	181,804	151,625	83.4	16.6
Doteli	398	374	94.0	6.0
Urdu	38,542	28,316	73.5	26.5
Yakthung/Limbu	200	176	88.0	12.0
Gurung	19,181	16,401	85.5	14.5
Others	100,683	74,912	74.4	25.6
Not stated	80	65	81.3	18.8
Karnali				
Total	1,519,611	1,156,194	76.1	23.9
Nepali	1,349,745	1,039,337	77.0	23.0
Maithili	584	531	90.9	9.1
Bhojpuri	514	425	82.7	17.3
Tharu	7,358	5,991	81.4	18.6
Tamang	1,238	897	72.5	27.5
Bajjika	17	15	88.2	11.8
Avadhi	466	390	83.7	16.3
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	606	551	90.9	9.1
Magar Dhut	25,140	20,245	80.5	19.5
Doteli	596	480	80.5	19.5
Urdu	160	143	89.4	10.6
Yakthung/Limbu	59	56	94.9	5.1
Gurung	1,414	1,163	82.2	17.8

Area	Total	Can read and write	Literacy rate	Illiteracy rate
Others	131,708	85,966	65.3	34.7
Not stated	6	4	66.7	33.3
Sudurpashchim				
Total	2,455,644	1,871,952	76.2	23.8
Nepali	1,116,520	1,066,845	95.6	4.4
Maithili	4,282	3,543	82.7	17.3
Bhojpuri	1,170	908	77.6	22.4
Tharu	371,291	271,967	73.2	26.8
Tamang	7,267	5,762	79.3	20.7
Bajjika	61	43	70.5	29.5
Avadhi	2,901	1,840	63.4	36.6
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	1,815	1,665	91.7	8.3
Magar Dhut	15,841	12,844	81.1	18.9
Doteli	439,943	329,316	74.9	25.1
Urdu	279	196	70.3	29.7
Yakthung/Limbu	123	108	87.8	12.2
Gurung	1,491	1,223	82.0	18.0
Others	492,625	175,668	35.7	64.3
Not stated	35	24	68.6	31.4

Annex 20: Language and disability

Mother tongue	Total	Total dis %	Total disability	Physical disability	Low vision	Blind	Deaf	Hard of hearing	Deaf and blind	Speech problem	Mental or psychosocial	Intellectual disability	Hemophilia	Autism	Multiple disability
Total	29,164,578	2	647,744	37.1	17.1	5.4	7.9	8.0	1.6	6.4	4.3	1.8	0.8	0.8	8.9
Nepali	13,084,457	3	322,198	37.9	16.1	4.7	8.2	8.7	1.5	6.5	4.6	1.7	0.7	0.7	8.6
Maithili	3,222,389	1	46,237	40.0	15.8	7.9	5.9	3.4	1.4	6.9	4.9	2.2	1.0	0.9	9.6
Bhojpuri	1,820,795	1	25,026	38.1	20.7	7.7	5.7	3.9	1.7	5.1	3.8	1.8	1.3	1.0	9.3
Tharu	1,714,091	2	38,745	36.8	20.4	5.6	7.1	7.9	1.4	5.4	3.8	1.5	0.7	0.7	8.7
Tamang	1,423,075	2	33,141	34.7	18.7	5.5	8.1	8.7	1.9	6.2	3.6	1.5	0.8	0.8	9.5
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	863,380	2	16,791	32.1	18.5	4.7	8.6	10.0	1.5	6.6	4.8	2.2	1.4	1.0	8.7
Bajjika	1,133,764	1	15,208	39.4	15.8	9.2	5.9	2.4	1.4	7.5	3.7	1.7	1.0	1.1	10.8
Magar Dhut	810,315	3	22,018	33.5	16.3	4.9	9.8	10.8	2.0	7.5	4.2	1.5	0.8	0.5	8.2
Doteli	494,864	2	11,981	39.9	16.1	5.6	7.1	9.1	1.8	6.0	3.3	1.5	0.7	0.5	8.6
Urdu	413,785	1	5,960	38.7	15.2	7.6	4.7	2.9	1.5	6.7	4.4	3.0	1.3	1.3	12.7
Avadhi	864,276	2	15,514	36.5	20.8	6.4	5.8	5.0	1.6	5.2	4.9	3.4	0.8	0.8	8.7
Yakthung/Limbu	350,436	3	8,929	35.5	16.6	5.7	7.0	9.8	1.9	6.5	4.7	1.5	0.7	0.6	9.4
Gurung	328,074	3	9,914	32.1	18.6	4.1	10.7	11.3	1.6	6.3	4.4	1.4	0.6	0.7	8.2
Baitadeli	152,666	4	5,535	39.9	19.2	5.4	6.1	8.6	2.1	4.5	3.4	1.9	0.5	0.7	7.7
Rai	144,512	2	3,333	33.2	16.6	6.0	9.1	10.2	2.4	7.1	3.7	1.3	1.1	0.5	8.8
Achhami	141,444	4	6,284	37.9	21.9	4.5	7.9	7.2	1.6	5.5	3.2	1.6	0.4	0.7	7.7
Bantawa	138,003	3	4,016	32.2	15.2	4.9	9.9	11.6	2.1	8.3	3.3	1.6	0.8	0.5	9.6
Rajbanshi	130,163	2	2,750	32.4	20.8	6.0	9.2	7.2	1.2	6.8	5.5	1.9	0.5	0.8	7.7
Sherpa	117,896	3	2,963	36.3	17.4	5.4	8.0	8.9	2.0	6.6	3.7	1.8	0.5	0.6	8.7
Hindi	98,399	1	1,292	39.6	17.6	7.2	4.6	3.9	2.1	5.4	6.8	1.9	0.7	0.9	9.3
Chamling	89,037	3	2,622	32.9	15.7	5.3	9.1	11.4	2.1	7.8	3.7	1.3	0.5	0.6	9.6
Bajhangi	99,631	4	3,445	38.2	18.3	4.6	8.5	9.8	1.9	5.8	2.7	1.5	0.1	0.8	7.8
Santhali	53,677	2	957	38.1	17.0	6.4	6.1	5.3	1.9	7.7	5.4	2.0	0.4	1.6	8.0
Chepang	58,392	2	1,054	33.4	15.4	7.0	11.7	8.7	2.1	7.2	2.3	1.1	0.8	0.7	9.7

