

**Enclosure II**  
**Final Project Report**

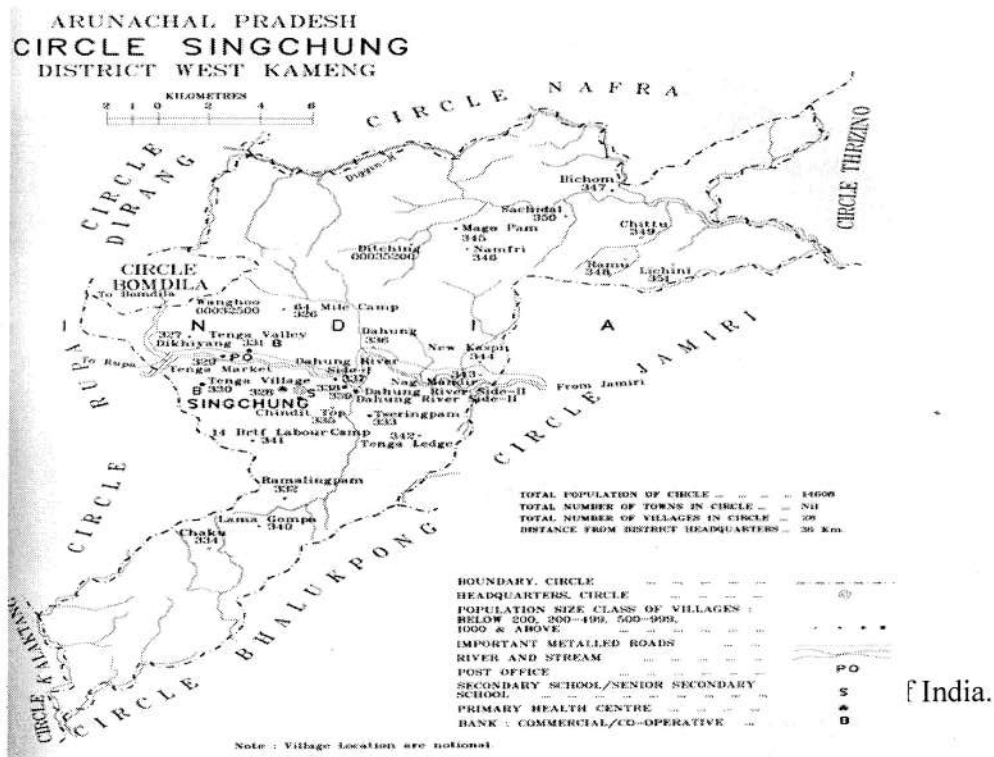
***Language Contact and Convergence: Study of Bugun (Khowa) in West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh.***

Research areas: Singchung, Ramalingam, Mangopam, Namfrey, Wanghoo, Bichom, Tenga Valley and Kaspi.

Methods used: Questionnaires and pictures, voice recorder, Praat software to analyse sound files

**1.0 Introduction:**

Bugun (Khowa) is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is an unclassified Tibeto-Burman language. Van Driem (2001) groups Bugun (Khowa) with Mey (Sherdukpen), Lishpa and Puroik (Sulung) referring to them as the *Kho-Bwa* cluster. The Bugun villages which are found in the Circle Sinchung of West Kameng are: Singchung, Wanghoo, Bichom, Mangopam, Namfrey and others. The map of Circle Sinchung below shows the Bugun villages. The immediate neighbours of the Buguns are the Akas (Hrusso), Sherdukpens, Monpas and Mizis.



The Bugun tribe consists of the following sub-tribes: Hakhuang T<sup>1</sup>ua, Brai Tua, Haying Tua, Khunjun Tua, Haji Tua and Dechhan Tua. As per the Census Report of 2011 the population of the Bugun tribe is 1432. But a population survey conducted by the All Bugun Youth Association (ABYA) in 2010 shows the population at 1720. The low population count of the Bugun is due to death of thousands of natives in the 1950's due to an epidemic. Most of the death occurred because of lack of proper medical aid and ignorance. Table 1 below shows the population of the Bugun tribe from 1960's as per the Census Report. From Table 1 we observe that there is a gradual rise in the population of the community.

