

Chapter One

A Sociolinguistic Survey of Rajbanshi Language of Jhapa and Morang

1. Rajbanshi Language: An Introduction

The language of Rajbanshi is greatly influenced by the Sanskrit group of language such as Bengali and Maithili (Bista 1972, Gautam, 1994). They have their own language which is known as Rajbanshi Bhasa and Sandyal, 1995 A.D. has termed this language as "Rajbanshi Dialect". Most of the Rajbanshi of the studied area can speak Nepali, the *Lingua Franca* of the kingdom. They use both Devanagari and Bengali script. The table shows the similarities of the following words of Rajbanshi with Bengali and Nepali.

Among the Rajbanshi speaking people geographical barriers such as mountains and rivers have long defined the limits of travel and communication. It is logical that their identity and language name is often geographically oriented. They call themselves Morngiya Rajbanshi, Jhapali Rajbanshi and so on. But the Rajbanshi speakers refer to both themselves and their language as Rajbanshi. All of the respondents from all locations said that they have no other name for their language. They learn the Rajbanshi language as their first language. However, primary identification has been geographically oriented, both for their own people as well as for their languages.

The Rajbanshi in the southeastern Nepal speak "Rajbanshi Kura". It is a written language that has only been linguistically studied in its rudiments. It is written in Devanagari script. The Rajbanshi Language speakers are scattered all over Terai area of Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. It is spoken mainly in Rajgadh VDC.

Majority of immigrants also speak Nepali language as their mother tongue in Terai. However, we have also seen other languages speakers e.g. Tharu, Tamang, Maithili, Magar, Gurung etc.

Different changing factors discourage Rajbanshi to use their language in public places. They use their language only in their own communities and homes as a mother tongue. Due to hesitation most of the young generation of Rajbanshis switches over into other language such as Nepali including its dialect and other languages.

Table No. 1: Similar words of Rajbanshi with Bengali and Nepali.

Rajbanshi	Bengali	Nepali
Dada	Dada	Daju (Brother)
Ai	Ma	Aama (Mother)
Ba	Baba	Ba, Babu (Father)
Mitha	Misthi	Gulio (Sweet)
Hamar	Aamar	Hamro (Our)
Aakash	Askas	Aakash (Sky)

Source: Field survey (1995)

2. Statement of Problem

In spite of being indigenous language and inhabited in a limited area mostly on the south eastern Jhapa and Morang, the use of language is different among the speakers between these two districts and normally even within their own community. This linguistic difference has been affected geographically as well as regionally. These two factors have caused the linguistic variation more in the level of morphology, syntax and phonology rather than semantics.

3. Hypothesis

The regional as well as geographical varieties and even more importantly the change of age, gender, sex, class, education, domination etc. are the main causes of the sociolinguistic variations.

4. Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to find out the socio-linguistic aspects of the Rajbanshi of Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari specifically this study has the following objectives.

- i) To provide a short ethnographic description of Rajbanshi of south-east of Nepal.
- ii) To analyse the socio-linguistic survey of the various sphere of Rajbanshi people with an emphasis on the impact of society in language.
- iii) To find out the factors and forces responsible for the socio-linguistic aspects of Rajbanshi language.

5. Literature Review

The interest on the thesis of this language is based on the fact that the Rajbanshi are limited in Jhapa and Morang who have also their own unique culture, language and social affairs. Only a few contributions have been made by some writers, scholars and linguistics on the language, literature and culture. But they have not been able to contribute much to the promotion of this language.

Hudson's Sociolinguistics describes the impact of society on language. Most of the growth in sociolinguistics takes place in the late 1960s and early 1970s; however, it can be seen as a new discipline. This is not meant to imply that the study of language in relation to society is an invention of the 1960s- on the contrary, there is

a long tradition in the study of dialect and in the general study of relations between word-meaning and culture, both of which count as sociolinguistics by its definition.

Bista (1972) has given a short ethnographic study of the people of Rajbanshi in the book "Mechi Dekhi Mahakali" (2031:231-32). However, there is also lack of detail information about the socio-linguistic survey of Rajbanshi people in "Sabai Jaat ko Phulbari" (2030:101-107). Bista has given short information about the Rajbanshi people.

William, Labov "The Logic of Nonstandard English" gives a relatively recent definition of Vernacular Cultures stating that despite the language is geographically different yet the underlying meaning is the same whether the language of standard speakers or nonstandard speakers.

In relation to this matter, Chomsky believes in universal grammar which is specific to any languages of any ethnic groups in this world whether it be standard English or nonstandard. Despite of regional and geographical variations, the underlying pattern of the language is the same in all the languages over the world. (513)

Gautam and Thapa (1994) provide a short ethnography of Rajbanshi people in "The Himalayan Times" of 2052 of 19th Chaitra, p: 5. Devendra Kishore Dhungana gave a short ethnography of the Rajbanshi people and states that the culture and tradition especially the marriage ceremony, religion and economic activities of Today's Rajbanshi have been completely influenced by education, domination and modernization.

Risely (1915) was found to be more interested in the origin of Rajbanshi people. Therefore, his work has not covered broader dynamic aspects of the Rajbanshi society and language.

6. Methodology

The research work will be a field work of this particular community. In order to prove this hypothesis the research will incorporate the ideas of sociolinguistic survey, focusing on how language affected by the society or the social behaviour. The source of linguistic data collection is field work on this community. The data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews and interactions from male and female as well as literate and illiterate.

7. Delimitation

The survey is marked by following limitations.

- a) The survey has based on southern part of Jhapa district including Morang.
- b) Limited member of speakers form the core area and peripheral area were chosen for interview and written questionnaires.
- c) It has focused more in socio-cultural practices and less on morphology and syntax.
- d) It has mainly focused on sociolinguistic approach.

8. Organization of the Study

The research is organized in 5 chapters. Chapter one gives in general introduction of the research. The second chapter is about demographic, social and cultural profiles. The third chapter discusses the sociolinguistic situation of the language. The fourth chapter analysis the data obtained through questionnaire and chapter five is the conclusion of the study.

Chapter Two

Demographic, Social and Cultural Profiles

A demographic profile is one of the tools of sociolinguistics. A sociolinguistic survey incorporates a demographic description to the ethnolinguistic community being studied or surveyed. It is a description of a community which identifies the location and population. It also seeks to profile the distribution of various social characteristics (e.g. age, sex, educational level, degree of contact with other language speakers and other physical and social amenities).

2. Outline

This chapter deals with the demographic, social and cultural profiles of Rajbanshi language. It consists of eight sections. In section 2.1 I will discuss the origin and the history of Rajbanshi people. Section 2.2 presents the geographic location. In section 2.3 I will discuss about Rajbanshi society and their social practices. Section 2.4 describes the birth ceremony. In section 2.5 I will discuss about marriage ceremony. Section 2.6 presents the marriage system, stability and change. In section 2.7 I will discuss the death ceremony. Finally section 2.8 presents cultural activities and change.

2.1 Origin and History of Rajbanshi People

On the basis of the mysterious history of the origin of the Rajbanshi, it is said that they belong to the great Bodo family that entered Indian in the 10th century B.C., from the east and settled on the bank of the Brahmaputra and gradually spread over Assam and the whole of north and east Bengal and east Nepal (Sandyal: 1965; Gautam, 1994). According to Waddell, the name Bodo is derived from 'Bod' a term designating the old Tibet. The Bodos belong to the Sino-Tibetan family (Berlie,

1985). Since the Koch belong to the Bodos, they are non-Aryan by origin by origin and some of them, adopted to Hindustan and they become Rajbanshi. These Rajbanshi later claimed to be Kshatriya, a warrior group of caste system that is found in the Indian sub-continent. The transformation of Koch into Rajbanshi is a singular illustration of the influence exercised by the fiction in the making of caste (Risley, 1891, quoted in Sandyal, 1965). The Rajbanshi, formerly known only as Koch are said to have been a very powerful nation during the 17th and 18th centuries. During that period the Rajbanshi in India had been controlled by the power of British and in Jhapa and Morang in Nepal, their territories were annexed to the kingdom of Nepal by king Prithivi Narayan Shah, the founder of the kingdom in 1774 (Bista, 1972:134).

A great majority of Koch inhabitants of northern Bengal invariably describe themselves as Rajbanshi or Bhahanga Kshatriyas. They keep Brahmins, initiate Brahminical ritual in their marriage ceremony and have begun to adopt Brahminical system of Gotras (Kasyapa). The Brahmins of Guda and Mithila introduced Hinduism to the Koches, who changed their religion as well as their names. As Hindus, they took the name of Rajbanshi, which we think is derivation from the Rajbanshi. The descendants of the former master of Koch country and Assam prefer to call themselves as Rajbanshi in Nepal and Bengal. Hence, some of the Rajbanshi are now trying to prove themselves as Chhetri through a popular legend of east Nepal and neighbouring territory among the Rajbanshi.

They are the descendants of the Kshatriya, who have taken shelter in north Bengal and neighbouring territory. It is said that they had thrown out there 'Janai' (sacred thread) from chest and tied it over their waist and there is still a tradition of keeping a thread around the waist and there is still a tradition of keeping a thread around the waist of Rajbanshi people which is known as 'Shikhha' in their local term.

However, the opinions concerning the origin of the Rajbanshi differ from one scholar to another and are manifested in different ways. As Gait (1901:12), describes the Rajbnanshi of North Bengal, as a synonym of Koch, represent a real caste and in this sense only it may be entered the schedule. The term is also a title of Tiyars, kaibarttas, Namasudras and after fishing caste. In Tippra, the term is applied to Tippras and to Hindus who have lost caste by eating with hill men.

It is stated in the imperial Gazetteer of India, (1908:283), though the Koches freely call themselves Rajbanshi, it is believed that the two communities sprang from entirely different sources; the Koch is the king of Mongoloid origin, while the Rajbanshi are Dravidian tribe who probably owned the name long before the Koch king rose to power. In Koch Bihar, the person now known as Rajbanshi are either pure Koches, who though dark have a distinctly Mongoloid physiognomy, or else a mixed breed in which the Koch element usually predominates.

For Dalton (1872; cited by Berlie, 1982:61) they spring from Dravidian and are probably a branch of the twelve Bhuiyas of East Bengal; while Hunter (1909), Risaley (1892) and Gait (1906), cited by sandyal: (1965:1-15), classify them with Dravide Mangoloids, Kumar (1973:17-19), considers them as a complex ethnic group whose principle stock is Mongoloid.

O'Malley (1911:445), states that the Rajbanshi or Barua Mug are the offspring of Bengali woman by Burmese men or more generally of Arakances mothers by Bengali father.

Thompson (1921:358), states that the Rajbanshis are the indigenous people of northern Bengal and the third largest Hindu caste in the province.

Chatterjee (1951:60-66), writes "The masses of north Bengal areas are very largely of Bodo origin or mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid. They can now mainly be described as Koch i.e., Hindusied or semi-Hindusied. Bodos who have abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the northern dialects of Bengali. They are proud to call themselves as Rajbanshis and claim to be called Kshatriyas.

Last but not the least, Sandyal (1965), has expressed his view towards the origin of the complex ethnic group as when a tribe was overrun by another in war, certainly all the members of the defeated tribe were not annihilated, a portion of them mingled with the victorious race and was incorporated by inter-marriage. Mixing up with the Aryans by marriage relations and adoption of Aryan culture started from the mythological age. Hence, it is very probable the population of north Bengal including the Rajbanshi today are a very mixed people. Thus, the history of the Rajbanshi gives an example of dominance and decline of a group like the Nayars of southern India (Berlie, 1985).

The original Koch and now Rajbanshis are among the oldest people of the area. They are the indigenous people of the eastern Terai of Nepal. Their history can be traced back to the time, unknown and in the course of time, they have developed different adoptive strategies, however, some of them appeared to be maladaptive. But they are still existing in their original place maintaining their own culture and tradition. Though they have been fully dominated by the other high caste people such as Brahmin and Chettries.

The Rajbanshi (belonging to royal lineage i.e. Raja means king, ruler or chief and v/Banshi is a family; a line) is the name of relatively large and dominant groups of people living in the eastern part of the country namely Jhapa and Morang districts.