Mother tongue	Total	Total dis %	Total disability	Physical disability	Low vision	Blind	Deaf	Hard of hearing	Deaf and blind	Speech problem	Mental or psychosocial	Intellectual disability	Hemophilia	Autism	Multiple disability
Danuwar	49,992	2	1,159	39.1	16.4	5.8	7.2	7.8	2.1	5.9	4.2	1.6	0.3	0.7	9.0
Sunuwar	32,708	4	1,164	33.3	20.0	3.5	7.9	11.0	1.7	6.8	3.8	0.5	0.4	0.1	10.9
Magahi	230,117	2	4,843	34.5	17.4	7.6	7.6	3.9	1.2	9.0	5.0	2.4	0.8	1.2	9.6
Oraon/Kudukh	38,873	1	563	41.0	14.2	8.0	5.5	5.9	1.6	6.7	5.0	1.6	2.0	1.6	6.9
Kulung	37,912	3	1,154	32.1	26.0	5.5	5.2	12.9	0.9	4.8	3.6	1.1	0.6	0.8	6.6
Magar Kham	91,753	4	3,638	38.3	17.1	3.6	13.7	8.8	1.7	5.2	2.0	0.6	0.3	0.2	8.4
Marwadi	21,333	1	274	33.9	27.0	4.7	5.5	6.9	0.0	4.4	4.0	1.8	1.5	3.3	6.9
Majhi	32,917	2	787	39.3	11.7	6.2	8.4	7.2	1.0	9.7	4.4	0.8	1.4	1.3	8.6
Thami	26,805	3	913	39.8	18.6	4.4	5.3	7.7	2.3	3.8	2.2	1.1	0.8	1.0	13.1
Bhujel	13,086	3	380	32.1	21.8	5.0	9.7	10.5	2.6	5.5	3.7	1.3	0.5	0.0	7.1
Bangla	23,774	1	337	40.9	18.7	6.5	6.2	4.2	1.2	5.9	3.6	3.0	0.0	1.2	8.6
Thulung	24,405	3	778	30.7	15.3	4.8	10.0	12.9	1.3	8.5	4.0	0.9	0.9	0.3	10.5
Yakkha	14,241	3	448	31.9	19.2	5.4	9.6	10.3	1.3	8.0	2.7	2.2	0.0	1.1	8.3
Dhimal	20,583	2	484	30.6	15.7	6.6	6.8	9.9	1.4	7.9	8.9	1.4	0.8	0.4	9.5
Tajpuriya	20,349	2	376	33.8	14.1	8.0	6.6	8.0	1.1	9.8	6.1	3.7	1.1	1.6	6.1
Angika	35,952	2	600	43.3	18.7	6.8	4.0	5.0	0.8	5.7	3.7	2.5	0.3	2.3	6.8
Sampang	21,597	3	628	33.1	15.9	3.5	8.1	11.8	1.3	6.7	4.6	1.8	0.6	1.6	11.0
Khaling	16,514	4	571	27.3	16.3	5.8	9.3	17.9	1.2	8.8	3.0	0.9	0.2	0.4	9.1
Wambule	15,285	3	439	31.9	13.2	4.8	6.8	12.1	0.7	9.3	4.3	2.1	3.2	1.1	10.5
Kumal	18,435	3	618	35.0	21.4	7.3	9.4	5.7	1.0	7.1	2.8	0.5	0.3	0.3	9.4
Darai	12,156	3	338	31.1	18.3	5.6	6.8	11.8	3.3	5.6	4.4	0.9	1.2	1.2	9.8
Bahing/Bayung	14,449	3	384	36.5	10.9	8.3	11.2	9.1	2.1	7.8	3.6	0.5	0.8	1.6	7.6
Bajureli	56,486	5	2,680	37.0	16.4	5.4	13.9	6.9	1.9	5.7	2.1	1.6	0.4	0.5	8.2
Hyalmo/Yholmo	9,658	2	222	32.9	21.6	3.2	6.3	7.2	3.2	5.4	3.6	1.4	1.8	1.4	12.2
Nachhiring	9,906	3	314	32.5	16.2	4.5	6.4	15.3	5.7	5.7	3.5	2.5	0.0	1.6	6.1
Yamphu/Yamphe	10,744	3	350	34.6	14.0	3.4	12.0	8.9	4.3	6.9	3.1	0.9	0.3	1.4	10.3
Bote	7,687	4	269	27.5	20.4	4.1	13.8	12.6	1.5	7.8	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.7	8.9