**Table: 1**

| Year       | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Population | 659  | 703  | 625  | 1046 | 1384 | 1432 |

Table 1 shows the population of the Buguns from 1960's onwards

### 1.1 Lingua-franca and Medium of Instruction

Arunachal Pradesh has 26 major tribes and numerous sub-tribes. The languages of these tribes and sub-tribes are *mutually unintelligible*. To facilitate communication Arunachal Pradesh has adopted Hindi as their *lingua franca*. Hindi is used in almost every domain: administration, business, educational institutions, market place, public discourse, amongst peers and the like. The impact of the lingua franca has affected the local languages and dialects adversely. There is a gradual decline of *active use* of the mother tongue amongst the various major tribes and sub-tribes. The Bugun tribe is one of the major tribes as per the the Scheduled Tribes List of 1958 (vide order 1958, C.O 22) with the notification date 06.09.1950. With a population of mere 1432 and with the younger generation consciously shifting to Hindi it has made the survival of Bugun language difficult.

Geographically, West Kameng is a steep mountainous region. But Tenga Valley which is one of the prominent area of West Kameng is in the Bugun area is comparatively flat and plain. This land which belongs to the Bugun people has been taken over by the Indian Army for

<sup>1</sup> Most Bugun speakers tend to use the voiceless and voiced plosives indiscriminately. For instance some speakers would pronounce 'tua' as 'dua' which means 'clan'.

strategic reasons. The entire Tenga Valley after the Chinese aggression has become the base of various regiments of the Indian Army. The defense personnel posted in this area come from different parts of India. This has made Tenga valley cosmopolitan. The native Buguns, both literate and illiterate, old and young alike feel the compulsion to communicate with these outsiders in Hindi.

Arunachal Government has English and Hindi as their official languages. Official work in government offices, educational institutions are conducted in both the languages but Hindi is predominant. In government schools English is the medium of instruction but instructions in the classroom are mostly in Hindi. Though English is the medium of education the locals associates themselves with Hindi which for them is a prestige language. Hindi according to them helps in their upward mobility. Only those who attend public schools are well versed in English. One of the informants Jimbu Murpew told us that though Hindi is spoken by the natives not everyone can write in the Devnagiri script. To write Hindi they use the Roman script.

Besides Hindi, the Bugun people are well versed in Nepali. Arunachal Pradesh has a huge migrant Nepali population. The migrant Nepali population makes around 60-70 % of the population in Bugun villages and hamlets like: Singchung and Ramaling. Though most of the Nepalis work as daily wage labourers in the Bugun fields; the native Buguns communicate with the Nepalis in Nepali or Hindi. There is no resistance from the Bugun community in picking up the Nepali language. On the other hand the Nepalis resist speaking in Bugun. Due to the close contact of both the communities there are quite a number of marriages between the the Buguns and the Nepalis. The children of these marriages may have a Bugun surname but they adopt Nepali as their first language. Before the formation of the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1972, this state was the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and Assamese was the *common link* language. Medium of instruction in schools was Assamese. In our fieldwork we have observed Buguns above the age of 50 can communicate in Assamese. From our observation we find the Bugun tribe is multilingual as most of them are well versed in Hindi, Nepali, Assamese and to certain extent in English. In §2.0 we have shown how these languages have impacted on almost every domain; the impact of Hindi being the most.

### **1.3 Conscious shift to Hindi**

A language with a low population count and a consciously shifting to a dominant language is bound to be endangered. UNESCO Report defines '*definitely endangered*' as those languages where the the younger population of a community does not know their native language and neither are they trying to learn it. UNESCO Report lists Bugun under the status of *definitely endangered*. In order to assess and understand the level of endangerment of the Bugun language we started our field work in the Bugun area for a two year period from 2012 to 2014. The main focus of the ICSSR sponsored project titled '*Language Contact and Convergence: Study of Bugun (Khowa) of West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh*' was to understand the impact of sociolinguistics on an endangered language. The field work conducted during the two years showed that school going children between 3 to 5 absolutely do not speak or know their language and neither the parents try to speak the native tongue with their children at home. When the parents were interviewed most of them justified their shift to Hindi as follows:

- i. Parents said they adopted Hindi at home primarily to admit their children in good schools, especially in Kendriya Vidyalayas. In school admission interviews children are expected to speak good Hindi. So they have to speak to their children in Hindi and not Bugun at home. Parents argue that children can learn Bugun when they grow up at a later stage but at the initial stage Hindi must be taught.
- ii. Hindi is the prestige language and good knowledge of Hindi is a sure sign of upward mobility. So learning Hindi is crucial as it makes one economically self- sufficient.