Basically they are found in between Mechi and Koshi river of Nepal. Though their physical structure is similar to the Aryans, they possess the character of Mongoloid such as Tharu and other ethnic groups. As observed by the researcher, they possess the characters of Aryan-Mongol-Austric and also some character of the mixture of Nagrito-Dravid.

The Rajbanshi people have seven sub-castes such as Rajbanshi, Tajpuria, Koch, Ramaniakahari, Kolbhakara, Bonga Rajbanshi and Rakhyata Rajbanshi and stated their Gotra (Chan) as Kashyap, Dhaneshwar, Bharadwoj and Sandip. However, all the Rajbanshi now chain as belonging to only one Gotra, Kashyap. Among the sub-caste not any discrimination is found. They all take part equally in all activities. They equally perform various feasts and festivals. There is no concept of touchable and untouchable. But there is a discrimination in ancestral deities.

According to the origin and history of Rajbanshi people, it has its own historical importance and mystery. In spite of the disintegratedness of the sovereignty of the big palace of Koch, it is still existing in some parts of the north of India. According to the renowned analytical historicist Arnold Dainoff, the world's greatest warriors are Samgram Singh Chilaray (Koch Kamtapur), Chhatrapati Siwaji-II (Hindustan) and Napoleon Bonaparte (France). And among them, the first brave warrior is Sangram Singh Chilaray mentioned in the history. Similarly, it is also mentioned that the joint attempt for the establishment of this huge Koch kingdom has been made by elder Malladev (Narnarayan) and the younger Shukladhwoj (Chilaray) and the warfare; far-sightedness and administrative capacity Chilaray is considered to be the great. The main cause behind giving the nickname as Chilaray to Shukladhwoja is that he didn't have any modern weapons for the expansion of his kingdom. He had to defeat the enemies by the means of spears and swords. Among the birds, eagle is very clever and

sharpshooting, in the same way clever and sharpshooting, in the same way Shukladhwoj along with military attacked his enemies like an eagle with the electrical acceleration. That's why chief of military or prince Sukladhowaj is introduced as a nick name of Sukladhowaj Chilaray in the history.

Koch king Hajor Hira and Zira were two sisters. They both were married to Haridas Mandal. At that time the king of Haridas Mandal had expanded to Maanas river on the east, Sonkoshi river on the west, Brahmaputra river on the south and mid-land of Himalayan on the north. After the death of Haridas Mandal in 1540 A.D., his son Malladev Narnarayan was throned. Maharaj Narnarayan including his brother Sangram Singh Chilaray expanded the border of Koch kingdom to Sadiya, Naga state and some parts of Burma, Manipur, Tripura on the east, Koshi river on the west, Bhutan Sikkim, some parts of Tibet on the north and Rampur of Bengaladesh, Dinajpur, Bagura Silate on the south which under the victory of the kingdom of Chilaray.

2.2 Geographic location

The Rajbanshi language is an Indo-European language spoken in the Terai district of Nepal, mainly in the Rajbanshi communities. The eastern Rajbanshi language is spoken in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. It is closely related to Maithili the most domination language of the Terai region of Nepal and of the northern area of Asam, India which is related to eastern districts of Nepal.

The eastern Rajbanshi language can be divided into two varieties. One variety of the Rajbanshi language is spoken in the districts which are between Mechi and Saptakoshi rivers. Another variety of the Rajbanshi language is spoken in the eastern

districts of India which presently known as west Bengal. In other words, the Mechi river is a division mark of the eastern Rajbanshi language.

Jhapa district lies in the southeastern border area of Nepal and is closely related to west Bengal, India. It is between Morang and west Bengal. Although Bengali is the dominant language throughout the district, there are settlements of the Rajbanshi speakers in several villages. The Rajbanshi language is the second most common language of this district. Morang, like Jhapa, is adjacent to the Indian border and lies between Sunsari and Jhapa districts. The Nepali language is the most dominant language of this district. Although the less majority of the Rajbanshi language speakers live in this district. It is reported that they are more related to the Bengali speakers.

2.3 Rajbanshi Society and Their Social Practices

The Rajbanshi are mostly agricultural people. Their village are found in the open space in the middle of their agricultural land. They prefer to live with the group of community and so the number of houses ranges mostly from 10 to 15 but in the study area it ranges from 10-32. Their dwellings are very close to each other. In every village there is relatively rich and old person who is known as 'Deoniya' never builds his house on the land of another 'Deoniya'. But a present, Deoniya are found to be settled on the land of another Deoniya in the study area due to the lack of land. The share croppers work as agricultural labours receiving half share of the crop they grow and mostly they build their homes on the land of Deoniya.

The houses of the Rajbanshi are made up of bamboo, paddy straw, wood and mud. The floor made up of beater earth smeared with a mizture fo sticky earth and cow dung. They keep their houses many neat and clean. Most of them smear the floor daily, some are twice or thrice a week. Out of 50 households, 20 houses are concrete building and their roofs are covered with corrugated iron sheets. Five house are built facing each other with a common court yard and compound.

Generally, a Rajbanshi house has two parts: the outer portion consists of small hut and yards which is used for business, sitting, gossiping, receiving guest, threshing corn and some other purposes. The another part is the inner fenced portion which separate huts and yard, which serves the real living part with sleeping room and kitchen. The wall of the house is smeared smoothly with the mixture of small pieces of straw, cow dung and mud and is decorated with the paintings of flowers, peacock and birds with different colours to make the house more beautiful. Every Rajbanshi has a small kitchen garden which is usually situated at the back side of the living

house compound and is fenced on all sides with jute residue and some time with bamboo lattices and various kinds of vegetables.

Hence, the house structure reflects the socio-cultural feature of the Rajbanshi and the materials used for building their houses give as some idea of their relation with the natural resources.

Family is a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adaptation constituting a single household, interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective and father, son and daughter, brother and sister creating a common culture. It is also a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently, precise and upbringing to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. The word family has been defined by different scholars in their own view.

Table No.: 2 Type of Family of Rajbanshi

S.N	Type of family	No. of family	Percentage
1.	Nuclear	33	66%
2.	Joint	11	22%
3.	Extended	6	12%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey (1995)

Population: The total population of Rajbanshi as shown in the census report of 1961 was 55,803 (Bista, 1971). The total population of Rajbanshi in Nepal was 79, 939, which is 0.43% of the total population of Nepal. The population of Rajbanshi in the Jhapa district was 52,753 (CBS, 1991) and 17,186 in the Morang district.

Table No.: 3 VDC wise populations of Jhapa

S.N.	VDC	Population
1.	Anarmani	27,762
2.	Arjundhara	16,178
3.	Bahundangi	22,897
4.	Balubari	3,907
5.	Banyani	2,005
6.	Bhadrapur N.P.	18,145
7.	Budhabare	19,742
8.	Chakchaki	9,676
9.	Chandragadhi	16,052
10.	Charpane	11,727
11.	Damak N.P.	35,009
12.	Dangibari	7,472
13.	Dhaijan	8,256
14.	Dharampur	2,215
15.	Duwagadhi	8,666
16.	Garamani	18,512
17.	Gauradaha	13,276
18.	Gauriganj	10,131

19.	Ghailadubba	11,185
20.	Gherabari	6,286
21.	Goldhap	7,486
22.	Haldibari	7,511
23.	Jalthal	13,132
24.	Juropani	10,624
25.	Jyamirgadhi	8,543
26.	Kechana	5,360
27.	Khajurgachhi	8,582
28.	Khudunabari	14,037
29.	Kohabara	10,589
30.	Korobari	5,006
31.	Kumarkhod	8,637
32.	Lakhanpur	13,911
33.	Mahabhara	7,040
34.	Maharanijhoda	10,239
35.	Maheshpur	12,765
36.	Mechinagar N.P.	49,060
37.	Pathamari	2,705
38.	Pathariya	9,966
39	Prithivinagar	9,879

40.	Rajgadh	15,354
41.	Sanischare	20,298
42.	Satasidham	16,759
43.	Shantinagar	17,437
44.	Sharanamati	12,832
45.	Shivaganj	13,552
46.	Surunga	21,616
47.	Tagandubba	9,539
48.	Topgachhi	20,619
	Total	632,177

(CBS, 1991) and 632,177 in the Jhapa district.

2.4 Birth Ceremony

It is believed that the pregnancy is the natural out come of the union between a man and woman. When a woman becomes pregnant (Pau-bhari) she is not considered unclean and is allowed to go about her regular works and does cooking and house hold duties but not allowed to go alone at night, attend any funeral, go to eat in a house where a Sradha (Post-funeral) ceremony is being performed. She may eat whatever she likes and not allowed to do heavy works. There is some restriction in case of the husband also, he should not carry a funeral or to attend crimation. He is not allowed to sacrifice and kill any kind of animal. Because the Rajbanshi believes that if the first born dies, it is very difficult to save others.

Of course most of the Rajbanshis of today prefer boys rather than girl. But they also give equal opportunity and importance to girl mainly due to two points- during the marriage ceremony, the groom has to pay lots of bride price (Chumna) and

on behalf of the son, the son of a daughter (Grandson) can observe the funeral rites of his grand parents. This shows that in Rajbanshi's society there is no such discrimination between the two sexes. From this, we can also prove that the Rajbanshi is a matrilineal society.

Before the child is born, they take help of local mid-wife which is Haryani or dawani. Haryani must be the lower caste or Hari. The Haryani cuts the placenta of a child which is called Nal. In the absence of Hryani, the placenta is cut by the grandmother or eldest woman of the house. After cutting the placenta, the end attached to the child is sprinkle with ashes prepared by burning the skin of dry unripe plantain in order to prevent any kind of disease arising from the card. After doing all these, Haryani was paid with money, ricegrain and Sari. Either on the 6th or 11th day of the birth, the hair of the child was cut by the barber (hajam) and again the barber was paid with some mount of money and clothes (Dhoti). There is no fixed day of Nwaran. Some of them observe on the day the baby was born and some on 6th or 11th days. It should be perform within the eleven days of the new born baby, on the day of Nwaran, the baby is given bath and should be smeared with a paste of the mixture of turmeric and mastered oil. In order to remove the bad smell of the baby and given bath. After then, the baby is kept in the Nanglo and they touch this Nanglo to the well (Inar). Before taking the Nanglo to the well (Inar), first of all, the newly born baby is taken inside, where the home deities is kept and for 5 times they shout with a word Ollu lulu. The mother of the baby after taking bath worships at the well and put dubo, flower, a piece of stone inside the well including incense stick and five pairs of bati, performing this puja means purification of women.

Previously, the pregnant women had to sleep on a mat until she completes the duration of pregnancy pollution. But at present, there is no compulsion to sleep on the

mat. They can sleep on bed. Rajbanshi people do not observe this pollution for very long days. According to the situation of their home and baby as well as the mother, they observe the pregnancy pollution. Before, the baby's mother was served food on the banana leaf and water in an earthen glass. But at present, all these systems have been changed. She can eat in a plate and steel glass. No such restriction is found today as before.

On the 11th day, they need a priest (Adhikari) and a barber (hazam) to cut the hair and nail of all the members of the family including the newly baby born. Adhikari sprinkle pure water to every corner of the house. On that day clean whole house and smear with a mixture of mud and cow - dung. So from that they onward the whole family becomes pure. There was some restriction regarding the food habits of the mother. She should not take meat for twenty/twenty five days after the baby was born. She was served with rice and ghee, bread, fish, bitten rice. They did not give green vegetables. Of course today, some change has been found regarding their food and other.

a. Naming Ceremony

There is not any certain day of naming ceremony in this community. Previously, they use to consult Patro for naming the baby. But at present, they name the baby on any day without consulting the priest. But, however, they follow some rules and regulation for naming of the baby which was mainly based on birthday with the name of former child, month and day of such evidences. If a new baby is born in the month of Falgun, the name of the child is used to be Fagu and if the first born has died, then the second born is given a hateful and undesirable name by thinking that gods may see but not like this child due to its bad name and so leave the child with his parents.

The Rajbanshi of today have started naming their children with modern names as they like and easy to call her/him. Some wealthy families give names to the newborn baby by arranging a ceremony and seeing the calendar and give modern names.

b. Pasni (Khir Chhuwan)

The Pasni or Bhat Khuwai (rice feeding ceremony-commencement by providing solid foods to the child) is known as Khir Chhuwan in the Rajbanshi community. This ceremony is performed on a grand scale but only for the first son of the family. The sons born after this are not feasted with any ceremony at all. This Khir Chhuwan has to be performed before the child grows milk teeth. During this ceremony, the Satyanarayan Puja is performed and then the Khir Chhuwan commences.