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Mother tongue	Total	Total dis %	Total disability	Physical disability	Low vision	Blind	Deaf	Hard of hearing	Deaf and blind	Speech problem	Mental or psychosocial	Intellectual disability	Hemophilia	Autism	Multiple disability
Ghale	23,049	3	708	30.8	24.7	4.8	10.0	6.9	0.6	6.1	3.0	0.8	0.3	0.7	11.3
Dumi	8,638	3	218	32.1	14.7	4.1	10.1	14.2	1.4	7.3	2.3	0.9	0.5	0.9	11.5
Lapcha	2,240	2	44	40.9	13.6	4.5	9.1	4.5	0.0	13.6	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8
Puma	6,763	3	225	21.3	21.8	6.2	8.9	16.4	0.9	10.7	4.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	8.9
Dungmali	5,403	5	284	25.4	18.7	3.5	4.9	28.2	0.4	8.5	3.9	2.1	0.4	0.7	3.5
Darchuleli	45,649	4	1,621	40.8	15.4	5.6	8.9	7.9	2.4	5.1	3.1	1.6	0.1	0.5	8.5
Athpahariya	5,580	5	265	35.1	15.1	1.5	15.1	12.8	1.5	7.9	0.8	3.0	0.0	0.0	7.2
Thakali	4,220	3	136	30.9	14.0	2.9	11.8	12.5	1.5	9.6	5.9	0.7	0.0	0.7	9.6
Jirel	5,167	3	150	34.7	23.3	2.0	6.0	15.3	2.0	2.0	3.3	2.7	0.0	0.0	8.7
Mewahang	7,428	3	219	39.3	13.7	6.4	6.8	10.5	1.8	4.6	1.8	0.5	0.0	0.0	14.6
Sign Language	1,784	69	1,231	1.4	0.4	0.2	44.0	0.6	0.7	29.1	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.2	22.1
Tibetan	5,053	3	163	33.7	20.9	4.9	9.2	3.7	1.8	9.2	4.9	1.8	0.0	0.6	9.2
Meche	4,203	2	66	45.5	18.2	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	6.1	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	6.1
Chhantyal	4,282	3	116	38.8	6.0	3.4	12.1	10.3	1.7	2.6	5.2	0.9	0.0	3.4	15.5
Raji	4,247	3	108	37.0	20.4	1.9	5.6	10.2	0.9	6.5	3.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	13.0
Lohorung	3,884	4	138	32.6	9.4	7.2	5.1	12.3	2.9	8.0	5.1	1.4	0.7	0.0	15.2
Chhintang	2,564	5	125	20.0	20.0	6.4	7.2	28.0	0.8	3.2	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0	12.8
Ganagai	26,281	2	522	32.0	15.9	7.1	10.2	6.7	1.9	6.5	5.6	2.9	1.7	1.1	8.4
Pahari	5,946	2	112	30.4	8.9	8.0	8.0	15.2	4.5	6.3	8.0	0.9	0.9	1.8	7.1
Dailekhi	4,989	8	372	27.2	33.3	2.2	10.2	8.1	1.6	4.8	3.0	1.3	0.0	0.3	8.1
Lhopa	2,348	5	115	17.4	20.9	3.5	27.8	14.8	0.9	2.6	2.6	1.7	0.0	0.9	7.0
Dura	1,991	2	33	27.3	18.2	9.1	15.2	9.1	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	15.2
Koche	332	4	13	7.7	30.8	7.7	15.4	15.4	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.4
Chhiling	2,011	6	116	21.6	18.1	5.2	15.5	19.8	1.7	3.4	1.7	3.4	2.6	0.0	6.9
English	1,323	2	26	19.2	30.8	3.8	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	7.7	3.8	11.5
Jero/Jerung	2,817	3	75	32.0	10.7	2.7	10.7	14.7	1.3	13.3	1.3	2.7	4.0	0.0	6.7
Khash	117,511	3	3,358	42.9	13.9	4.3	10.6	9.3	1.2	6.1	2.5	1.0	0.4	0.6	7.3