### **2.0 The Phenomenon of Code-mixing and Code-switching**

Janet Holmes (2013) defines Code-switching as "moving from one code (language, dialect, or style) to another during speech for a number of reasons such, to signal solidarity, to reflect one's ethnic identity, to show off, to hide some information from a third party, to achieve better explanation of a certain concept, to converge or reduce social distance with the hearer, to diverge or increase social distance or to impress and persuade the audience (metaphorical code-switching)". Bernard Spolsky (1998) in his 'Sociolinguistics' states "Code-switches can take place between or even within sentences, involving phrases or words or even parts of words. The

switching of words is the beginning of borrowing, which occurs when the new word becomes more or less integrated into the second language”.

## 2.1 Code switching and mixing in Bugun

Code-mixing, Code-switching and Lexical Borrowings are a common phenomenon in a community which uses more than one language in their everyday life for communication within themselves as well as other communities present near them. This phenomenon is quite rampant in the Bugun areas because of the amalgamation of huge population of working and trading communities like the Nepali, Hindi speaking community settled for trade purposes, Assamese people working in government offices and the like.

**Table 2 shows lexical borrowings into Bugun**

| <b>Bugun</b>       | <b>English Gloss</b>             | <b>Word Source</b>                |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| phatek chap        | Prison                           | Phatek: Assamese                  |
| So                 | Tea                              | Sah: Assamese                     |
| billahi / tomato   | Tomato                           | Bilahi: Assamese, Tomato: English |
| Malo               | Radish                           | Mula: Assamese                    |
| Jaleo              | Chilli                           | Jolokia: Assamese                 |
| jati               | Tribe                            | Assamese                          |
| hazarai (wiam sua) | Thousand                         | Hazar: Pan Indian                 |
| gari               | Vehicle                          | Gari: Pan Indian                  |
| Devar              | Husband's younger brother        | Hindi                             |
| Devrani            | Husband's younger brother's wife | Hindi                             |
| Nannad             | Husband's sister                 | Hindi                             |
| Sala               | Wife's brother                   | Hindi                             |
| Sali               | Wife's sister                    | Hindi                             |
| Sasur              | Father-in-law                    | Hindi                             |
| khandan            | Clan                             | Hindi                             |
| machchi            | Fish                             | Hindi                             |
| Juis               | Juice or fruit beer              | Juice : English                   |
| sentaal            | Central                          | English                           |
| meat               | Meat                             | English                           |
| pregment           | Pregnant                         | English                           |
| Baba               | Father                           | Nepali                            |
| Sasuri             | Mother-in-law                    | Nepali                            |

Table 2 shows some of the lexical words borrowed from Assamese, Hindi, English and Nepali. The first column has the borrowed items, the second column provides the English gloss and the third column the word source. Words borrowed from Assamese have undergone some morpho-phonological changes. Bugun has the cardinal *wiam za* ‘thousand’ in their vocabulary. But the pan Indian word *hazar* is used by them. Bugun has a rich repertoire of kinship terms. Nowadays they are heard using quite a number of Hindi kinship terms. This is the influence of the *saas-bahu* serials from the popular Indian television channels. Most of the words borrowed from English are pronounced differently. The list has two Nepali kinship term indicating that the Nepali vocabulary has found its way into Bugun.

## 2.2 Recordings

In order to assess the depth to which the impact of the lingua franca has affected the day to day activities of the community; the research investigator made recordings in various domains to find which language was frequently used.

### 2.2.1 Recording of the Bugun creation story in Bugun

The excerpt cited here is from the recording the chanting of the *phabi* i.e., the local priest, about the birth of Grandfather Phunphulwa. Here the priest chants in Bugun to venerate the Bugun ancestor who they consider to be their God.

|                         |             |                       |                 |              |                   |             |                 |                |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| <i>gə<sup>h</sup>ia</i> | <i>giog</i> | <i>p<sup>h</sup>a</i> | <i>hamaunia</i> | <i>nio</i>   | <i>hamau nana</i> | <i>nia</i>  | <i>boi-siyo</i> | <i>royesia</i> |             |
| we                      | birth       | for                   | sky-earth       | new          | sky               | and         | earth           | love-affair    | to do       |
| <i>kə<sup>h</sup>ia</i> | <i>giog</i> | <i>hamaunia</i>       | <i>siosa</i>    | <i>habia</i> | <i>hanai</i>      | <i>giog</i> | <i>jongma</i>   | <i>phongma</i> | <i>giog</i> |
| we                      | birth       | earth- sky            | together        | moon         | sun               | birth       | sky-mother      | sky-father     | birth       |

‘Our birth in the earth happened when the new sky fell in love with the earth. We were born when the sky and the earth came together and gave birth to the moon and the sun, the sky father and the sky mother then gave birth to Grandfather Phunphulwa (Bugun ancestor)’.