Here, the child's maternal uncle or mama first rinses the boy's mouth, feeds him with Khir (pudding glutinous rice cooked in milk and spiced with raisins, cashews, peanuts, coconut pieces, etc. and sugar) and again rinses his mouth. This is repeated by the maternal aunt (Mama's wife or Maiju). After this is over, then only the other family members do the same functions on a seniority basis. This is then followed by the maternal kinfolks. (As long as the child does not commence uttering any sounds, his mother's parents do not eat anything). In this Khir Chhuwan ceremony, the Mama's role is vital, and this can be said to be applicable in most ethnic groups in the kingdom. If the case is such that a real mama does not exist, then the child's mother makes a male her Dharma Bhai (ritual younger brother) and then this pseudo-mama completes this ceremony performing all the rituals that a real mama does.

c. Bartabandha

(Karnachhed Ceremony): The ritual of Bartabandha in Nepal is known as Karnachhed among the Rajbanshi and in their society it is stated that if a person has not had this ritual completed, then he is not eligible for marriage. Since there is not hard and fast rule that this Karnachhed must be done within a fixed time, it can also be completed a day prior to the marriage. This ritual is performed by the Thakur or Gosai who does various Pujas and bellows some mantras (sacred incantations) into the boy's ears. This is also known as Kanfunke, in some other ethnic groups. Once the boy hears this mantra, he became purified. This is the standing Rajbanshi belief.

Karnachhed is performed for females too in this society and they have to begin wearing Kundals (ear-rings), therefore, in anticipation, they have their ears pierced when very young, when Rajbanshi females have their first menstruation or menarche there not exist a custom of observing pollution as is the case in other Hinduised ethnic group of the kingdom. No importance is given to this natural phenomenon, which is contrary to many other tribal customs throughout the world.

2.5 Marriage Ceremony

Marriage is the institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted to have children or in other words, marriage is an institution in which a man and woman establish a continuous claim to have the right to sexual access to one another and in which the woman involved each eligible to bear children (Haviland, 1990). "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents" (Royal Anthropological Institution 1951:110).

Marriage is also one of the most universal and most important social institution of human society. When a boy and girl get married they can enter the family life and they are socially as well as legally permitted to have sexual relationship. Marriage as an institution is universal to human society, but its types and forms differs from place to place and from one ethnic groups to other in accordance to the rule and regulation and beliefs system of particular society.

Generally, three types of marriage are found to be prevalent in each and every society. There are:-

i. Monogamy

ii. Polygamy

iii. Polyandry

Monogamy is a type of marriage in which one man marriage only one woman at a time. A custom of having more than one wife at a time is known as polygamy where as custom of having more than one husband at a time is known as polyandry. Rajbanshi marriage is caste endogamous and clan exogamous.

The Rajbanshi practices the following type of marriage:

- i. Mangi Bibaha or Phul Bibah (Arrange Marriage)
- ii. Love Marriage (Mankhusi Bibaha)
- iii. Damdumai Bibaha (Living together without formal marriage)
- iv. Dangua Bibaha (Widow Marriage)
- v. Ghanjiya Bibaha (House-in-law keeping)

Among all these forms of marriage the Rajbanshi prefer arranged marriage rather than other at present. According to the informants 80% of marriage is arranged

types marriage and the remaining 20% is other types of marriage. During the time of arranged marriage, the Rajbanshi adopt the following process.

a. Phul Bibah (Arranged Marriage):

This is the common form of marriage practiced by the Rajbanshi. It is called Mangibibah or Phul Bibah. In this form of marriage, the boy always marry a virgin girl. Usually, it is done with their traditional rite and ritual and is one of the most expensive forms of marriage. During the time of arranged marriage the Rajbanshi adopts the following processes.

Subhadekha is the first stage of arranged marriage in a traditional process when a boy crosses the age of 20/22 or became mature, the guardian starts searching a girl with the help of middle age man known as Karuwa or 'Match Maker' and this brides house to arrange the matter. The boy after then goes to the house of the girl to see her. the boy along with the Karuwa gets a warm welcome, offering them beaten rice and some cigarettes, tea etc. from the side of girls guardians. They sit on the jute mat in the yard of the house and the girl comes with a plate containing some beaten rice, fruits with some sweets and is placed in front of the assembly. Then the girl offers Dhog to all who are present there. She is placed in front of the party and asked some questions about her name, education, etc. Boy's father gives some rupees in the hand of the girl and she again offer Dhog as before and goes away. If they like the girl, they send the Karuwa with message to the girl's parents setting that "Hamro Subhadekha Thichha" or we like the girl. The Karuwa or the match marker comes talking the message of weather the parents or the guardian of the girl agrees with the proposal for marriage or not. In this way, the simple formality of seeing the girl or the first process is over. The Karuwa is sent to girls house with messae that they are satisfied with the girl and would be too glad to have her hand with their son.

Dulaaha Tilakhiwar is second stage of arranged marriage. In this process if the guardian of the girl agrees with the engagement, they send a message through the Karuwa for coming to the house of boys guardian or parents to see their house and other socio-economics condition on a particular day. The Karuwa conveys information to the guardians of the boy and the guardian of the girl to go to see the boy, his house and status. The traditional custom is called Dulaaha Dekhi. They take interview of the boy about his education, land and other house hold matters and they send a message whether they agree to the engagement or not. If they agree, they give something to the guardians of boys in affirmative. This process is known as Superipan. Then, at a fixed day the girls father with his relatives and friends visit the boys house and presents some clothes and a gold ring to boy and Dhoti to the boys fathers and this custom is known as 'Tilakhiwar'. They also fixed Chumna (bride-price) if the girl's father demands. The customs of chumna was essential and compulsory in the past, when there was scarcity of girls population but now-a-days, it is not compulsory and gradually changing in another form that is, the boys party does not pay in case to the parents of the girl but in the forms of ornament and clothes to the girls in indirect way. But in many cases, the custom of chumna has been changed into the custom of Tikka (dowry) where girls father have to pay much money to the boy in the form of presentation due to the interaction with the hill people and other Terai people.

Dalikhara is another custom in the marriage of the Rajbanshi people. Unless the ritual is completed, the marriage is not considered as fixed. The ritual is performed in the day convenient for the both sides. On the fixed day of Dalikhara the man of boys side goes to the house of girls parents. They are welcome and seated in the compound. The neighbours and village elders of the girls side also gather. Then, in

presence of such gathering the boy's father presents the girl's with ornaments, cloths and cosmetic for the marriage and the goods presented depends on the financial condition of a person. Since, these presents are girl's property, when she goes to her husband's house, she takes everything with her. After the accordance to the opinions of the both parties the date of marriage is fixed. Then the 'Sundesh' i.e. payment to the parents of girls from the side of boys and Karalibhar, (the things which must be sent to the house of girl's father on the day of wedding) are arranged. After Dalikhara it is supposed that the boy and girl have become husband and wife. If anyone of the family dies after Dalikhara before completing marriage, the death ceremony and death pollution should be observed from both sides. The boy or the girl cannot ritually marry any other person after the process of Dalikhara. This is the social rule deeply rooted in the Rajbanshi culture. After this they perform the another ceremony known as 'Adibas'.

Adibas takes place in the former day of wedding ceremony. On this day the tutelary deities of the girl's house are worshipped. Beside this, they also worship Narayan and the girl is allowed to meet her best friend. All the relatives and guests arrived on this day.

The ritual of Kasakuta Laune (Paste of turmeric and oil) is performed. It is usually done by the elder's or cousins on the whole body of girls. Similarly, at the boy's house also worship is performed to their tutelary ancestral and family deities. At night, Nani (mother's mother) or mousi (mother's sister) fries the Kasakuta and mixed with oil by Bhauju (elder brother's wife) and didi (elder sister-real or cousin) and the paste of Kasakuta is applied on the body and face of the groom and at the same night exchanges of Dhoti and Supari with the groom's best friend takes place, which is considered as an essential part of marriage of the Rajbanshi people.

On the eve of Janti they make up the groom and small knife called, Jeevan Churi (Jeevan-life, Churi-knife) is given to the groom. After they reach the brides house young girls welcome them by singing a satirical song. The bride's sister welcome the groom and takes him inside the house. After dinner the marriage ceremony starts by worshipping various gods and goddess. After performing various process, the groom put Sindur (Vermilion) on the forehead of the bride which is the most important part of the marriage ceremony. After this, both the bride and groom is worshipped by the brides cousin and they present giftes also known as Chumna. This ends the ceremonial functions of the day.

Next day in the morning after other marriage procession are over, the bride-side bid farewell to the Janti (marriage guest form groom's house) known as Bidai in local language.

Before the Janti returns back, the parents of the bride feed Kheer (rice-pudding) any demand put forth by the groom. This procession is called Khir-Khilana.

When the Barati or Janti arrive at the groom's house the groom's mother welcomes the newly wed couple by sprinkling water with a flower. The groom's sister washes the feet's of both the couple and they are taken inside the house. This is then followed by a grand feast in which all relatives, neighbours, invites participate. This feast is known as Bhar Bhat and it contains varieties of foods including meat which is essential. The new bride serves food to the guest and the marriage ceremony is over.

On the ninth day after marriage, the bride is taken to her maternal house by her kinfolk. She then returns back after eight days and are no more regarded as new couple.

In this way arrange marriage of the Rajbanshi people ends undergoing various stages followed by exchange of various goods between the bride and the groom side. This helps to strengthen their social relationship. But due to high expenses it has created a problem for them to continue their cultural practices.

Eventhough there are other various marriage systems found in the Rajbanshi community, arrange marriage system is highly practiced, acceptable, common and popular.

b. Mankhusi Bibaha (Love Marriage):

This is another type of marriage system prevailing in the Rajbanshi society. It is not a common and not found before only at present, the young girl and boy are practicing love marriage, such type of marriage takes place when both the girl and boy like each-other. It is found among the Rajbanshi who cannot afford formal marriage. A feast to the community is offered in this type of marriage. A feast to the community is offered in this type of marriage. This type of marriage is not considered as a good one, although it is acceptable by the society and children can inherit their father's property.

c. Damdumai Bibah (Living together without formal marriage):

Another kind of marriage is damdumai Bibah. This type of marriage is for those who are financially weak. The boy takes the girl to his home and they are considered married, though not ritually. Thus, the couple can get ritually married when their financial position becomes better in the future, after having few children too. This is considered absolutely practical and socially normal procedure.

d. Dangua Bibah (Widow marriage):

In this type of marriage a widow adopts a man as her husband and he lives with the widow in her house. There is no need of any rites and rituals on such marriage. It is an accepted form of marriage by the society and it is neither criticized nor encouraged.

Widow re-marriage is allowed in Rajbanshi society. When a man wants to get married with widow there is no necessary of any special ceremony, but there should be a negotiation with her guardian/parents and date is fixed. The man goes to her house with few friends and they are fed with meat foods. He returns back with his wife then she is allowed to live in the society as a proper married girl. Such form of marriage is also called Simon Bibaha by these people. From this, we can say that, Rajbanshis are both matrilineal as well as patrilineal society.

e. Ghanjiya Bibah (House-in-law Keeping):

Such type of marriage is occurred due to some reasons. The first one is that, when a boy cannot afford the bride price, the parents of the girl keep the boy in their own house for their daughter and make him work as a helper for some period. During this period, he is not allowed to have any sexual intercourse with the girl. After sometime, the boy and girl are passed through regular forms of marriage and they become husband and wife. Such type of bride groom is called Ghanjiya and the groom lives in the house of his father-in-law. In terms of residential pattern, it is a matrilineal residence. From this, matrilineal type of society is clearly visible among the Rajbanshi society.

