CHAPTER 1:  INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Nepal is the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. It lies to the South of China, and in the remaining three directions — it is surrounded by India. The whole of Nepal is divided into seventy five districts, one of which is Saptari district. It has one hundred and fifteen village Panchayats and a Population 3,70,125. Saptari district has a common boundary with Bihar in the South. To the north is Udayapur district, to the East is Kosi Zone and to the West is Sirha district of Nepal.

It is entirely plain. The climate is hot throughout the year with a short winter from November to January. There is heavy rainfall from July to October.

The main food produce of the district are Paddy and Wheat. The flat land and plentiful of water, is suitable for cultivation of Paddy. The main occupation of the people in this district is cultivation, most of them are farmers, owning their own land. Their main source of income is from the land. But to-day due to the spread of education, many are getting education and get employment in Government services. Comparatively speaking this district has a higher percentage of education than the other districts of Nepal.
The people of this district belong to many tribes. The yadavs are in majority, then come the Tharus, Brahmins, Rajputs, Kayasthas, etc.

Most of the people live in the rural areas in small houses with thatched roofs and mud walls. But to-day owing to the changes in Economic trends, big modern houses are coming up slowly, and most people prefer to build houses in the city and live there for the education of their children as well as for other facilities.

The women of the higher castes of this district still live under the 'Parda-system'. Most of these are housewives, unlike other women these women - the Brahmins, Rajputs and Kayasths - do not go to work in the fields. These women are dressed traditionally in a petticoat, sari and blouse and men wear dhoti ganji and kurta. The main food of these people is rice since it is grown in plentiful. The majority of the people are non-vegetarian. To eat fish and meat is not prohibited for them.

Maithili is the second major language in Nepal. It is spoken by about 21 million people in Bihar State of North India and the Tarai of Nepal. It is one of the modern Indo-Aryan languages of South Asia and is commonly referred to in linguistics literature as one of the three dialects of 'Bihari' (Grierson 1909).
Maithili as a language has been mentioned even in 'Aain-i-Akbari'. However, according to Grierson (1906) the first European Scholar to make a note of its existence was H.T. Colebrooke (1801). Its different stages of development are called as 'desila ba-ana', 'Abahatha', Tirhutya, and Tirhuti. In Nepal Maithili is spoken in the districts of Saptari, Sirha, Dhanusa, Mahotari, Sarlahi, Morang, Sunsari, Jhapa, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur.

Maithili bears a lot of similarity to Bhojpuri, Magahi, Bengali and Nepali.

The name of the language Maithili is given after the name of the place Mithila. Mithila was known as Videha in the Ancient period. It is said in the scriptures that Mithila was named after Mithi, a ruler of the Videha.

Historically Maithili can be divided into three periods.

(1) Early Maithili:

The early period of Maithili literature is in the form of lyrics. The available works are the 'Carya: padā' and the Vidyapati's works such as 'Kirtilata:' and 'Kirtipatā:ka:'.

(2) Middle Maithili:

This begins with the language of Jyotiriswar's 'Vārparatnā:karā' written in the 14th Century. The Middle
Maithili literature was dominated by the drama such as Umapati's 'Pañjābhaṭhaṛaṇa'. After the decay of Sanskrit drama, these 'Kirtaniya naiṭak' forms were very popular. (We also have a particular type of dramas which are known 'Kirtaniya naiṭak'.) The language of 'Krispa jañmi' of Manbodha represents Middle Maithili of 18th Century.

(3) **Modern Maithili:**

(The language and literature from the 18th Century onwards). The modern period of Maithili is influenced by Western trend of literature, especially in Prose. Prose fiction and journalism are its greatest achievements. The name of the journals are 'Swadesh' and Mithila-Mihir'.

The relation of Nepal and Mithila have been very intimate from remote times. Even in the ancient times a part of Mithila lay within the boundaries of Nepal. Today also some of the Maithili speaking districts lie in Nepal as mentioned above. Janakpur, her ancient capital, and 'simrāgw' the capital of Maharaja Nanyadeva (1097) the founder of the first historical dynasty of Mithila, lay within the territory of Nepal.

It is said that for a number of years the direct route to plains from Nepal was through Mithila alone. That is why under the stress of Muslim invaders, Mithila rulers could seek refuge in Nepal so easily. Maharaj
Harisimhdeb (1296-1323 A.D.) is said to have gone there when he was overthrown by the Musalmans in 1323 and established himself at or near Bhaktapur (Bhatgaon). His arrival produced a tremendous change in the history of Nepal and in her relations with the people of Mithila. Some scholars are of the opinion that this great historical event did not occur at all but the Maithili, 'Panji' and Nepalese 'Vansabali agrees in supporting this account.