In Bugun religious festivals like *Chhatsua* and other rituals are carried out by the *phabi* who conduct the proceedings in ‘priest language’ which is not understood by most people except



maybe by the head priest's family or other subordinate priests or the elderly people of the tribe. In this ritual, stories of how the ancestors descended, how the tribe came into existence is narrated and the question of human creation is discussed. The younger generation tends to distance themselves from this ritual. As most of them cannot or do not communicate in Bugun; for them to follow the 'priest language' and appreciate the traditional ritual is difficult. Besides these festivals is a long drawn event which continues for a number of days and is expensive.

### **2.2.2. Speech of Gaon Burrah 'Village Headman' in a Cultural event in Hindi**

The second recording was done in a public meeting where the Gaon Burrah 'village headman' of Sinchung was addressing the public during the opening of a football match. The Gaon Burrah gives his speech entirely in Hindi.

...isiliye chota-mota tofa bhi dete rehte aur Chief Guest bhi. Isiliye mana nehi karta aur isko us din mera jo khel kud me bhi, games me bhi ho Chief Guest ban gaya hai aur dobara phir mera Cultural Seketry nai isiliye requestkiya, phir kal raat me bhi chief guest ban ke wo ek bar nehi do bar

'....that's why I present small gifts and also accept offer to be the Chief Guest of various occasions. That's why I do not refuse when I am asked to grace any occasion and the other day I was also the Chief Guest in place of the Cultural Secretary who was unable to be present during games competition. I was requested not once but again and again to be the Chief Guest just like last night also...'

In public meetings and gatherings Hindi is used by the locals. After the address, the football match starts and the players were heard using Hindi for instance amongst themselves. For instance *Dawa ko pass karo* 'pass the ball to Dawa' etc. The Bugun people are football enthusiasts. In Sinchung village football matches are organized annually. Teams from different parts of West Kameng participate. Here players and spectators alike are often heard shouting and cheering in Hindi.

### 2.2.3 Children in the playground Hindi and English

Graze for football is seen amongst children too. While playing football in the village street the children takes names of international football players. Throughout their game they converse in Hindi.

**1<sup>st</sup> child:** Kushal Ronaldo hai hum Maxi team, maxi team ka skipper

**2<sup>nd</sup> child:** ham inion hai inion

Everyone laughs

**1<sup>st</sup> child:** Moncheshri union team ka bolo na

**3<sup>rd</sup> child:** Moncheshri team ka idhar gaya.

**Other children:** Dawa ka hand huwa, Dawa pakra bolta hai, hand huwa hand huwa, Dawa nehi mara, hand mat karo, hand hand.

The reading of the above recording is somewhat like this

‘Kushal is Ronaldo, the skipper of Maxi team. We are Union, we are.’

Everyone laughs.

‘Say we are Manchester Union’. ‘Manchester team has gone there’.

‘Dawa used his hand’

‘Dawa says he had caught the ball’.

‘It was the hand, the hand’.

‘Dawa did not hit’. ‘Don’t use the hand, hand, hand’

This recording was done when a bunch of children below the age of ten were playing football in the street. These children do not know English and neither do they speak in Bugun even though they are Bugun children. The interesting thing is that that they are familiar with soccer star Ronaldo and teams like the Mexican team and Manchester United.



## 2.3 Observations

1. The first recording is a conscious one as a priest is asked to recite the creation story told by them as part of Bugun religious ritual commonly followed.
2. The second recording is also a conscious one when the speaker is aware that he is being recorded and filmed. The choice of language preferred by the speaker to convey his message to his fellow Bugun speakers clearly shows how comfortable he is with the adapted language i.e. Hindi.
3. The third recording however is an unconscious one as the children are unaware that they are being recorded and they talk among themselves in the most natural way they speak or are spoken to at home.