2.6 Marriage System, Stability and Change

From the above discussion of different forms of marriage practiced by the Rajbanshi of Jhapa and Morang, we found that the Rajbanshi People generally prefer arranged marriage system. But however, due to their changing social-cultural as well as economic condition. They are bound to bring changes associated with expenditure for the marriage ceremony. Previously, they used to invite all the neighbouring Rajbanshi and other people to attend the marriage ceremony. But now-a-days, they invite only selected people and relatives to attend the ceremony. A significant change can also be observed in their wedding party. These days the size of the party is relatively small and items for lunch and dinner are ordinary. Besides this, these people have left so many rituals and process followed in their wedding ceremony. Though, some of the Rajbanshi's marriage system is found to be existing in traditional form, still some significant changes are occurring side by side due to the change of time. According to the informants, the main reason for such changes is their economic condition. It is due to the domination of other castes mainly the hill people. Before, Rajbanshi were land lords of the said VDC but as soon as they were dominated, the Rajbanshi people had to lead a very hard life. Other reason is modernization and influence of other caste group. Their way of life is changing slowly and slowly with the changes in their socio-cultural life. Thus stability and change can be observed side by side today in the marriage as well as in other ritual processes followed by the Rajbanshi of Jhapa and Morang.

2.7 Death Ceremony

Like birth and other rituals, every human society processes a social organization. The Rajbanshi people observe death ceremony like the other Hindus of Nepal. In their society, ritual related to death differs according to the age of the

deceased person. If a child who has not yet grown milk teeth dies, it is buried and death pollution is not observed. Similarly a person who dies due to 'unnatural death' such as snake bite, suicide, accident is also buried. If the deceased being older than the toothless child, death pollution is observed from three to five days. Adults are either burned or cremated according to the desire and the availability of wood. But however, they don't bury the dead body of a young boy and girl because they think that the soul of the dead man may give sorrow, so they prefer to burn the corpse of young man in order to be free from the soul's sorrow. The Rajbanshi people believed that the soul of the dead man go to the sky and grasped with the super spirit (over soul).

In the Rajbanshi community, elder son is important to observe funeral rites for four days. After that day body may be able to observe the funeral rites. When a man dies, they bath the corpse and keep the dead body in the yard on the ground on a jute mat. The head of the corpse is always place towards the north. The body of the corpse is covered with a piece of white cloth. It is only after this that the message of death is sent to the concerned relatives, kin and neighbours. People offer money to the dead body and after that they made an Aanchi, a thing made of bamboo to carry the corpse and carry to the Ghat (cremation place) taking the name lord Vishnu by all the members of the funeral procession and produced the sound of conch shell (sankha). They must carry spade (Kodali) and Handi (a clay pot) with them. After the arrival at the Ghat, the body is untied, stripped of the clothes except a small piece and laid on the earth placing the head towards north and some ghee is poured over the corpse throws earth on the corpse thrice and after that he fires the pyre moving anti-clock wise three times with flaming torch which has been used for fire the pyre.

After the funeral ritual, they perform the process of Teensinan. In this ritual, all the khatiyars are invited and all peoples including the family members of the deceased, kuro, barber and Thakur Guru (priest) go the nearest river and have a bath and perform puja on the name of the deceased. On the day they arrange a religious programme called bhajan. A barbar shave the head of the kuro. and other interested people and the kuro changes his clothes which he has been wearing since the day of the funeral. All the participants are fed with vegetarian food on the bank of the river and return home. Once the teensinan is over, death pollution has to be observed only by the kin, while the others are purified.

After the eighth day of teensiana, they arrange a feast in the name of the dead man at the funeral house. But they don't arrange this feast on Tuesday. Basically they observe the death pollution for 12 days. During these days too, they go to the Ghat and perform all the ritual activities by the low caste priest. His demand should be fulfilled according to the economic status of the deceased family. On this day, the ritual of eating katto is performed and it is very prevalent among the Rajbanshi.

On the 13th day, Saradha is performed at the house of the deceased by the Brahmin and is regarded as the last programme arranged in the name of the dead man. On this day, all the relatives, neighbours, and the honorable man of the village along with the Khatiyar are fed with meat, food and other varieties of expensive foods. Various types of gifts like golds, silver, brass, plate, copper pot etc. are given to the Brahmin praying for peace in the name of the departed soul which is known as Baitarni dan. On the very day, they clean each and every corner of the house and Thakur arrange worshipping activities of the ancestral Thakur, hazam, bhajan group, priest etc. After this, they don't observe the death ceremony for twelve months. In this way the death ceremony of Rajbanshi people came to an end. However, at present

they don't spend much money like before. They use to perform ritual activities in a simple way. The main causes for all this change is their change in socio-economic condition.

2.8 Cultural Activities and Change

A) Dress, Ornaments and Food Habit

The Rajbanshi people dress up in a very simple way. The Rajbanshi men generally were Kamij (full shirt) and Dhoti (loin cloth). At present, they have started wearing modern dresses like shirt, pant, coat and other desirable dresses. Likewise, the women also have started wearing Sari and young girls were Kurta and other modern dresses. Actually, the traditional dress of a woman is called petani, a cloth of 2/3 meter long tie around the chest which hangs down to the knees and they do not usually use any other cloth to cover their body. These are the traditional dress of Rajbanshis people and are suitable to their physical features and geographical environment. As the Rajbanshi people live in comparatively warmer place, their traditional dressing pattern helps them adopt with the environment exposing most part of the body to maintain body temperature (Regmi, 1991:53). Since their contact with outer world, through education and social contact, their traditional patterns of dressing are gradually disappearing. Generally, young Rajbanshi people prefer to wear modern dresses such as pant, shirts and coat according to their economic status and interest. Likewise, Rajbanshi women also started wearing Sari, blouse and sometimes 'Choubandicholo' as a result of interacting with hill people. In addition to this, young and educated Rajbanshi girl prefers to wear modern dresses like salwar kamij, skirt, shirts and pants etc.

Likewise, change also has come to some extent in the ornaments.

Traditionally, the Rajbanshi people don't use ornaments so much. If they used that were made up of silver which are usually thick and heavy. Now-a-days gold ornaments are being used by some well to do family, but the poor people use silver ornaments which are smaller and thinner in size. These people are not so much fond of ornaments but due to the influenced by other ethnic groups of the vicinity they began to adopt their tradition gradually. The Rajbanshi women are very simple. On the occasion of feast, festival and ceremonies they use ornaments and do simple make-up like the other women. Previously, the married Rajbanshi women wear a wide ornamented, silver bangle 'Motakharu' and 'Shankha-kharu', a conchshell bangles, wear on the left hand. Such bangles are broken off after the death of her husband and nevedar wear even if she is married again. But today the Rajbanshi women of the study area were small conch-shell bangles as a sign of married and only few of them put Sindur (vermilion). Even today most of the Rajbanshi men and women were found painting their arms and neck with various design as their wish as a symbol of beauty and good luck.

As paddy is the main cereal crop of this area, rice is the staple food for the Rajbanshi. Dal, Bhat and Sag (Pulses, Rice and Mustered leaf curry) is the daily diet of the Rajbanshi people whatever may be economic condition. They use slat, chilly and other kinds of species in preparing their foods. In the morning they usually take puffed rice (Muri) or panthabhat (cooked rice soaked in water one night) and Kharkharaa (fried rice cooked one night before). As soon as they come back from the morning work they take Jalkhai (breakfast), at noon they take freshly cooked rice and at night take same food as at noon. Previously, the Rajbanshi people did not serve the food to the guests without fish or meat. But at present due to their low economic

condition such system has found to be changed. Before, they believed that selling of varieties of vegetables at the market. Previously they never drink Raksi (liquor) and chicken, if they happened to touch, they had to take bath before entering the house. But the Rajbanshis of today have started drinking Raksi and eating chicken. Such habit of drinking and eating is found among the educated and high post people. Besides this, their favourite dish is curry, cheka sag, which is prepared from the green leaves and tender shoots of jute. In some cases a few dried fishes are added. This curry is enjoyed by almost all the Rajbanshi people which forms an item of their daily diet.

B) Dances and Songs

Dance and songs are the most important part of Rajbanshi's socio-cultural life. The different varieties of songs and dances of Rajbanshi people are not only their religious and recreational aspect but these activities also indicates their ancient modes of life. Rajbanshi people are very much found of songs and dances during their leisure time. Such songs and dances have passed on from one generation to another. Usually women do not take part in songs and dances and the role of girls in dancing is fulfilled by the boys becoming a false lady. Most of their dances and songs are based on their traditional custom. Regarding instrument, they songs and dance programme.

The dances of Rajbanshi peoples are not only the source of recreation and entertainment but also represent the religious life of the communities. The dances of Rajbanshis can be classified into two parts:

First dance, that reflects their socio-cultural life and the second, dance that high lights the traditional customs. Socio-cultural dances includes Sastriya or the panchali and religious dances are based on Ramayan and Mahabharata. On Ramayan, they show the scene of Ram-Sita marriage, fight between Ram and Ravan, Sita

kidnapped by raven etc. They also perform the play (Notwa lila) of Mahabharata and true speaker king Harshchandra. Dances and materials needed in the programme are arranged by the local people.

The song of rajbanshi people unlike the dances shows the religious as well as social life of the people. They usually sing folk song. Their song represent their traditional way of life an the recent social events as well as the love affairs of the young boys and girls, then the parents and the neighbours became sad and sing a song representing the sorrow and unhappiness. Likewise, a young girl signs a sign representing her love. They also sing a songs of natural love and affection between Dewar (Husband's younger brother) and Bhauju (wife of elder brother) and sister-in-law (sali) sad brother-in-law (vena).

According to the informants, the dance and songs of Rajbanshi society are changing day-by-day due to the change in socio-cultural way of life. As each and every socio-cultural aspect of human society is dynamic in nature hence, the so-called Rajbanshi socio-cultural aspects is also not static, it is found changing slowly and silently. Due to their low economic condition, usually they seldom arrange religious dancing programmes as it is very expensive to arrange a dance programme. Also due to their contact with other Hindus and neighbouring ethnic groups, they are not so rigid in their social norms and values. Therefore, due to low economic condition as well as their contact with other ethnic group, they are not infavour of spending much in dancing programme. Before girls were not allowed to dance instead boys used to become a false lady and performed dance based on their traditional custom but now-a-days even the girls are freely taking part in dancing programme. At present, though they arrange a dancing programme by introducing new instrument. They also started performing modern dance and songs in their community. Previously, they were fond

of arranging dance and song programme during each and every feast and festival but at present, they don't frequently arrange such programme due to the change in socio-economic life. As observed by the researcher, the Rajbanshi's original culture and tradition are gradually changing day-by-day and if such condition prevailed for at least 7/8 years then it will be very difficult to find their traditional culture, norms and values.

C) Kin Group

The term kin or kinship system is part of social structure. It includes definite social groups of which the most important is the family. According to Winick (1992:154), "Kinship system may include socially recognized relationship based on supposed as well as actual genealogical ties." In defining kinship, Majumdar has said, "In all societies, people are bound together in groups by various kinds of bonds. The most universal and the most basic of these bonds is that which is based on reproduction, an inherent human drive, which is called kinship in sociology and social Anthropology." The desire of reproduction gives rise to two kinds of bonds. Firstly, there is a bond between parents and their children and that between siblings. The first kind of bond which arises out of a socially or legally defined marriage relationship is called affinal kinship. The affinal kin are not connected to each other through blood. The relationship based on blood ties for eg-relationship of parents and their children is called consanguineous kinship. (Majumdar and Madan, 1986:98). The two types of kin group consanguinial and affinal are found in every human societies. These two kin groups are found to be the most popular among the Rajbanshi people of the study area consanguinial kinship is known as guthiyar and affinal kin group is known as kutumba in their local term. They trace their kinship from parents side.

The Rajbanshi people of the study area have both descriptive as well as classificatory terms to refer to their relation such as Bap (father), Aai (mother), Kaka (uncle), Nana (Mother's father), Dada (father's father) etc.

According to the informants, it has come to be known that the Rajbanshi are the descendent Suryabanshi Chettry and their clan (gotra) is kashyap. Within this, there are seven sub-castes and all take part equally in every activity. Discrimination is found in ancestral deities which are the main measuring rod during the time of marriage. Nobody wants to get married with the girl who has powerful ancestral deities. Basically, they prefer the same power of ancestral deities from both sides. Rajbanshi people did not want to get married with other ethnic groups. They marry within the same cast. For e.g. - if a Rajbanshi boy marries a Nepali girl, the girl should be either Chhetry or Brahmin only then the girl can enter the kitchen. If the girl is beyond the above mentioned i.e. Rai, Limbu, Gurung etc. She is not allowed to enter the house and also not accepted by the society. She has to live separately.