Mother tongue	Total	Total dis %	Total disability	Physical disability	Low vision	Blind	Deaf	Hard of hearing	Deaf and blind	Speech problem	Mental or psychosocial	Intellectual disability	Hemophilia	Autism	Multiple disability
Sanskrit	13,906	3	383	33.2	20.6	5.5	10.4	8.6	1.3	6.3	3.1	1.3	0.5	1.3	7.8
Dolpali	3,244	5	145	51.7	11.7	2.8	11.0	4.8	0.0	6.2	6.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	4.1
Hayu/Vayu	1,133	3	39	35.9	17.9	7.7	5.1	7.7	0.0	7.7	7.7	2.6	0.0	0.0	7.7
Tilung	1,969	2	35	34.3	11.4	0.0	8.6	5.7	0.0	5.7	2.9	8.6	0.0	0.0	22.9
Koyee	4,152	3	117	28.2	12.0	9.4	11.1	9.4	3.4	7.7	3.4	1.7	0.9	0.0	12.8
Kisan	1,004	4	35	31.4	11.4	2.9	8.6	20.0	0.0	8.6	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	11.4
Waling/Walung	545	1	6	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
Musalman	16,252	3	414	36.2	13.8	5.6	8.2	4.3	1.7	11.1	5.8	3.6	0.5	1.2	8.0
Hariyanwi	114	0	0												
Jumli	8,338	5	400	32.8	23.0	5.5	9.3	6.8	0.5	5.8	3.3	2.8	0.5	2.3	7.8
Punjabi	871	2	17	47.1	11.8	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	5.9	0.0	0.0	17.6	5.9
Lhomi	413	2	7	28.6	0.0	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Belhare	177	5	8	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0
Sonaha	1,182	4	44	29.5	22.7	9.1	18.2	0.0	0.0	6.8	6.8	4.5	0.0	0.0	2.3
Sindhi	291	1	2	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dadeldhuri	21,300	5	1,035	34.3	14.8	4.1	10.7	11.6	2.1	6.4	4.3	1.7	0.4	0.8	8.9
Byansi	1,706	3	56	35.7	21.4	3.6	10.7	10.7	1.8	10.7	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Khamchi(Raute)	741	2	11	45.5	18.2	9.1	9.1	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sam	106	4	4	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Manange	2,022	4	77	15.6	16.9	2.6	20.8	15.6	2.6	13.0	1.3	2.6	0.0	0.0	9.1
Dhuleli	786	4	33	33.3	15.2	9.1	18.2	0.0	0.0	18.2	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Phangduwali	247	5	11	45.5	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	0.0	9.1
Surel	174	3	6	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Malpande	161	2	3	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Khariya	132	1	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kurmali	397	2	8	50.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
Balkura/Baram	1,539	2	37	10.8	18.9	10.8	32.4	10.8	0.0	5.4	2.7	0.0	0.0	2.7	5.4

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Mother tongue	Total	Total dis %	Total disability	Physical disability	Low vision	Blind	Deaf	Hard of hearing	Deaf and blind	Speech problem	Mental or psychosocial	Intellectual disability	Hemophilia	Autism	Multiple disability
Lungkhim	702	2	17	41.2	17.6	0.0	11.8	5.9	0.0	23.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sadhani	122	3	3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kagate	611	2	13	23.1	15.4	0.0	7.7	7.7	0.0	7.7	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1
Bankariya	86	1	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Magar Kaike	1,225	2	18	44.4	0.0	5.6	22.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kusunda	23	0	0												
Bhote	12,895	4	462	36.6	16.0	5.6	14.1	6.5	1.1	9.1	4.1	1.3	0.0	0.6	5.0
Lowa	624	1	3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chum/Nubri	4,284	5	222	23.0	24.8	1.8	18.5	12.2	2.3	5.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	10.4
Baragunwa	1,536	6	85	24.7	17.6	5.9	5.9	16.5	1.2	7.1	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Nar-Phu	428	6	24	41.7	4.2	0.0	16.7	12.5	0.0	4.2	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
Ranatharu	77,766	3	2,382	33.8	26.3	5.5	6.5	5.8	0.9	4.8	4.0	2.0	0.4	0.4	9.7
Karmarong	2,619	2	49	30.6	22.4	8.2	22.4	4.1	0.0	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1
Mugali	2,834	2	53	34.0	7.5	1.9	9.4	9.4	1.9	3.8	11.3	1.9	0.0	3.8	15.1
Tichhurong Poike	410	2	6	16.7	16.7	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sadri	1,347	2	26	34.6	7.7	0.0	11.5	7.7	0.0	7.7	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.2
Done	3,100	4	122	39.3	24.6	4.1	4.1	7.4	2.5	4.9	7.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	4.1
Munda/Mudiyari	2,107	2	38	34.2	13.2	7.9	5.3	5.3	0.0	5.3	2.6	7.9	2.6	2.6	13.2
Kewarat	3,469	2	61	37.7	18.0	3.3	6.6	13.1	1.6	4.9	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	8.2
Others	4,201	1	38	36.8	18.4	2.6	5.3	7.9	2.6	5.3	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.9
Not stated	346	1	4	75.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Annex 21: Language and economic activities (ten years and above, as a percentage)