Janet Holmes (2013) 'An Introduction to Sociolinguistics' states some Economic, Social and Political factors for language shift which are: i) The dominant language is associated with social status and prestige. ii) Obtaining work is the obvious economic reason for learning another language. And iii) the pressure of institutional domains such as schools and the media.

During several trips to schools in the Bugun locality it was found most of the children from the age of five to sixteen mostly conversed in Hindi, the language of communication in those parts. When the children were asked why they conversed in Hindi with their Bugun friends, they replied rather shyly that they were more comfortable speaking in Hindi than Bugun. The senior students also mentioned that they could not understand clearly the Bugun language (variety) which the children/people of other Bugun villages spoke; for example the children of Singchung could not understand the children of Namfrey when they spoke in their native tongue and often made fun of their accent.

When talking with neighbours and acquaintances the division of age groups, qualification and social standing came into the forefront. It was observed that people with higher social standing, be it in the area of occupation and finance or education tended to code switch and code mix more. Even house wives with bare minimum qualification or no qualification tended to use words in English and Hindi in their day to day conversation even though the names of those words were present in their own language, it is probably because they have heard their menfolk

or the school going children use those words. Words like *apple*, *kiwi*, *grapes juis* (juice), *tomato*, *meat*, *machchi* ‘fish’, *pregment* ‘pregnant’, *nursing mother*, *same*, *kubi* ‘cauliflower/cabbage’ etc are often used in their daily conversation.

In a market place it was noticed that the people who generally do not use Bugun within themselves spoke in Bugun when they had to alienate some outsiders or speak in code. While talking to strangers the people generally start conversation with the words ‘*Bugun Hain*’?, which means ‘Are you Bugun’?. If they turn out to be Bugun speakers then they begin conversing in their language with the usual code mixture. Interestingly it was noted that when asking for directions the women folk used Nepali, probably assuming whoever the person travelling on foot to be a Nepali speaker.

### 3.0 Statistical Reports and Facts

#### 3.1 Findings of the first Report in Singchung and Ramaling villages

The field study done by the Research Investigator shows that the percentage of code-mixing done depends on the exposure of the individual to different places and to various other language speakers, for example young people will have much more code mixing as compared to the elders because of more exposure in educational institutes. The older people who code mix and code switch are those who have to go out for business or service. It is also seen that parents do not communicate with their children (below 10 years of age) in Bugun, probably because of the fact that they have to be admitted in schools, which has Hindi as its medium of teaching. Table 3 shows the fluency levels of the speakers according to their age groups.

**Table 3**

| SI No | Age group    | No of people | Fluent | Resort to code mixing/ switching | Understand Bugun | Don't understand Bugun |
|-------|--------------|--------------|--------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1.    | 81 and above | 3            | 3      |                                  |                  |                        |
| 2.    | 71 — 80      | 1            | 1      |                                  |                  |                        |
| 3.    | 61 — 70      | 1            | 1      |                                  |                  |                        |

|     |         |    |    |    |   |   |
|-----|---------|----|----|----|---|---|
| 4.  | 51 — 60 | 4  | 4  |    |   |   |
| 5.  | 41 — 50 | 14 | 10 | 3  |   |   |
| 6.  | 31 — 40 | 7  | 4  | 3  |   |   |
| 7.  | 21 — 30 | 15 | 4  | 11 |   |   |
| 8.  | 17 — 20 | 9  | 1  | 8  |   |   |
| 9.  | 13 — 16 | 14 | 5  | 4  | 5 |   |
| 10. | 9 — 12  | 10 | 1  | 4  | 5 |   |
| 11. | 3 — 5   | 5  | 1  | 1  |   | 3 |
|     |         |    |    |    |   |   |

**Table 3 shows the number of people interviewed as per their age group and degree of fluency.**

In Table 3 we observe that the degree of fluency is reduced with age. The older people from the age group of 51 to 81 are fluent whereas; the fluency gets reduced when it comes to speakers below the age 16 and children below 5 do not understand their native language at all. Speakers below the age of 51 resort to code switching. Since the data given in Table 3 does not adequately represent the problem, therefore Table 4 is added to show the degree of mixing according to age groups.