Of the 50 households of Rajbanshi one case of intercaste marriage with a Limbu girl was found who was living separately from their parents. They give less social recognition but they did not boycott the marriage relationship. Though the Rajbanshi has different clan name they use only Rajbanshi. They do not seek a marriage partner with their own clan and lineage so we can say that these people are clan lineage exogamous.

D) Religion

The phenomenon called religion is extremely variegated, complex, intricate and full of paradox. It includes such facts as celebration despair, ethical vigour, mystery, social activism, animal sacrifice, rituals beliefs and dogmas about natural

and super natural etc. As everybody knows that religion is a part of culture. Each and every society of the world does have its own religious tradition. The religion of every ethnic group is interwoven with their religious processes. Rajbanshi are rigid in their religious beliefs. Each and every part of their cultural activity is closely related with the religious myths. Though the Rajbanshi are Hindus by their religion, they also worship their own type of god and goddess which are not included in Hindu religion. Besides this, they worship nature god and goddesses such as the goddess of rivers, god of forest etc. They worship ghosts e.g. 'Bhuts,' Pattenis, and make offerings to them from their propitiation. They also belief in spell they have their own priest or sacred specialist which is known as 'Ojha.' This Ojha are the healers of illness, diseases and personality disorders in their own unique way of diagnosis and treatment. According to the informants Rajbanshis are Shaivas, but the impact of Shaktatism, Vaisnavism, Buddhism, Tantrism have produced a curious blend in there religious usages. They believe in witchcraft, worship Shiva (Mahakal), Bisahari (Bisohori, snake goddess) Durga, Kali, Lakshmi (Than-sri). Besides this, they also worship Narayan, Vishnu, the sacred basil plant and take part in Kirtans also perform Dharma-Thakur Puja, Chandi puja and also take part in Gorokhanathergan. Rajbanshi people believe in social service and other welfare. They consider the role of religion in a wider sense. They think that pleasure and misery are directly related with religion. They believe on home deities village deities, the soul of dead man and their ancestral deities Thakur.

Home deities are worshipped by the headman of the house daily early in the morning. In the absence of the head, one of the other members of the house worship the god daily. They establish their home deities in the south-east part of their house. They also worship Tulshi, Durga Devi, and Kali in the form of home deities. The

Rajbanshi people believe that if they forget to worship the home deities they would suffer from certain kinds of sorrows and diseases. Most of the deities which they worship daily in the form of home deities are Hindu deities but the worshipping activities differ slightly from that of the Hindu. Rajbanshi believes that, worshipping of village deities is important not only for household of an individual but also for the whole villagers.

In the worshipping activities, they use banana, milk and different flowers, and rice. Besides home deities and village deities they also worship the fire god (Burma Thakur), Paban Thakur, Bisto Thakur and Mahakal Thakur for the well being of the villagers.

In Rajbanshi community, the Rajbanshi people also consider the soul of dead man as a god and worship it. When a woman becomes pregnant, she must be saved from the intrusion of dead man's soul. She should not go alone at night. They also suggest the pregnant women not to stay alone in the darkness of the house. Thursday and Friday are strictly prohibited for the pregnant women to go outside and she should not make any murder during the pregnancy period. To get well being from dead soul-poitipith (soul of girl who dies in her very young age) they worship poitipith.

But however, due to their changing socio-cultural as well as economic activities, their way of worshipping of god and the soul of dead man has become quite flexible. Now-a-days, the Rajbanshi people do not worship their deities daily because of their poor economic condition. So, side by side they have cut down worshipping items needed for the worship, according to the informants. They use Brahmin in every ritual and ceremony. It is said that due to their engagement in various economic activities the duration of worship has been cut down dramatically within the period of last 20 years.

E) Festivals

From the beginning of human beings people started to celebrate various kinds of festival with great enthusiasm in slightly different ways and with varying degree of intensity, depending upon locality economic and social status, education religious and family background and personal inclination (Anderson, 1977:16).

Nepalese people celebrate various festivals according to their culture and tradition. Almost all the festivals of Nepal are not only religious in character but also preserve in themselves a very fascinating picture of the great historical, cultural, social as well as the economic account of the people. Festivals of Nepal provide a deep insight in the culture of the people.

Rajbanshi people perform various festivals. they called festival as pabani in their local terms. They take very much interest in their festivals. They celebrate various festivals according to their own ways. They are as follows:

i) Dole Siruwa

This festival begins from Falgun Purnima and lasts in the second week of Baisakh (April third week). They celebrate this Dole-Siruwa by eating different varieties of dishes like meat, fish, drink rice beer and singing and dancing.

ii) Dole-Pabani

This festival falls in the months of Falgun (February) and celebrate for three days. On the first day of a Falgun Purnima all the villagers gathered in Melaghar, a hut made up of bamboo binding with paddy straw and worship there. During the days they smear each and every corner of the house with mud and cow-dung and wash clothes and wear new clean clothes. They worship Dole-Thakur by offering various items. At night, they gather at a place and pass whole night singing vajan and kirtan,

and dancing. On the next day of Falgun Purnima, they play whole day thereby throwing colourful dust to each other.

iii) **Siruwa Pabani**

This is one of the biggest as well as very important festival of the Rajbanshi people. This festival starts from the first of Biashakh (Second April) to the third of Baishakh (May of the first week). Though they celebrate this festival for one week, they give more importance to the 1st of Baisakh which they regard as the new year day according to the Bengali calendar and the 1st week of this year is also known as Siruwa Sapt. During the period, the Rajbanshi people clean their houses and cloth and prepare desirable items likes meat, curd, bitten rice and other different varieties of vegetables. During this festival, they used to smear different colours (abir) to one another. They go to their relatives and friends house and wish them happy New Year. Above all this, the main characteristics of this festival is to play with colours and eat different varieties of dishes. But these days, due to their low economic condition such type of sacrifice is not seen.

iv) **Bishawa Pabani**

This festival starts on the first day of New Year and this is regarded s the first festival during the year of Rajbanshi people. On the first of Baisakh, they throw water to each other and pray for the rain to come on the earth and wishes good to all during the New Year. the Rajbanshis smear their house with a mixture of cow dung and mud, put clean cloths and worship their ancestral deities. They hang onion in front of their house and celebrate for well begin of all the people. on the first of Baisakh, they have a tradition of eating seven kinds of vegetables. Actually Rajbanshi people are very

much fond of eating different items and spending luxurious life, so due to this factors most of the Rajbanshi of today lead a miserable life.

v) Rang Siruwa

The festivals start on the second of the Baisakh (Third week of April) month. This is second day of the New Year. In this festival, they worship land by using colourful dust (Abir). In this days too, they clean their clothes and houses and worship of ancestral deities. The Rajbanshi people play with colourful dust throughout the whole day and at the evening they go to the river and take bath. On the way to the river they sing song and worship Dole Thakur and Thakurani. They believe that during these days both Dole Thakur and Thakurani meet together in the side of the river. They eat curd, bitten rice, and other sweets and return to their houses. They took some sands of the river and spread it on the roof of their house for their wellbeing and to free from evil spirit.

vi) Jaitra (Debipuja)

The term Jaitra (Dasai) held on the Nawami (ninth day of Dasai) during which they worship goddess Durga by offering bananas and other fruits including flowers of different colours. If any one has made any previous promises for well being, they have to sacrifice goat in the name of Durga on the tenth day of Dasain. During this puja, they go to the market or mela. Like other hill people, Rajbanshi people celebrate Dasain with great enthusiasm but they do not put tika like that of Nepali on their forehead.

vii) Lakhi Puja

The festival falls on the mid of Kartik (November) and is known as Lakhi Puja. It is known s Laxmi Puja (Tihar) in Nepalese society. Rajbanshi people

celebrate this festival for three days. it comes after 15 days of the great festival Dasain. In this festival, on the first day they worship cow. Before worshipping cow, they were clean clothes, clean their houses and cow-shed (guhali), on the evening, after worshipping cativities are finished, they go to their fields by firing a wooden lamp which si called Hakahaki in their local term. Some of the Rajbanshi sacrifice goat, duck and hen. They eat Pidalu (Kachu), pulses, rice and any other desirable dishes which ever they can afford. At night they arrange a musical programme of entertainment. On the second day of Tihar, they feed their cows and bullocks and worship known as Bakhar, which is prepared by mixing grass and salt and given to their cattle.

On the last day of Tihar, they observe the festival by performing some Tantric rituals. After then, they throw the worshipping items in the road side. At night young people enjoy by playing Hudhurdhare, a kind of crew that perform dancing and singing activities which represents the traditional folk culture of Rajbanshi people.

viii) Jituwa Pabani

This festival observed at a time when a family got married of their elder or younger son. They observed this festival by fasting and worshipping of god and goddess. It is also a kind of costly festival; however it is not compulsory to observe for all the Rajbanshi people. According to the informants, this festival was taken from Ramayana. This falls on the month of Aswin (October). Especially, women took part in this festival and keep fasting throughout the whole day. At night they gathered together and entertained by signing and dancing.

ix) Dadhikado

This festival is observed on the month of Bhadra Asthami, or on the birth day of Lord Krishna (September). A statue of Lord Krishna is made and worshipped.

Whole day they play with mud and at night the organizer of this festival arranges a big feast.

Chapter Three

Sociolinguistic Profile of the Rajbanshi Language

A sociolinguistic profile is the study of relationship between language and its speaker. Trudgill provides a good summary of some aspects of its converge:

Whenever we speak, we can not avoid giving our listeners clues about our origins and the sort of person are. our accent and our speech generally show where we come from and what sort of background we have. We many even give some indication of certain of our ideas and attitudes and all of this information can be used by the people we are speaking with to help them formulate an opinion about us. (3)

Socio linguistic profile of particular language justifies the relation been language and communities. The Rajbanshi language has also tried to justify the relation between Rajbanshi community and their language. Bista observes, "The speaker lived in the east Jhapa, Biratnagar, Sunsari districts of Nepal" (22).

3. Outline

This chapter deals with the sociolinguistic profile of Rajbanshi language. It consists of three sections. Section 3.1 presents the sociolinguistic variation in the Rajbanshi language. In section 3.2 I will discuss the geographical variation. In the same way, 3.2.1 the social variation has been presented. Similarly, 3.2.2 the polite and honorific strategies in the Rajbanshi language has seen well presented. In another subsection 3.2.3 I have discussed the kinship terms in the Rajbanshi language. The last section 3.3 is about the influences of other in Rajbanshi.

3.1 Sociolinguistic Variation in the Rajbanshi Language

Labov argues, ". . . studies of variation according to type of speaker focus on regional distinctions, sometime intermingled with social distinction" (313). The language differences due to different geographic origins of individual speakers are probably the most obvious instances of sociolinguistic variation. Although languages tend to be assimilated at a faster pace in these days of mass media, long distance communication, national language policy and regular contact try to reduce the variation.

Human languages usually provide with a speaker more than one-way of expressing from of expression is part of linguistic competence. This choice will depend on relation between speaker and addressee, the circumstances of the conversation as well as the intended; affect which also to a considerable degree on the social background of each speaker.

The Rajbanshi language is affected by local languages. It differs more or less from the local languages and their dialects. The Rajbanshi speakers are in contact with the speakers of many ethnic communities, for instances Maithili, Gangai Bhojpuri, etc. The Rajbanshi spoken in Morang and Sunsari is more influenced by Maithili and Nepali because of its close contact with the speakers of Nepali and Maithili language.

3.2 Geographical Variation

Labov observes, "Geographical variation can shed light on language change. In all cases regional studies distribution of the form in question for example various phonetic pronunciations of calf including [kae:f] [Ka:f]" (324).

It is logical that language is often geographically oriented due to various causes. The Rajbanshi language spoken in Jhapa although it is not similar in all places

and even within the same district, the dissimilarity is logically commented on phonology and morphology. The language spoken in Eastern Jhapa is slightly different from southeastern Morang.