After the death of Harisimhdeb, his sons Mansimhdeb and Shyamsimhdeb ruled over Nepal for about Twenty seven years. The daughter of Shyamsimhdeb was married to a boy from a family of an exruler of Nepal.

Maithili therefore gained decided ascendency in the Nepalese Court. It was loved and respected in all distinguished quarters.

Several eminent Pandits from Mithila were invited to Nepalese courts. Jayasthitimalla (1380-1398) called Kirtinath Upadhaya and Raghunath Jha, to make laws about houses, hands, castes, and dead bodies.

Jagat jyotirmalla (1618-1633) invited Bansmani Jha. Indeed the downfall of the cınbar Dynasty and the occupation of Mithila by muslim invaders induced a large number of Maithili scholars to seek shelter and patronage in Nepal for quite a long time. The result of all
this intercourse was that Maithili became the most dignified of all languages in Nepal. At Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Kathmandu it established itself firmly.

Ranjitmalla was the last ruler of Mall̄ period. Most of the Maithili dramas written under him. Their names are 'krishṇa carit' (1736), Ṩaśṭhaven (1754), Indrajayantkaśm (1764), Madancarit, Ramcarit, Mālecarit, Ruṣkmaṇiparinya.

Jagatjyotirmalla was also dramatist. He wrote three dramas as 'Mudit kublaśwa (1628), Ṩargouribibah (1629), and 'kunjbihāri'. Nepal has published one journal in Maithili named 'phuḷpaṭi'.

The dialectal survey of Maithili was never taken up seriously. So the dialectal divisions described in the works of the scholars who studied Maithili are mostly influential. Subhadra Jha (1958) has a list of seven dialects such as the standard, souther, eastern, Chikachiki, Western, Jolahi and the Central colloquial. Although the gives a geographical account of each of these dialects, it is evident that some of these are social dialects rather than being geographical. This is especially true for Jolahi and the standard dialect. However neither social nor geographical divisions are
explored fully by him. Bhola Nath Jha (1970) has divided six branches of Maithili on the district like Darbhanga, Deoghar, Muzaffarpur, Munger, Purnia and Bhagalpur. He tries to justify this classification by giving a few example of those dialects. The specimens are far from convincing. Such as Dinbandhu Jha (1950), Ramanath Jha (1955), and Govind Jha (1968) did not even care to describe any dialectal divisions.

Maithili has been described by S.K. Chaterjee (1926) as a Central Magadhan language. Maithili is very closely related to Bengali, Magahi, Oriya, and Assamese. Maithili has link between the Eastern Magadhi tongues and the Western dialects such as Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Bagheli and Chattisgarhi.

Maithili is written in three scripts Tirhuta, Kaythi, and Devnagri. Once Tirhuta was most popular script. It was mainly used by the Brahmins, Kayasta and other higher castes.

Kaythi, on the other hand, was used by the business communities and was also popular among the semiliterates and among the women who wrote their house-hold accounts in this script.

Devnagri is the script of Maithili in which almost all the books and journals appear now-a-days.
Maithili is taught from Intermediate level to the Post-graduate (M.A.) level in the Tribhuban University, Kathmandu (Nepal), and it has the bright prospect to develop in the future.

The present study is based on the spoken form of Maithili of Saptari district of Nepal. It varies from the Maithili of Bihar as well as other parts of India. No linguist has made an inquiry in the spoken form of Maithili language of Saptari. The author of the present work visited the Saptari district three times and collected the linguistic materials like 4000 Vocabulary, 400 Sentences, 8 Texts and several nominal and verbal paradigms.

All these materials are well recorded on a Portable tape recorder taking four informants from the four different parts of the district. All four informants are the native speakers that is Basant Das, Kapleswar Yadav, Juman Mukhiya, Udit Narain Mishra, and the author of the present work is also a native speaker of Maithili spoken at Saptari. The informants taken for the present study belong to different castes.

The present study of Maithili spoken at Saptari district is based on language given by the informants.
The purpose of the study is to analyze the spoken form of Maithili of Saptari especially in the form of Phonology and Morphology.

Some special words of Maithili language of Saptari which have been given below:

aḍkhiːs  jealousy
kajriː  moss
koːhaː  a kind of small earthen pot
takkhaː  hallow in the wall
paṭriː  small plank
palthaː  a position of sitting with the feet crossed under the buttocks.
thayr  a place where cattle has tied an embankment
chahar  paper
basahaː  paper
joːliː  grass net
goːnair  mat
goːhaːliː  cow shed
ghamarthan  useless talk
meːkcoː  hindrance
moːglaːn  India
raːs  string

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