**Table 4**

| SL no | Age group    | No of people | Maximum mixing | Less mixing | Rare mixing | No mixing | Do not speak Bugun |
|-------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1.    | 81 and above | 3            |                |             | 2           | 1         |                    |
| 2.    | 71 — 80      | 1            |                | 1           |             |           |                    |
| 3.    | 61 — 70      | 1            |                | 1           |             |           |                    |
| 4.    | 51 — 60      | 4            |                | 1           | 3           |           |                    |
| 5.    | 41 — 50      | 14           | 1              | 5           | 6           | 2         |                    |
| 6.    | 31 — 40      | 7            | 2              | 5           |             |           |                    |

|     |         |    |   |    |  |  |   |
|-----|---------|----|---|----|--|--|---|
| 7.  | 21 — 30 | 15 | 5 | 10 |  |  |   |
| 8.  | 17 — 20 | 9  | 5 | 4  |  |  |   |
| 9.  | 13 — 16 | 14 | 3 | 6  |  |  | 5 |
| 10. | 9 — 12  | 10 | 2 | 3  |  |  | 5 |
| 11. | 3 — 5   | 5  | 1 | 1  |  |  | 3 |
|     |         | 83 |   |    |  |  |   |

**Table 4 shows the degree of code-mixing according to the age groups.**

In Table 4 we observe that code-mixing is present in every age group. Out of total 83 people belonging to all the age group only 3 people completely do not code-mix. It is because these people reside in places which do not have much external influence. 13 speakers between the age of 16 to 3 do not at all speak in Bugun, so there is no question of code-mixing in their case.

### **3.1.1 Observations**

From Table 3 and Table 4 we find that:

- i. code-mixing has mostly become spontaneous and habitual, and
- ii. code-switching is normal, showing comfort level of the speaker with the local variety of Hindi that has emerged from this regular contact

### **3.2 Findings of the second and third Report**

A total of 93 native Bugun speakers were interviewed of whom 48 were males and 45 females. The people interviewed were above the age of 15.

**Table 5**

| <b>Names of villages</b> | <b>No of males</b> | <b>No of females</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Mangopam                 | 9                  | 10                   | 19           |
| Namfrey                  | 8                  | 7                    | 15           |
| Wanghoo                  | 5                  | 3                    | 8            |
| Bichom                   | 26                 | 25                   | 51           |
| Grand Total              | 48                 | 45                   | 93           |

**Table 5 shows the number of people interviewed gender wise**

In the lines of Abbi (2007), 'Where Have All the Speakers Gone? A Sociolinguistic Study of the Great Andamanese, Indian Linguistics' following measurement has been followed to show the level of code-mixing done by the speakers ranging from: No mixture to Not Knowing the Mother Tongue Scales of measuring code mixing and code switching.

- i. No mixture (NM)
- ii. Rare mixture (RM)
- iii. Little mixture (LM)
- iv. Constant mixture (CM)
- v. Know but do not converse in the Mother Tongue (KMT)
- vi. Do not know the Mother Tongue (DK)

In the case of Bugun the above given scales of measurement indicates the following situations:

1. 'No Mixture' indicated speakers who usually could not speak the contact language: in this case Hindi.
2. Rare mixture indicated that speakers used some loan words from the Contact language which are not present in their Mother Tongue.
3. Little mixture indicates the situation when speakers had to resort to the Contact language to explain situations or incidents which could not be properly explained in their Mother Tongue.
4. Constant mixture indicated the situation where speakers used their Mother Tongue and the Contact language simultaneously in such a way that it seemed part for their vocabulary. A case of unconscious code mixing and switching.
5. In some cases the Native speakers, especially young people or people who lived outside their native places tend not to use their language even when they well understood the language.
6. People who did not at all understand or know the language.

The above mentioned scales were used by the researcher to measure the extent of language contact and convergence on the basis of the following Markers:

1. Distance/proximity of a place from the nearest Contact area.

From the research it was found out that the villages Mangopam and Namfrey which were at quite a distance from the nearest town or any other contact area were less influenced by other dominant languages than the villages of Wanghoo and Bichom which were nearer to the urban areas.

Unlike the latter villages, the children of Mangopam and Namfrey acquired the Hindi language quite late. There is no doubt that even these two villages were not completely uninfluenced but the distance definitely slowed the time of acquiring other languages. Furthermore only a few people could understand Nepali, the second dominant language in that area.