Phonetically dissimilar words

Jhapa (Rajgadh) / a / verses	Morang (Karsiya) /aa/	Word
Dhakar	Dhaakar	Bull
Batu	Bakraa	He-goat
Bada	Barkaa	Elder
Agni	Aagni	Fire
Ha	Haa	Yes
Chhata	Chhumaa	Younger

The above table presents some of the phonological differences in the core and peripheral area. The differences are formed at the phonological level. The points of words are /aa/ is employed in peripheral area whereas /a/ in the core area.

Lexically dissimilar words:

Jhapa Rajbanshi	Morang Rajbanshi	Words
Hae	Chhi	Is
Jhalaa	Kinati	Hand bag
Sitaan	Siraan	Pillow
Baahaa	Bihau	Marriage
Waahaa	Waain	He
Chengri	Chhuri	Young girl
Daari	Dandi	Taraju
Daamaal	Sadak	Way
Gheraa	Ghailaa	Water pot
Pakaa	Kiraa	Insect
Nidur	Muso	Rat
Bakaa	Baukaa	Dumb
Nukni	Akni	Louse

3.2.1 Social Variation

Labov observes ". . . studies of social variation attempts are usually made to obtain adequate sample form the social spectrum of the urban community, including groups defined by ethnicity education age and sex as well as socio-economic status."

(318). Speaker is supposed to speak in an honorific language to address the people who are higher social status than the speaker for example father, mother and boss, etc.

2. Aajhi haat jaabaa habe: Aaja bazaar janu paryo

I go to market today.

3. Nibansiyar chhuuaa: Ta bajya randiko chhoro

Bastered son

According to the level of politeness pronoun, verb and noun endings differ and all the alternative expressions of words used. e.g.

A: Pronouns

According to the level of politeness, pronoun ending differs.

tui	you	blunt
haamaar	our	casual
taahamaar	your	polite/form.

B: Verbs

The following suffixes are attached to the end of verbs to show level of familiarity or respect.

aasan	kripakare	kripakare-aasan	please come
(Polite form)			
jaa wan	jaawan		go (casual)
Mari gilo			died (blunt)

C: Noun

The following prefixes are attached to the end of noun to show level of or respect.

ge	aai	mother (vocative)
----	-----	-------------------

go	baau	father (vocative)
dado	baje(dado)	Baje (vocative in polite form)

The following suffixes are used to the end of nouns to show the level of respect or formality.

go	bahnu+go = bahnugo	brother-in-law (respect)
ge	maamaa+ge = maamaage	maternal uncle (casual)

3.2.3 Kinship Terms in the Rajbanshi Language

This is a case study of applying the rules of honorific and politeness to the kinship in Rajbanshi language. The following table presents some examples of how the pronouns 'you' and 'your' are used by different family members in the Rajbanshi language.

Speaker	Addressee	Addressee's position in relation to speaker	Rajbanshi pronoun	Pronoun
Father	so	junior kilns	tui	you
grand father	grand son	junior	tui	you
uncle	Nephew	junior	tui	you
Husband	wife	equal	tui	you
wife	husband	equal	tui	you
friend	friend	equal	tui	you
father-in-law	son-in-law	equal	taamaaha	you
son-in-law	father-in-law	equal	taamaaha	you
son	father	senior	tui	you
slave	boss	senior	maalik	you
mother-in-law	daughter-in-law	junior	tui	you
daughter	mother	senior	tui	you
Teacher	students	junior	taamaahalaa	you

Here, are some examples of how the verbs are used while addressing to the family members.

Father-in-law	kripakare khaan	please! eat (respective way)
Son-in-law to father-in-law	aasan	comes
Mother to daughter	jaa	go (normal)
Uncle to nephew	dekhislo	seen
Nephew to uncle	hetat jaaish	go down
Son to father	chuliaasel	arrive
Between friends	hae	is
Master to slave	khabaa	to eat (order)

3.3 The Influence of other Languages in Rajbanshi

The Rajbanshi Language has borrowed a number of words from different languages e.g. Nepali, Maithili and English. The influence of Nepali is higher than that of other languages. We can see Nepali language influences up the Rajbanshi language spoken in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari.

Examples of some words, which are influenced by Nepali language

Nepali	Rajbanshi	Words
Ghar	ghar	house
Dahi	dahi	curd
Kitab	kitab	book
Kalam	kalam	pen
Saalaa	saalaa	brother-in-law
Saali	Saali	sister-in-law
Maamaa	maamaa	maternal uncle
Ghew	gheyu	ghee
Sasuro	Sasur	Father-in-law
Aama	Aai	Mother
Pakhura	Pakhraa	Arm
Mantri	Mantri	Minister
Kaiyo	Kaako	Comb
Raajaa	Raajaa	King
Naam	Naam	Name

Some Rajbanshi words are similar with other Indo-Aryan language. Some

Rajbanshi words are closely related with the Maithili language.

Maithili	Rajbanshi	Word
Baau	Baau	Father
Lakhdi	Lakhdi	Firewood
Agni	Agni	Fire
Mritak	Mritak	Dead
Tauliya	Tauliya	Towel

The influence of English is also seen in the Rajbanshi language

English	Rajbanshi	Words
School	Iskul	School
Copy	Kaapi	Copy
Radio	Redi	Radio
Pants	Pent	Pants
Motor	Matar	Motor
Bus	Bas	Bus
Cycle	Saaikal	Cycle
Doctor	Daactar	Doctor
Master	Maaster	Master
Hospital	Haspataal	Hospital

The influence of other language depends on the topic of conversation, attitude of speakers, and of speaking and mode of conversation.

Chapter Four

A Sociolinguistic Survey

This survey is concentrated in the southeastern part of Jhapa and Morang district. The survey is related to the particular community or society. The main source of data collection was field work on the related community this sociolinguistic survey was prepared by utilizing different techniques, word list data collection of language, text recording and administering sociolinguistic questionnaires. This chapter presents the nature and source of data collection, sociolinguistic questionnaire, data presentation, data analysis result, map of survey area and the evaluation of language maintenance and the evaluation of language maintenance and shift.

4. Outline

This chapter deals with the sociolinguistic survey of the Rajbanshi language. It consists of nine sections. In section 4.1 I will discuss the nature and source of data collection. Section 4.2 presents the classification of data. In subsection 4.2.1 I will present the Respondent's sex. In the same way, 4.2.2 I will present respondent's age. The sub section 4.2.3 is about respondent's education. The sub section 4.2.4 shows the respondent's profession. In 4.3 I will discuss word list. In 4.4 I will discuss about regional variation. In 4.5 I will discuss about the recorded text. The next section 4.6 is about the presentation of sociolinguistic, questionnaires. Section 4.7 deals about data collection. In the same way 4.7.1 is about recorded language data and 4.7.2 is about language attitude data. The sub section 4.7.3 presents the word list. In sub section 4.7.4 I will discuss recorded text. In 4.8 I will focus data and result. The last section 4.9 is about language maintenance and language shift.

4.1 Nature and Source of Data Collection

Rada Rodajicic observes, "data bases on people's situation is scientifically imprecise and will never give you more than rather cloudy view of what is reality going on" (184).

The data collected for the present survey were both oral and written in nature. The data were collected from the Rajbanshi communities of the southeastern part of Jhapa and Morang district I made an attempt to include the data from different age group, sex, education status, and economic level, etc. Three village development committees of southeastern Jhapa have been chosen for the sample study from core and peripheral area.

1. Jantachowk (Rajgadh VDC ward no. 4)

Population approximately-	1000
Number of households -	110
Percent of Rajbanshi household-	100%

2. Bokrajhari (Rajgadh VDC word no. 1)

Population approximately-	900
Number of households-	90
percentage of Rajbanshi household-	70%

3. Daangibari (Pathariya VDC word no. 3)

population approximately-	1100
Number of households-	70
Percentage of Rajbanshi household-	100%

4. Bagaan (Pathariya VDC ward no. 5)
Population approximately- 850
Number of households- 65
Percentage of Rajbanshi household- 70%
5. Karsiya (Sorabhag VDC ward no. 3)
Population approximately- 300
Number of households- 35
Percentage of Rajbanshi household- 100%
6. Harakpur- 9 Sorabhag VDC word no. 1)
Population approximately- 150
Number of households- 20
Percentage of Rajbanshi households- 100%

Map-2: Map of the survey area

4.2 Classification of data

4.2.1 The Respondent's sex

Table No.: 4 Presents the sex of respondents

Respondents	Male	Female	Total
100	52	48	100

The table shows that out of the hundred respondents, fifty-two were male and forty-eight female who were directly participated the survey. In addition, the survey includes both the male and female respondents so that the attitudes of male and female could be obtained.

4.2.2 Respondent's Age

Table No.: 5 Presents the age of the respondents

Age of respondents	No. of person
15-25	37
25-35	30
35-45	16
45-55	11
55-65	4
65-75	1
75-85	1
Total	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents thirty-seven are below twenty-five, thirty one above 25 and sixteen were below 35. There is only one respondent above the age of seventy-five. Thus, the majority of respondents are fifteen to thirty five.

4.2.3 Respondent's Education

Table No.: 6 Education status of the respondents.

Respondents education status	No of students
Illiterate	30
Literate	22
Primary	25
Secondary	11
S.L.C.	6
Intermediate	3
B.A.	2
Above	1
Total	100

It shows that out of hundred respondents thirty of them are illiterate. Whereas, twentytwo are literate. Only few respondents' qualification is above school leaving certificate.

4.2.4 Respondent's Profession

Table No.: 7 Profession of the respondents.

Respondents' profession	Number of respondents
Farmer	70
Labour	10
Student	10
Business man	2
Teacher	5
NGO job holder	3
Total	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents seventy percent of Rajbanshi are farmers, ten are labours, ten are students, and two were businessmen. Three are involved in teaching and only two were jobless sick people. The diversity in the profession may show different attitudes towards the use of their language.

4.3 Word List

Two hundred words were collected from the survey areas. Six VDCs of Jhapa and Morang were chosen as the field of this survey. The wordlist was collected from speakers who were long term residents of the areas. The words elicited were a collection of the most general words. In some cases a classification of word is made in parenthesis where the sense of a word is not clear. In the case of variants and synonyms each was discussed and a decision was made as to which form into include in the word list.

The word list consisted of different parts of speech-noun, pronoun, adjective, verb and adverb, etc. In the case of verb two forms were elicited. One of them was the third person masculine form the simple past tense (e.g. he came/waa-aasel/ and the second form was the first person singular informal imperative/e.g. aasa batha/'please sit.' In the case of pronouns the first person, second person and the third person were elicited. For the first person plural inclusive pronoun, a sentence was used.

(Blair 27) Pier Giglioui argues:

Once the words were elicited from a set of native speakers, they were then checked with a second set of speakers, the words were compared to find out to what extent the language spoken in the two areas was different phonetically. The reason for this is that sociolinguistic "choices," may inform the hearer about the speaker's social and regional origin as well as about the nature of social situation at hand about shift in the topic of the conversation and so forth.

4.4 The Regional Variation

Regional variation is seen in the Rajbanshi language. The words listed in the following table justify this statement.

Core area	Peripheral area	Word
Dhakar	Dhaakar	Bull
Baati	Khuri	Bowl
Uhaaye	Aye	He
Jaltin	Goltin	Pail
Raasta	Degar	Road
Hudar	Huti	Other place
Ha	Haye	Is
Batu	Bakra	he-goat
Ura	Udaa	That

The above table shows the regional variation in the core area and the peripheral area. The residents of Rajgadh, Jhapa and Chakchaki, Jhapa represented the core area whereas the speakers from Harldibari and Chandragadhi is considered the peripheral area of survey. Despite the fact that variation is not great, we can easily predict the speaker's regional rather than his/her social position by means of this word list.

4.5 Recorded Texts

A text was recorded for-event focused poetry. The recorded text on: "wife fled away" is a poetry based on narrative style one love song "Hamar bhadu keman ache" was recorded as supplementary material. The sample of recorded text is presented in Appendix- '3'.

4.6 Sociolinguistics Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a set of questions on a topic or group of topics designed to be answered by respondents. The important source of data collection is sociolinguistic questionnaire. The questionnaire is prepared in such a way that could cover different aspects of language and attitude, patterns of contact travel, language opinions, bilingualism and so on. The questionnaires for the written and oral interview were prepared. Questionnaires were asked in Rajbanshi language and in Nepali as well.