Mother tongue	Number	Employee	Employer	Own work	Family support	Not reported
Total	14,983,310	28.6	1.4	55.3	14.5	0.1
Nepali	6,950,718	27.0	1.6	56.0	15.3	0.1
Maithili	1,409,617	36.9	1.2	47.1	14.8	0.0
Tharu	1,034,789	34.7	0.9	52.5	11.8	0.1
Tamang	824,522	22.8	1.0	63.6	12.5	0.0
Bhojpuri	789,198	38.1	1.4	46.6	13.9	0.1
Magar Dhut	478,439	22.1	1.0	62.1	14.7	0.1
Nepalbhasha (Newari)	461,632	40.3	3.4	45.2	11.1	0.0
Bajjika	424,420	37.8	0.9	46.7	14.6	0.0
Avadhi	380,856	24.1	0.9	58.8	16.2	0.1
Doteli	252,975	16.3	1.0	66.2	16.4	0.0
Yakthung/Limbu	213,281	15.9	1.0	66.7	16.4	0.0
Gurung	170,736	23.8	1.7	59.7	14.4	0.3
Urdu	150,857	36.5	1.2	46.6	15.7	0.0
Magahi	96,570	33.9	0.8	55.2	10.1	0.0
Bantawa	86,159	12.5	0.8	70.5	16.2	0.0
Rai	82,350	31.0	1.4	54.8	12.8	0.0
Rajbanshi	76,925	42.4	1.1	43.9	12.6	0.0
Achhami	68,681	6.2	0.4	83.8	9.6	0.0
Sherpa	65,982	20.1	1.7	64.1	14.0	0.0
Baitadeli	65,450	8.2	0.4	78.9	12.5	0.0
Khash	62,773	12.3	1.1	73.6	12.8	0.2
Chamling	53,476	14.7	0.8	61.6	22.9	0.0
Ranatharu	52,030	21.3	0.5	60.6	17.5	0.1
Hindi	52,022	49.5	3.7	36.4	10.2	0.1
Magar Kham	49,293	14.3	1.1	69.9	14.1	0.6
Bajhang	45,722	8.7	0.5	79.7	11.1	0.0
Santhali	33,356	58.6	0.4	29.6	11.4	0.0
Chepang	31,433	15.7	0.4	69.0	14.8	0.0
Danuwar	30,581	25.9	0.7	55.8	17.4	0.0
Bajureli	30,451	5.2	0.4	86.2	8.2	0.0
Kulung	25,101	13.7	0.7	68.6	17.0	0.0
Darchuleli	21,461	8.6	0.5	76.4	14.4	0.0

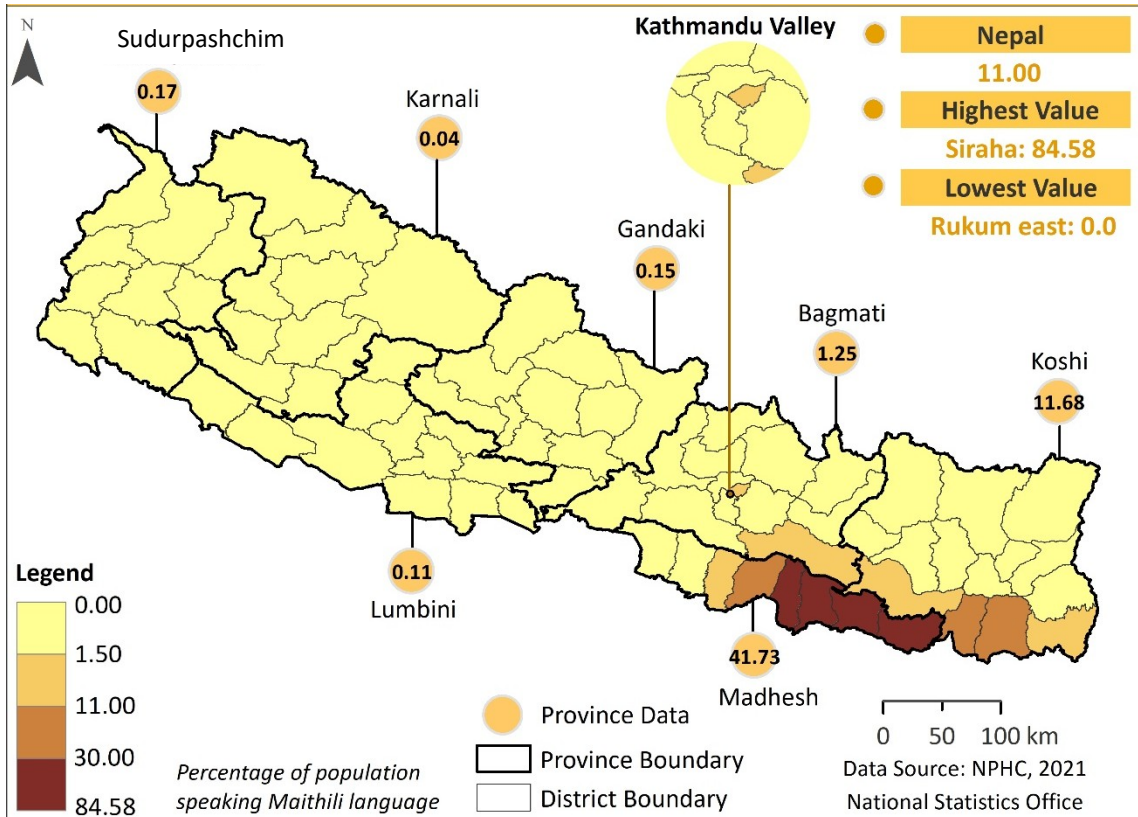
Mother tongue	Number	Employee	Employer	Own work	Family support	Not reported
Oraon/Kudukh	20,778	52.3	0.6	36.7	10.3	0.0
Angika	20,274	35.8	0.4	52.7	11.1	0.0
Sunuwar	18,780	20.6	0.8	65.1	13.4	0.0
Majhi	18,441	40.6	0.8	46.5	12.0	0.0
Thami	16,590	18.2	0.5	64.0	17.3	0.0
Ganagai	16,283	27.5	0.7	47.2	24.7	0.0
Thulung	15,010	15.2	1.0	67.0	16.9	0.0
Bangla	14,631	52.8	1.9	34.9	10.3	0.1
Sampang	13,270	12.4	0.7	57.4	29.4	0.0
Tajpuriya	12,804	35.7	0.6	45.1	18.5	0.0
Ghale	12,345	19.2	1.3	67.1	12.3	0.1
Dhimal	12,200	35.3	1.0	51.2	12.5	0.0
Kumal	11,283	25.5	0.5	62.1	11.8	0.1
Khaling	10,985	13.3	0.9	69.9	15.9	0.0
Marwadi	10,317	26.6	16.1	44.1	13.1	0.0
Yakkha	9,570	12.0	0.6	67.8	19.5	0.0
Dadeldhuri	9,016	9.5	0.4	77.1	13.0	0.0
Wambule	8,847	13.3	0.7	69.3	16.7	0.0
Bahing/Bayung	8,193	16.8	1.0	67.4	14.7	0.0
Bhujel	7,710	25.5	1.0	58.9	14.5	0.1
Yamphu/Yamphe	7,685	11.5	0.5	65.9	22.1	0.0
Bhote	7,395	13.3	0.9	70.5	15.3	0.0
Musalman	7,279	39.2	0.8	48.2	11.9	0.0
Darai	7,278	29.1	0.9	58.6	11.4	0.1
Sanskrit	7,025	35.0	2.1	49.1	13.7	0.1
Nachhiring	6,143	14.3	0.5	64.7	20.5	0.0
Dumi	5,374	12.9	1.0	51.4	34.7	0.0
H Yolmo/Yholmo	5,293	20.0	1.1	62.2	16.6	0.1
Mewahang	5,053	11.0	0.6	73.1	15.3	0.0
Bote	4,522	33.5	1.2	53.6	11.4	0.2
Jumli	4,390	11.7	0.7	79.7	7.8	0.1
Puma	4,082	11.6	0.4	71.5	16.5	0.0
Athpahariya	3,919	12.8	0.6	71.2	15.5	0.0
Pahari	3,490	30.0	0.6	60.2	9.2	0.0