The following figure shows the level of code mixing in the four Bugun villages

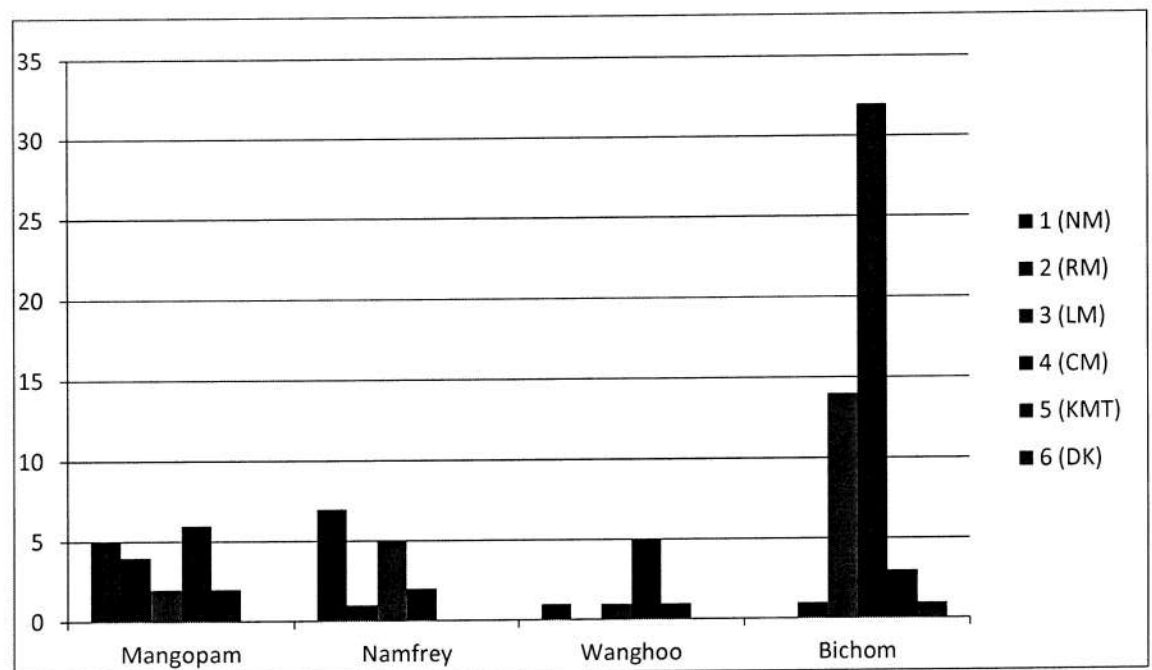


Fig. 1

In the above figure the purple bar is higher as compared to the other bars in both Wanghoo and Bichom, whereas in Mangopam even though the violet bar is higher it does not make a huge difference compared to the other bars. Therefore we can say that code mixing is highest in the places which are nearest to the contact area.

2. On the basis of age groups.

On an average it was seen that the age group from 15 to 45 recorded the highest case of code mixing. The reason behind this is that the speakers of these age groups are exposed due to their education and mobility.

3. Education and prestige.

As mentioned earlier the dominant language Hindi is considered to be the prestige language and the language of the educated.

4. Sex

The research also shows that in comparison to men, women tended to resort to lesser code mixing. Most likely it was because women remained within their native community more often than men, moreover there were less exposed to other communities than their menfolk.

### **Interview with the non-native speakers**

Altogether fourteen non-native speakers, mostly from Singchung were interviewed. These people had been in that area for a very long period. Most of them answered that they did know the Bugun language but did not use them as the natives speakers themselves conversed with them in Hindi or in Nepali. Some of them could also sing in Bugun. Moreover they also admitted that the Hindi used by them was not the standard Hindi of North India.

### **The Final Report**

A total of 195 people from different Bugun villages were interviewed on the basis of age groups, sex, social status etc. The outcome was as follows

- a. Out of 195 only 23 people were monolingual i.e. active Bugun speakers.
- b. 53 people spoke only Hindi as a first language.
- c. 119 people were found to be multi-lingual.

The Pie-Chart shows the percent of speakers of the Bugun community



## Speakers

■ only Bugun ■ only Hindi ■ Multilingual

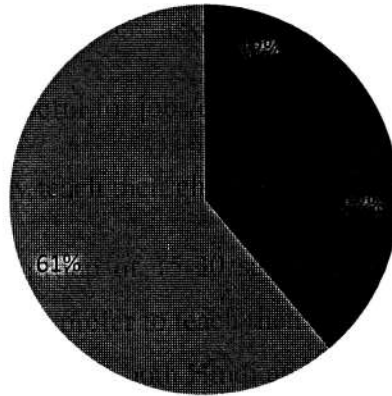


Figure 2

In the same survey different people were asked questions like:

- i) Which language was more useful for jobs/offices?
- ii) Which language would they teach their children?

The people between the age group of 15-30 said English was the language which would be useful for jobs while they would prefer to teach their children Hindi. The people between the age group of 35-50 said they would teach both Hindi and Bugun to their children at home while they believed that Hindi was useful for office and job purposes.

The table below shows language preference by different age groups:

Table 4

| SL No | Age groups   | English | Hindi | Bugun |
|-------|--------------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1.    | 60 and above | NA      | Yes   | Yes   |
| 2.    | 50-60        | NA      | Yes   | Yes   |
| 3.    | 35-50        | Yes     | Yes   | Yes   |

|    |       |     |     |              |
|----|-------|-----|-----|--------------|
| 4. | 15-35 | Yes | Yes | Not required |
|----|-------|-----|-----|--------------|

The graph below shows the percentage of active Bugun speakers of different age-groups

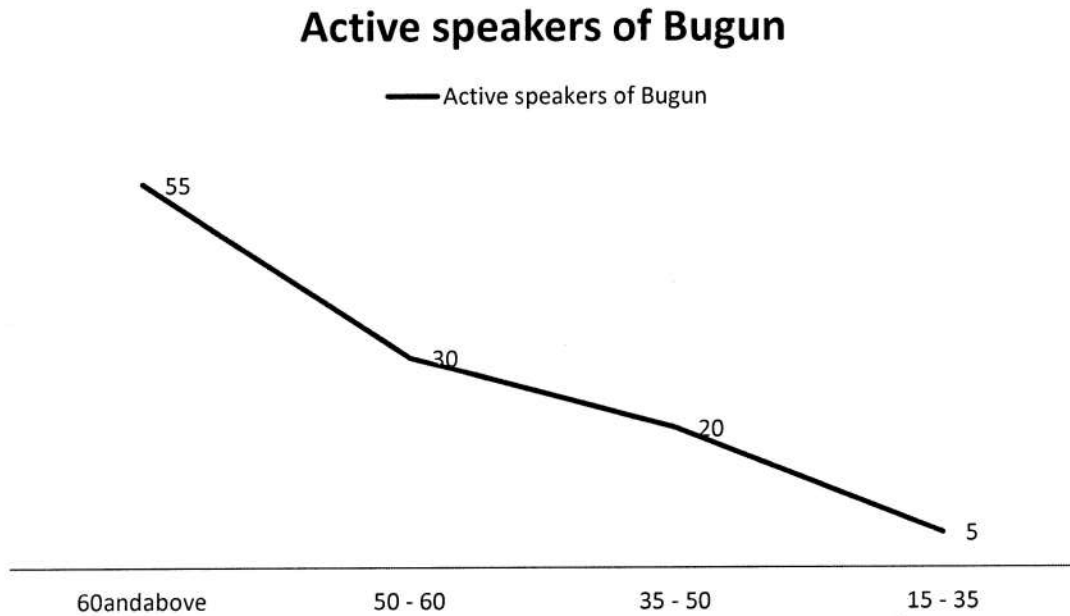


Figure 3

#### 4.0 Conclusions

The future of any least populated languages lie in the efforts of the speakers themselves. Are the older generations teaching the younger generations their native language? How much effort is being put to reinstall the language which is on the verge of disappearing at a fast rate? UNESCO has listed Bugun (Khowa) under the 'definitely endangered' category which means that the native language is not being taught by the parents within their homes. The prevention of the spread of dominant language is inevitable as it is parallel to economic and social development of the community and the area as a whole but in the meanwhile loss of language and culture would also result in loss of identity, which the community might be facing in the coming years. From the field work it has been found out that after the death of the older generation above the age-group of 60 – 65, many Bugun words will completely disappear. Even now old people cannot

explain certain words used in rituals or laws which were once very common among them because of memory loss on their part. The middle aged population are interested in the preservation of their language and identity and do contribute on their part as much as they can, but even then they cannot explain those issues to the younger generation. The problem is that 80% of the younger generations do not have the time or the realization that their native language is undergoing a rapid change and will continue in the future also if they do not make an effort.

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