4.7 Data Presentation

This section presents data, which were collected from the survey area. These data were related to language use, language attitude word lists and text recordings for language creativity and its distinctive feature.

4.7.1 Recorded Language Data

In order to find out the language use situation in the targeted areas, the respondents were asked oral and written questions. Some of the important questionnaires related to the topic what language the respondents use with their family members and in different situation sin their communities. A synopsis of the respondents to the situations is presented in the following table.

Table No.: 8 A synopsis of the language use

A synopsis of the written questionnaires and language use				
Situation	Rajbanshi	Nepalese	Both	Others
Grand father/mother				
Jokes				
Stories				
Political discussion				
Speaking to women				
Singing				
Counting				
Social activities				
Script				
Government official at work				
Getting a job				
Mother tongue				
Religious and cultural activities				
Local market				
Talking with friends and relatives				
Second language				
Unknown person				
Total	5	7	5	

This table shows the bilingual, monolingual situation of Rajbanshi language.

They use Nepali language as a means of communication and they use both Nepali and Rajbanshi language although they use their own language among their families and communities.

4.7.2 Language Attitudes Data

This sub-section discusses language attitude of Rajbanshi speakers towards their own language and towards other language in their communities. Fishman and Agheyisi observe, "so far as it is very difficult to measure, even though its measurement are based on two theoretical standpoints. The mentalist and behaviorist position" (1380. According to mentalistic concept, attitudes are a mental and natural state of readiness. They can be inferred from subject's introspection. "The behaviourist attitudes regard as a dependent variable and it can be determined statistically by observing actual behavior in social situations" (332).

Table No.: 9 What language should your children be taught at school?

Respondents	Rajbanshi	Nepali	Both
100	55	5	40

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents fifty-five of them want their children to be taught in Rajbanshi language were as only forty percent of them want both language as the medium of instruction at school and only five percent of them accepts present situation. This indicates that Rajbanshis have language loyalty towards their language. On the other hand, they realize the importance of Nepali language because it is the lingua franca in Nepal.

Table No.: 10 World radio/local f. m. station broadcast the news in your language?

Respondent	Should	Should not	I don't know	Total
100	80	7	13	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents, eighty percent demand to broadcast program in the Rajbanshi language whereas thirteen percent respondents are unwilling to answers.

Table No.: 11 What language do you like most?

Respondents	Rajbanshi	Nepali	Both	Total
100	70	10	20	100

The table shows that out of hundred respondents seventy of them like Rajbanshi language the most, twenty percentage like both languages and only ten percent like the Nepali language. Naturally they show their preference for their language compared to Nepali.

Table No.: 12 What language do you speak at home?

Respondents	Rajbanshi	Nepali	Both	Total
100	60	15	25	100

The table shows that sixty percent of the respondents speak Rajbanshi language, whereas twenty five percent speak both languages and only fifteen percent of them speak Nepali. This indicates that they have retained their mother tongue. Beside this indicates inter generational transmission of Rajbanshi language.

Table No.: 13 Do you switch to other languages with your language?

Respondents	Yes	No	Total
100	70	30	100

The table shows that but of one hundred respondents seventy percent of them switch to other languages and thirty percent of them don't agree switching to other

language. Despite the fact that they speak in Rajbanshi language in Major domains of use, they switch to Nepali language because of its practical importance.

Table No.: 14 In which school will you send your children if there are two schools Rajbanshi medium other is Nepali medium?

Choose in study	Rajbanshi medium	Nepali medium	Total
100	70	30	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents seventy percent of them wanted to send their children to Rajbanshi medium schools and only thirty percent of them are ready to send their children to the Nepali medium school.

Table No.: 15 What would be the situation of language if Rajbanshi youth married with other language speakers?

Respondents	Good	Bad	Total
100	10	90	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents ninety percent of them reject inter cast marriage and Rajbanshis are aware that if they marry non-Rajbanshis, the language will face attrition. This is one of the reasons of the language loss.

Table No.: 16 Should government think about Rajbanshi Language?

Respondents	Should think	Should not think	Other	Total
100	100	0	0	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents, sixty percent of them answered 'good' whereas forty of them answer necessary. This also indicates the universal tendency that children learn better in their mother tongue than in other languages.

Table No.: 17 If a school established for Rajbanshi language teaching, would you offer your help?

Respondents	Offer help	Don't help	Others	Total
100	100	0	0	100

The table shows that out of one hundred respondents all of them would be ready to help if the Rajbanshi language teaching school was established. This shows that Rajbanshi language speakers prefer Rajbanshi language as a medium of instruction of school.

Table No.: 18 What will be the situation of Rajbanshi language in ten years?

Respondents	Good	Bad
100	20	80

The table shows the challenge of Rajbanshi language in the future. Most of the Rajbanshi are worried about the future of their language. This shows that the potential future of Rajbanshi language is uncertain because of widespread use of Nepali language even in Rajbanshi speaking areas.

Table No.: 19 Can other tribes understand it?

Respondents	Yes	No
100	5	95

This table clearly indicates that the people of other tribes can not understand this language. Therefore this language is restricted within the Rajbanshi language and its use has shrunk.

Table No.: 20 Where were you born?

Respondents	Jhapa	Morang	Others
100	60	35	5

This table shows that out of hundred sixty percent of the people are born in Jhapa and thirty-five percent in Morang whereas only five percent of the people are born out of them. They claim that they are the native people of Jhapa and Morang.

Table No.: 21 What do you call your language?

Respondents	Rajbanshi	Other name
100	100	0

All the respondents have used the some name "Rajbanshi" to address their language. They have no other name for their language except the Rajbanshi language. Therefore, this is the autoglotonym of this language.

Table No.: 22 What do your neighbour call your language?

Respondents	Rajbanshi	Other name
100	100	0

The table shows the single name of Rajbanshi language. All the neighbours address their language as using word "Rajbanshi." Thus, this heteroglotonym is similar to be autoglotonym.

Table No.: 23 Have you seen the books, magazines and article published in Rajbanshi?

Respondents	Yes	No
100	70	30

The table shows the standardizing situation of Rajbanshi language. Only seventy percent of them have seen the magazines and books, which is written in Rajbanshi language. Although the respondents' opinion is exactly divided into two parts, there is a little standardization of language. This language has no orthography and written tradition.

Table No.: 24 Do you think that your language has changed?

Respondents	Yes	No
100	90	10

The table shows language maintains problem of Rajbanshi language. Ninety percent respondents realize some changes in their language mainly, in using words and its pronunciation.

Table No.: 25 Are there any organizations for the language development?

Respondents	Yes	No
100	70	30

The table shows the language development effort of Rajbanshi language. Seventy percent of them have knowledge about Nepal Rajbanshi organization and its work, which is a little bit related with language development.

Table No.: 26 Are there any religious books in Rajbanshi language?

Respondents	Yes	No
100	0	100

The table shows the lack of religious books in Rajbanshi language. It proves folk culture of Rajbanshi language. Here has not Rajbanshi script developed till the time. The religious books written in the Rajbanshi language are not found.

4.7.3 Words List Data

The words are grouped alternatively by using slants within the phoneme bar phonetically found to be dissimilar in the survey. Other group of words is arranged in such a way that it presents two areas of the language which is found to be influenced by Nepali and loan from Nepali in the language. A sample of this area is presented below.

Phonetic dissimilar words

Core area	Peripheral area	Word
Kunaah	Kunthe	Where
Pakhi	Paakhi	Bird
Aaguti	Aagaati	Front
Batha	Basa	Sit
Kahale	Kohol	Said
Hayeni	Naahaye	Isn't it
Uda	Udaa	that
Aachhaa	Bhaala	Good
Jagaaye	Jagote	Early

Nepali influence loan words

Core area	Peripheral area	Word
Raajaa	Raajaa	King
Ghiyu	Ghiyu	Ghee
Dudha	Dudha	Milk
Naama	Naama	Name
Gaalaa	Gaal	Cheek
Saalaa	Saalaa	Brother-in-law
Jholaa	Jhalaa	Bag
Ghans	Ghans	Grass
Bandel	Bandel	Boar
Mantri	Mantri	Minister

4.7.4 Recorded Text Data

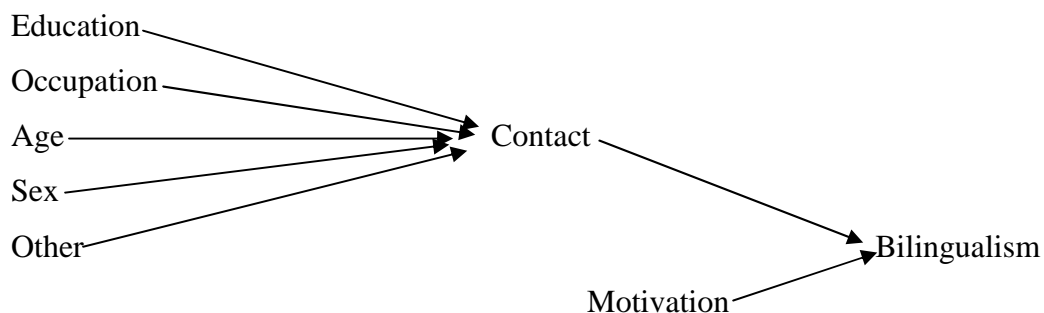
The recorded text data provides naturalistic material. In actual fact the inhabitants in the format knowing that they are being recorded are usually fairly short lived. The main purpose of this subsection is to examine whether or not the language is rich enough to describe different mood and situations. The recorded poetry text on "wife fled away" focus on even based on narration. One love song as supplementary material to the folktale includes country life, love and passion etc. The recorded poetry and folksong are included in Appendix "3".

4.8 Data Analysis and Results

Radojici observes,

"If the results are inconclusive, that is result in itself may be the phenomenon is not as you foresaw or is not measurable in the way you thought. Try to find possible reasons why you got what you did specially identifying whether there was any problem with the experimental design." (165)

The data collected through various methods are presented in section 4.7. On the basis these data I found out that the Rajbanshi language has been spoken as a distinct language. Since the time immemorial, it is used within the Rajbanshi communities of southeastern Terai region of Nepal. They use this language for various purposes such as taking with family members and friends, singing songs, religious instruction at home and having social discussion with Rajbanshi speakers. Most of the Rajbanshi love their language; however they can not speak their own language. Blair observed, "most often individual speakers are bilingual precisely because of community needs and pressure" (52). The degree of contact with the second language is correlated with such variables education status, occupation, age and sex. The frequency of contact with mother-tongue speakers of the second language and so, forth. The following illustration shows the relationship between those factors.



Source: Frank Blair Survey on a shoestring a manual for small scale language surveys.

Respondents to the sociolinguistic questionnaire reported that only some of the older generations speak the language as their linguistic identity. However, most of the Rajbanshi wanted to preserve their language and demand to establish the Rajbanshi language medium school. All the Rajbanshi realized that it must be saved at any cost for future generations.

The overall data show that they respondent that Nepali language should be used as a national language, which is widely used by many people. When asked, "What would be the situation of language if the Rajbanshi youth marry with other language speakers?" Most of them did not like to marry out of their language communities. Most of the respondents showed their loyalty towards their language and agree to preserve and to promote it.

All of them stated that they would buy literature if it available in their language. For this they face two problems. The publication of the Rajbanshi literature has been started with the establishment of Nepal Indigenous Organization in Nepal. The respondents also reported that there are some phonetic differences in Morang, Jhapa and Chandragadhi Jhapa, dialects of Rajbanshi because of geographical and regional distance.

The word list data shows that Rajbanshi language is influenced by Nepali and other local languages e.g. Maithili, Aashmi, Bengali, etc. In the survey including the core and peripheral area, a total of two hundred ten words were collected.

The peripheral area has eleven words influenced by Nepali where in core area only six words have been influenced. The approximate percentage of Nepali influence is 2.85% in the core area.

5.23% Nepali loan word in the core area

4.76% English influenced in core area

4.76% Other languages influenced.

Next, out of 200 words the core area has ten Nepali loan words whereas the peripheral area has twenty one Nepali loan words. The approximate calculation as follows:

6.66% Nepali loan words in the core area

10% Nepali words in the peripheral area

4.76% Other languages loan/influence words in the peripheral area.