Mother tongue	Number	Employee	Employer	Own work	Family support	Not reported
Jirel	3,481	23.0	1.1	64.7	11.2	0.0
Dungmali	3,314	10.8	0.4	74.7	14.1	0.0
Lohorung	2,772	14.7	0.7	66.8	17.8	0.0
Koyee	2,732	10.6	0.7	47.7	41.1	0.0
Chum/Nubri	2,566	9.4	1.4	77.5	11.7	0.0
Dailekhi	2,529	11.3	0.4	77.3	10.9	0.0
Raji	2,515	22.5	0.4	64.3	12.8	0.0
Meche	2,483	30.3	1.3	56.1	12.2	0.0
Tibetan	2,243	37.9	6.6	41.3	14.1	0.2
Thakali	2,148	25.9	8.3	52.3	13.1	0.3
Done	2,098	17.0	0.3	71.2	11.4	0.0
Kewarat	2,092	34.3	0.4	52.2	13.1	0.0
Chhantyal	2,070	20.5	0.9	60.5	17.9	0.2
Chhintang	1,864	6.5	0.4	74.2	18.8	0.0
Dolpali	1,801	10.2	0.6	77.7	11.3	0.2
Jero/Jerung	1,664	10.8	0.9	70.9	17.4	0.0
Mugali	1,534	13.6	1.3	70.4	14.7	0.1
Lhopa	1,509	12.9	1.5	76.0	9.3	0.3
Lapcha	1,500	13.4	0.7	74.7	11.1	0.0
Chhiling	1,388	10.7	1.2	71.1	17.0	0.0
Karmarong	1,356	7.3	0.0	81.3	11.4	0.0
Munda/Mudiyari	1,355	53.7	0.5	30.4	15.4	0.0
Barangunwa	1,190	9.8	5.3	74.6	10.0	0.3
Manange	1,146	19.3	5.1	63.0	12.5	0.1
Dura	1,106	22.5	1.3	62.8	13.0	0.4
Tilung	1,002	14.4	0.6	60.7	24.4	0.0
Balkura/Baram	910	19.1	0.5	68.7	10.3	1.3
Byansi	886	20.4	2.6	64.2	12.8	0.0
Sadri	814	71.4	2.0	21.1	5.5	0.0
Sign Language	774	26.0	0.5	53.7	19.8	0.0
Sonaha	722	38.1	0.3	52.5	9.1	0.0
Hayu/Vayu	632	17.9	0.6	69.0	12.5	0.0
English	625	51.8	4.8	28.6	14.7	0.0
Kisan	609	63.4	0.8	26.8	9.0	0.0

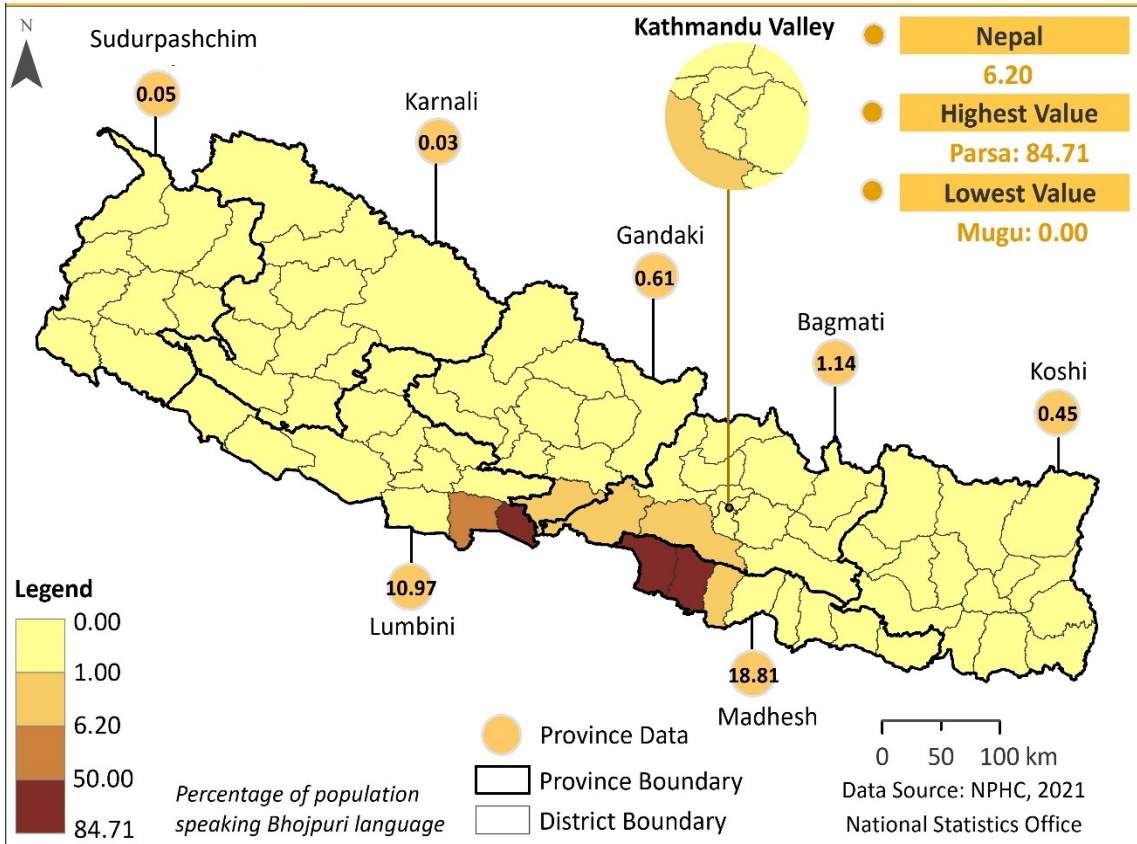
Mother tongue	Number	Employee	Employer	Own work	Family support	Not reported
Punjabi	475	44.8	7.6	36.0	11.6	0.0
Lungkhim	448	7.1	0.9	73.2	18.8	0.0
Magar Kaike	429	24.7	1.9	54.3	18.6	0.5
Kagate	340	15.3	0.3	73.8	10.6	0.0
Khamchi (Raute)	336	33.3	0.0	46.1	20.5	0.0
Dhuleli	336	9.5	0.3	69.9	20.2	0.0
Nar-Phu	308	19.2	0.0	77.3	3.2	0.3
Waling/Walung	305	23.6	1.0	59.0	16.4	0.0
Kurmali	271	33.2	0.4	47.6	18.8	0.0
Koche	211	55.9	0.0	29.4	14.7	0.0
Lowa	209	47.4	0.0	20.6	32.1	0.0
Lhomi	195	30.3	2.1	55.4	12.3	0.0
Phangduwali	184	10.3	0.5	69.0	20.1	0.0
Sindhi	167	24.6	4.8	61.1	9.6	0.0
Surel	133	13.5	0.0	71.4	15.0	0.0
Belhare	117	10.3	0.0	54.7	35.0	0.0
Tichhurong Poike	98	43.9	0.0	29.6	26.5	0.0
Malpande	84	54.8	0.0	39.3	6.0	0.0
Sam	71	29.6	0.0	60.6	9.9	0.0
Sadhani	70	62.9	0.0	31.4	5.7	0.0
Khariya	69	53.6	0.0	33.3	13.0	0.0
Hariyanwi	60	26.7	15.0	46.7	10.0	1.7
Bankariya	58	10.3	0.0	44.8	44.8	0.0
Kusunda	11	45.5	0.0	45.5	9.1	0.0
Others	2,631	64.1	3.7	25.8	6.3	0.0
Not stated	153	31.4	9.2	49.0	10.5	0.0

ANNEX MAPS

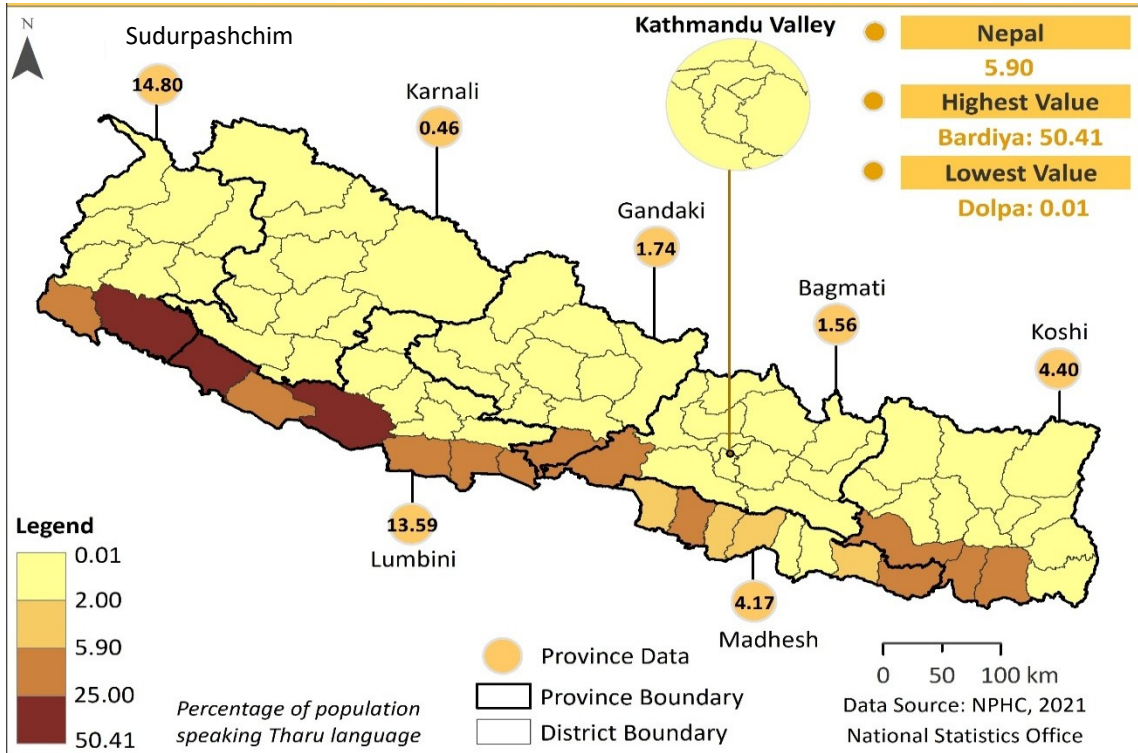
Map 1: Distribution of Maithili by province and district, Nepal, 2021



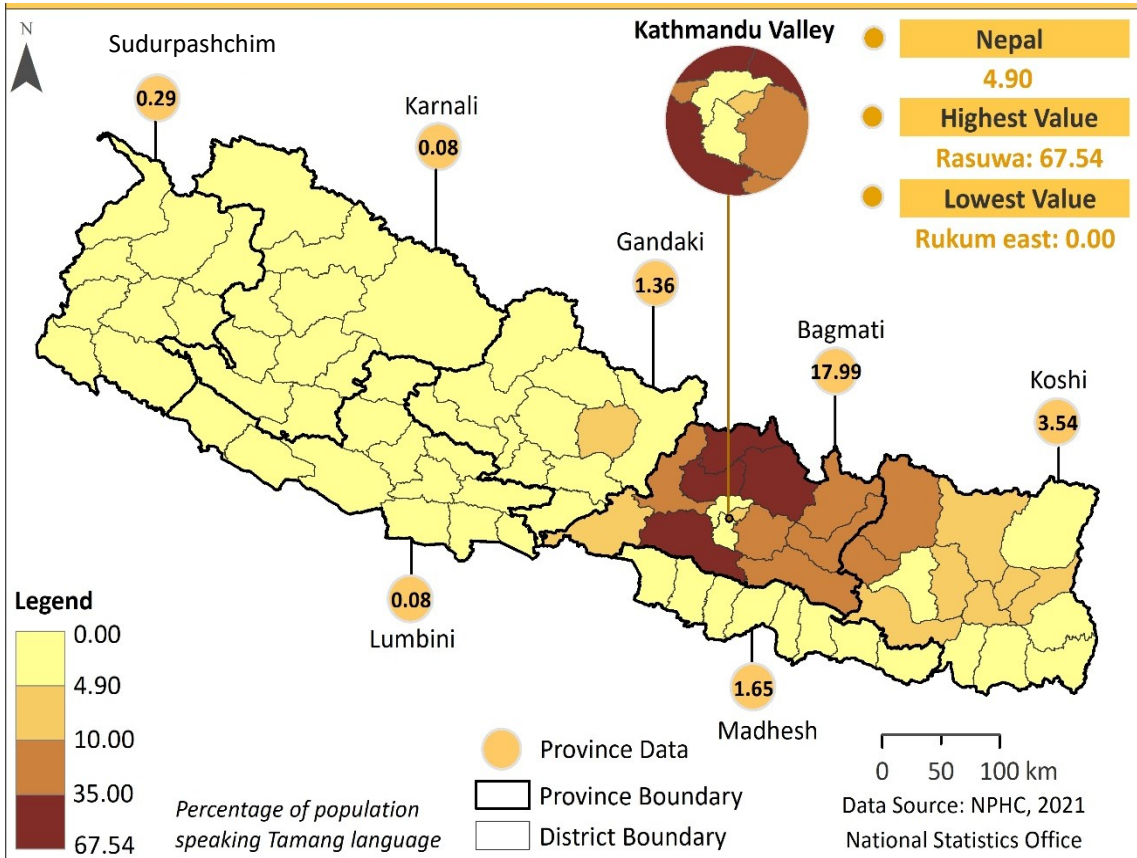
Map 2 : Distribution of Bhojpuri by province and district, Nepal, 2021



Map 3: Distribution of Tharu by province and district, Nepal, 2021



Map 4: Distribution of Tamang by province and district, Nepal, 2021



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Tel: 5365323, 5341801, 5328406, 5345946 (47, 48)

Fax No.: 977-1-5327720

E-mail: info@nsonepal.gov.np, Website: www.nsonepal.gov.np

E-mail: popcen@nsonepal.gov.np, Website: www.censusnepal.cbs.gov.np

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