On the basis of these native and Nepali loan words, we come to the conclusion that the peripheral area is more influenced by Nepali more than core area. The result is summarized in the following table.

Table No.: 27 Data analysis result

Area	Native words%	Nepali loan words%	Nepali influenced words%	English influence words%	Other language influence word	Total
Core area	80.97	6.66	2.85	76	4.76	100
Peripheral area	75.25	10	5.23	4.76	4.76	100

The table summarizes the influence of other languages in Rajbanshi language.

This shows the approximate percentage of pure Rajbanshi words used in core and peripheral area.

4.9 Language Maintenance and Language Shift

The language shift is more rapid than the language maintenance. There may come a time when the Rajbanshis will answer "we can not speak Rajbanshi, we forgot. The tendency of switching over to Nepali is based on following instances as explained by fisherman. In the Nepali context, the instances referred to be.

- a) The vernacularization of Nepali through governmental educational and cultural activities.
- b) The adoption of English, Sanskrit and Nepali as languages of elite for wider communication throughout the country.
- c) The growing displacement of imported language of wider communication and the parallel vernacularization of governmental technical, educational and cultural effort in the country (299).

As fisherman has observed,

As a result, not only the verbal repertoires of communities and networks that experience the greatest socio-cultural change, the most likely to be alerted, but the repertoires who gain most in economic, political or other socio-cultural status are most likely to be adopted or copied by others who see opportunities. For desirable changes in their own status by so doing (301). Because of these inevitable factors a possible language loss can not be ruled out. Special provisions by way of promotional schemes are sought to be provided in order to encourage literary activity, translations and publications on the part of the government because the situations that has prevailed in the country.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

I have incorporated the major findings of the research in the conclusion.

5.1 Main Findings

The main aim of this sociolinguistic survey has been to find out the answer of basic question regarding the Rajbanshi and their language. Major findings are mentioned below:

5.1.1 Socio-cultural Status

The Rajbanshis have their unique cultural rite and rituals, and household composition. They have their own festivals, food habit and lifestyle. It makes them distinct from other ethnic groups. The recorded text on folk song and folk tale also prove this very fact. It was also supported by the opinion expressed by the respondents of this survey.

5.1.2 Vocabulary

One of the great remarkable achievements of this research is a collection of words slumbering two hundred and ten. It is the list of words that focuses on the regional variation in pronunciation. This proves the uniqueness and richness of language. Comparison of word list shows the variation found in the peripheral and core area where language is spoken. The comparison of word list shows that the core area and peripheral area are different in terms of lexicon. Naturally, vocabulary elicited from the peripheral area exhibits grater influences form Nepali language than that from the core area.

5.1.3 Language Use

The vast majority use Rajbanshi more than Nepali in most domains, especially at home, with village friends, at local market, at religious activities and while expressing their deepest feeling. Further more, the majority of them claimed that Rajbanshi is the most efficient language for communication. They use Rajbanshi language in both private and public affairs with their community. It is used mostly in core area than in the peripheral area. Most of the respondents are interested in using Rajbanshi language. While using their mother tongue they feel happy. More than seventy percent of them speak their language as a mother tongue in the core area.

Rajbanshi language is spoken in the central southeastern terai region of Nepal, with largest concentrations in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari.

5.1.4 Dialect

The Rajbanshi language has high percentage of cognates between core and peripheral area. There are 90% words similar in both core and peripheral area. There is not a strict dialect variation in this sense. The remaining ten percent words are influenced and borrowed by Nepali language in peripheral area. Although regional variations have been noticed in the Rajbanshi language due to social and geographical factors, the social dialects are not found. The speakers from different areas can easily understand each other without any problem. Therefore the variation is mutually intelligible. They think that they speak the same language regardless of differences found mostly at the lexical level. In some cases other factors affect the language such as lack of language studies, education and communication gap social interaction with different types of community and so on.

5.1.5 Language Vitality and Language Shift

The poetry and love song shows the richness of language. The result of data analysis shows most of them use mother tongue inside their community in both private and public affairs, such as talking with friends, performing religious activities etc. Moreover the Rajbanshi language has in own vocabulary to express different situations, sound, sights, smells and feelings that shows the vitality of language. It has own native lexicons, which are fundamentals of any independent language. From this entire significant feature the Rajbanshi language is still healthy and vital. The average mother tongue retention is more than seventy percent in Rajbanshi community.

Rich and educated Rajbanshi prefer Nepali as their home language as a reaction to high living standard. Government function forced them to use Nepali language. All this socio-economic, political and educational factors force them to shift from Rajbanshi to Nepali. The code switching and code mixing is high in peripheral area than the core area speaking language. Code switching and code mixing is more common with the young generation than the old. It shows the process of language shift among Rajbanshi Speakers.

5.1.6 Education, Literacy and Standardization

There is no education system in Rajbanshi language. Most of the respondents demand primary education in their mother tongue and Rajbanshi language speaking teacher for their students, at least during the primary school will be established. Moreover, they are ready to contribute if the Rajbanshi language medium school is established. They are willing to send their children in Rajbanshi medium school. But the possibility of establishing a Rajbanshi medium school is very low.

There are no literary classes in Rajbanshi language, neither in the formal nor in the informal education. They don't like to reveal the secrecy of their language to other language speakers. They use Nepali or English language and literature in the process of literacy. The literacy percentage is low in Rajbanshi community, which create problem to run literacy programs.

The first attempt to standardize the Rajbanshi language was to write dictionary by Yogendra Prasad Yadav in 2005 Nepal Rajbanshi Association in other Rajbanshi welfare organizations are going to publish magazine in Rajbanshi language. They have no Rajbanshi linguistic society, linguist tried to standardize it by publishing academic journal. The sample of recorded text of morphemes, dictionary and numerals has been presented in Appendix- '1' & '2'.

5.1.7 Migration and Inter Marriage

They don't prefer inter-cast marriage and migration, but they often travel to their community according to their social needs. There is contact with the speakers of different ethnic communities, mainly Maithili, Gangaai, Bengali languages of Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan family like Nepali. Jhapa is the migrated land but most of the Rajbanshis claimed them as indigenous people. Migrations of other language speakers affect the Rajbanshi language and their lifestyle.

5.1.8 Potential Future of the Rajbanshi Language

All the respondents show positive attitudes towards their language. Moreover, they are ready to contribute to development of their language. It shows the good potential future of Rajbanshi language. But all the educated young Rajbanshi's activities show the negative future of their language. They give positive opinion about language but they hardly speak their language. The process of language switching is

continuous with the development of socio economic and educational status. Potential future of Rajbanshi language is good in the core area than in the peripheral area.

5.1.9 Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Most of the Rajbanshis are bilingual. Except before school age children and old women, all of them can understand Nepali language. The process of bilingualism starts with the starting of school. Monolingual situation is going to end. There is no multilingual situation in Rajbanshi community.

5.1.10 Kinship Terms and Honorifics

The Rajbanshi pronouns and kinship terms are almost similar to Bengali language. They have three types of politeness strategies.

5.2 Recommendation

Nepal is identified as a unique land of multicultural identities and ethnicity. The Nepalese uniqueness rests on their multiple mother tongues, rites and ritual, life patterns cultural and beliefs. Taking those facts into consideration, it is essential to preserve and promote the multicultural heritage, which we inherited from our forefathers from ancient time.

To preserve and develop the Rajbanshi language, government should provide primary education in the mother tongue for Rajbanshi communities. Literary should be promoted in the language by developing basic reading and teaching materials. Grammars, dictionaries, and literature should be produced in Rajbanshi language. The news in the Rajbanshi language should be broadcast on the radios, FM stations and the Television. The use of Rajbanshi language should be extended socially, culturally in mass media. Nationwide cultural exhibition should be held to other communities for the information of Rajbanshi.

Necessary steps should be taken for codification, regularization, simplification, elaboration, implementation and evolution of the language. More comprehensive linguistic and sociolinguistic research should be undertaken on the Rajbanshi language. It is necessary to make new national language policy for the development of endangered language.

The above mentioned measures can develop and standardize the Rajbanshi language in order to promote its use in social interaction, education mass media and publications. If the democratic government has a consistent policy in language, planning in Nepal for the development of endangered languages. It will automatically develop.

Bibliography

- Arderson, May M. 1977. *The Festivals of Nepal*. Rupa and Co. Ruskin House, Museum Street.
- Berlie, John. 1985. *The Rajbanshi: A Complex Ethnic Group of South East Nepal and Bengal*. Regmi Research Centre, Kathmandu.
- Bhattarai, H. P. 1994. *Cultural Strategies of the Rajbanshi for Adaptation: A Cultural-Ecological Case Study of Rajgadh Village in Jhapa District*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology. An Unpublished Thesis, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.
- Bista, D.B. 1972. *The People of Nepal* (Second Edition). Ratna Pustak Bhandr, Kathmandu.
- Bista, D.B. 2030. *Sabai Jaat Ko Phulbri*. Sajha Prakashan, Kathmandu.
- Bose, N.K. 1973. *Some Indian Tribes* 1st ed. National Book Trust, New Delhi.
- Caplan, Lionel. 1970. *Land and social Change in East Nepal: A Study of Hindu-Tribal Relation*. University of California Press, Berkely.
- Central Bureau of Statistics, 1987. *Population Monograph of Nepal*. Sajha Prakashan Ko Chhapakhana, Kathmandu.
- Dahal D.R. 1978. *Indian Ethnic Group in the Nepal Terai*. CNAS, T.U., Kathmandu.
- Dalton, E.T. 1872. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*. Reprinted, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi.

- Department of Information, HMG, Nepal. 2031. *Mechi Dekhi Mahakali*. Vol. 1.
- Dhungana, D. K. 2052. Rajbanshi Jatiko Jiban Ra Baibahik Parampara, "Himalaya Times."
- Dr. Vatsyayan. 1992. *Anthropology: Social and Cultural*. Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition Deriyaganj, New Delhi.
- Dutta, N. K. 1969. *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*. Vol. 2, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta.
- Francies, B. H. 1971. *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*. Munjusri Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Gait, S. E. 1962. *A History of Assam*. 1st ed. LBS Publication, Guahati, Assam.
- Gautam, R. and et al. 1994. *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*. Vol. 11, Faith India, New Delhi.
- Haimendorf, C., Ban F. 1968. *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon*. Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Haviland, W. A. 1990. *Cultural Anthropology* (6th Edition). Harcourt Brace Javanovich College Publishers, New York.
- Hodgson, H. B. 1990. *On the Koch, Bodo and Dhimal Tribes: Miscellaneous Essays Relating to India Subjects*. Vol. 1, Trubner and Company, London.
- Majumdar, D.N. and T.N. Madan. 1986. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Asian Publishing House, Bombay.

- Panta, S.D. 2041. *Jhapako Adhibashi*. Lub Press, Baneshwar, Kathmandu.
- Proffenberger, Mark. 1980. *Pattern of Change in Nepal Himalaya*. The Macmillan Company of India Ltd.
- Rajbanshi, D.S. (ms.). *Rajbanshi Bhaasaakaa Kryaapad Tatha Dhaatuharu* (The Verb Phrase and Roots of Rajbanshi Language).
- Regmi, R.R. 1991. *The Dhimals-Miraculous Migrants of Himal: An Anthropological Study of Nepalese Ethnic Group*.
- Risely, H.H. 1982. *The Tribes and Customs of Bengal*. Vol. 1-2, Bengal Secretarial Press, Calcutta.
- Robertson, Ian. 1980. *Sociology*. Worth Publisher Iric, New York.
- Sanyal, C. C. 1965. *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal*. The Asiatic Society, Calcutta.
- Shaha, R. 1975. *An Introduction to Nepal*. Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Sharma H.B. and Subedi, T.R. (ed.) 1994. *Nepal District Profile*. National Research Associates Kathmandu.
- Sharma, S. 2045. *Nepal Ra Yeska Nibashi*. (Introducing Statement) Kathmandu, HMG, The Ministry of Transport and Communication, Mudran Tatha Prakashan Bibhag, 2nd Edition.
- Upadhyaya, D. 1998. *Rajbanshi Ek Parichaya*. Bhadrapur: Rajbanshi Bhasa Prachar Samiti.

Yadav, Y. P. 2005. *The Documentation of Rajbanshi Language*: Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur.