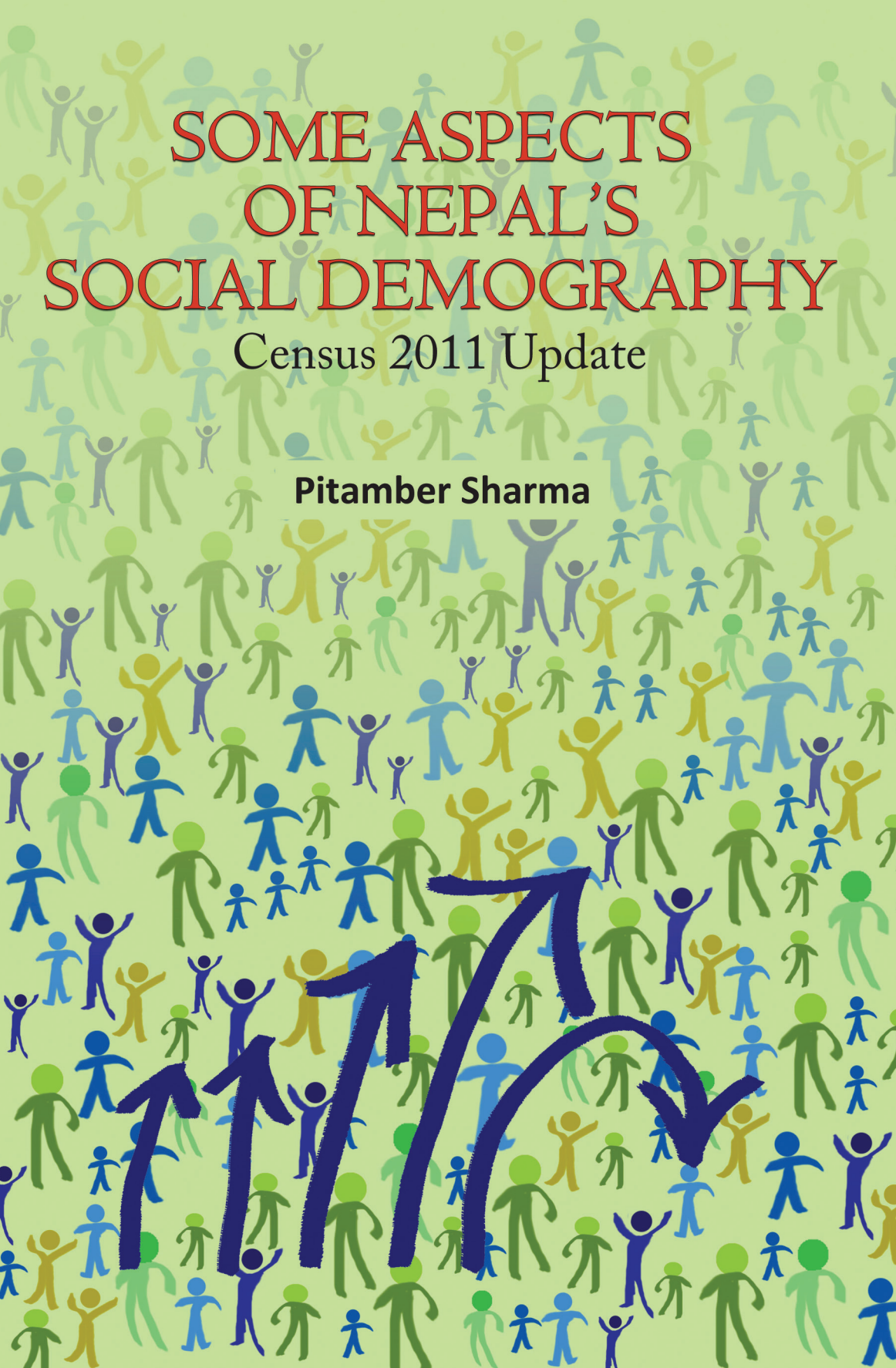


SOME ASPECTS OF NEPAL'S SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHY

Census 2011 Update

Pitamber Sharma



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Introduction

This book attempts to provide an update on some aspects of Nepal's social demography (CBS 2003, Gurung 1998, 2003), namely the growth dynamics of population, and changes in ethnic, linguistic as well as religious composition and literacy on the basis of available national-level data from the 2011 census (CBS 2012). The census shows a historic decline in the growth rate of population, significant regional shifts in population, and also a phenomenal wave of medium-term migration abroad. Urbanisation rates have remained high. There have been additions of new ethnic and linguistic groups. The literacy situation has improved but significant regional and caste/ethnic inequalities persist. The diversity of Nepal is more pronounced, and the mobility of the population is more striking. The book concludes with some observations on the implications of Nepal's changing social demography.¹

1 A version of this book appeared in *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 17:2, pp. 333-372, December 2012.

1. Demographic and Spatial Transition²

The 2011 census results re-emphasise Nepal's continued demographic and spatial transition. The demographic transition became evident in the lowest decennial rate of population growth of 1.35% in the 2001-11 inter-censal period compared to over 2% in all censuses since 1971 (Table 1). This growth rate was even lower than the one projected by the Central Bureau of Statistics under the most optimistic fast-fertility decline scenario, according to which the 2011 population was expected to reach 28.177 million (CBS/MOHP 2003).³ Since people away from home for over six months are not counted in the household, many have surmised the low growth to be an artefact of absentees abroad. Indeed, 1.921 million people, or 7.3% of the enumerated population, were reported as absentees abroad in the census. There was phenomenal out-migration of people in the inter-censal period which is also reflected in a much-reduced sex ratio of 94.2. If the rate of absentees had been the same as in the 2001 census, i.e., 3.24% of the enumerated population, about 1.06 million people would have been added to the 2011 population. This would have raised the annual growth rate to 1.74%, which would still have been lower than the 1991-2001 rate of 2.25%. All indications are that in spite of the number of absentees abroad, the decline in Nepal's population growth rate signifies a faster demographic transition than expected (Feeney et al 2001). Average household size in 2011 came down to 4.88 from 5.44 in 2001. The 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reported a total fertility rate (the average number of children that would be born alive to women in her reproductive years, i.e., 15-49 years of age) of 2.6, a significant decline compared to 4.1 reported by DHS in 2001.

The implications of the demographic transition are seen in the age composition of the population. The working-age population between

2 Unless otherwise stated all the data used in this study are derived from CBS (2012), CBS (2003), CBS (1995) and CBS (1987).

3 The underlying assumptions were zero net migration, a total fertility rate of 2.7, and crude death and birth rates per thousand population of 7.7 and 24 respectively (CBS/MOHP 2003).

Table 1. Population Growth Rate, 1952/54-2011

Census Year	Population (million)	Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	Sex Ratio
1952-54	8.257	-	96.8
1961	9.413	1.64	97.0
1971	11.556	2.05	101.4
1981	15.023	2.62	105.0
1991	18.491	2.08	99.5
2001	23.151	2.25	99.8
2011	26.494	1.35	94.2

ages 15 and 64 has risen steadily since 1991: from 54.1% of the total in 1991 to 59.8% in 2011 (Table 2). There has been a notable decline in the percentage of the 0-4 age population, from 14.7% of the total in 1991 to 9.7%. The dependency ratio, i.e., the ratio of population between the ages 0-14 and 65 years and above to the working-age population of 15-64 has declined steadily, from 84.7% in 1991 to 77.2% in 2001 and 67.2% in 2011.

This rise in the supply of labour poses a challenge in terms of creating gainful employment opportunities, particularly in a context where 30% of the currently economically active labour force remains underutilised (CBS 2008). But, it also opens up opportunities for taking advantage of the 'demographic dividend', a situation where the growth of the potential labour force is higher than the growth of the population dependent on them. A population dividend can also spur domestic demand even as the need to attend to the increasing old-age population in terms of health facilities and social safety net grows. The population aged 65 years and over was 5.3% of the total population in 2011 compared to 3.5% in 1991.

Table 2. Population by Age Group (%)

Age Group	1991	2001	2011
0-4	14.7	12.1	9.7
5-9	15.2	14.1	12.1
10-14	12.6	13.1	13.1
15-29	25.7	27.0	27.8
30-44	16.4	17.1	17.8
45-64	12.0	12.4	14.1
65+	3.5	4.2	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3. Population Distribution by Geographical Region

Region	Mountain			Hill			Tarai			Nepal	
Census Year	Population (million)	%	Density per sq km	Population (million)	%	Density per sq km	Population (million)	%	Density per sq km	Population (million)	Density per sq km
1952/54			5.349 million			64.8% 47/sq.km*				8.257	56
1961			5.991million			63.6% 53/sq.km *				9.413	64
1971	1.139	9.9	22			6.071	4.346	37.6	128	11.556	79
1981	1.303	8.7	25			7.163	6.557	43.6	193	15.023	102
1991	1.442	7.8	28			8.413	8.635	46.7	254	18.491	126
2001	1.688	7.3	33			10.251	11.212	48.4	330	23.151	157
2011	1.782	6.7	34			11.394	13.319	50.3	392	26.494	180

Source: CBS, 1987, 1995 and 2003.

Meanwhile, the spatial transition of the population is reflected in two processes. The first is regional, i.e., a continuing shift of the population from the hill/mountains to the Tarai. The 2011 census showed that Nepal is no longer a mountainous country in a demographic sense; over half the population now resides in the Tarai (Table 3). Since 2001, the density of the population in the Tarai has risen by 62 persons to the sq km compared to 21 in the hills and one in the mountains. In the inter-censal decade. Nearly 2.1 million people were added to the 20 Tarai districts in contrast to 1.1 million in the 39 hill districts and about 94,000 in the 16 mountain districts. But, population growth in the Tarai was also uneven. Nearly 80% of the Tarai population lives in the Eastern and Central Tarai. The redistribution of Nepal's population that began in the wake of malaria eradication in the 1950s and early 60s continues unabated.

Table 4. Urbanisation and Urban Growth in Nepal

Census Year	Urban Population (million)	Per Cent Urban	Urban Growth Rate	Two-city Index	Four-city Index
1952/54	0.238 (10)	2.9	—	2.53	1.25
1961	0.336 (16)	3.6	4.40	2.54	1.03
1971	0.462 (16)	4.0	3.23	2.55	1.04
1981	0.957 (23)	6.4	7.55	2.51	1.06
1991	1.696 (33)	9.2	5.89	3.26	1.24
2001	3.228 (58)	13.9	6.65	4.03	1.38
2011	4.524 (58)	17.1	3.43*	3.79	1.19

Source: CBS, 2003; World Bank, 2012.

* This does not include reclassification and addition of the proposed 41 new municipalities. If these were accounted the growth rate would be more than 5% per annum.

The second process of spatial demographic transition is the relatively rapid rate of urbanisation. The 2011 census showed that 17.1% of Nepal's population lives in the 58 designated municipalities which are, by definition, urban areas (Table 4). This figure was 13.9% in 2001. Nepal is the fastest urbanising country in South Asia and when the 41 new municipalities designated in 2011 are taken into account Nepal's urban population is expected to reach 24%, with an urban growth rate of more than 5% per annum (WB/AusAid 2012). Kathmandu is the pre-eminent primate city with 22% of total urban population. Nearly a third of the country's urban population resides in the five municipalities of the Kathmandu Valley. The two-city and four-city

primacy index,⁴ which were 4.03 and 1.38 in 2001, declined to 3.79 and 1.19 respectively in 2011. But the pre-eminence of Kathmandu remains uncontested. Kathmandu (pop. 1,003,285), Pokhara (264,991), Lalitpur (226,728), Biratnagar (204,949) and Bharatpur (147,777) are the five major cities. Kathmandu has a density of 20,289 persons to the sq km compared to the average urban density of 1380 for the country. Overall, the spatial demographic transition is characterised by a rapid rise in urban densities in the Kathmandu Valley and urban areas along the main highways near the Indian border, especially in the Eastern and Central Tarai. The World Bank study noted above indicates that urban areas might be contributing as much as 65% to the GDP. The rising contribution of urban locations to the GDP, an indicator of increasing value-added activities in urban areas, also means that urban areas will continue to attract rural migrants at an accelerated pace.

4 Dividing the population of the largest city by that of the second-largest city provides the two-city primacy index. Similarly, the four-city index is derived by dividing the population of the largest city by the sum of the populations of the second-, third-, and fourth-largest cities. A higher index value denotes a higher population concentration in the largest city.

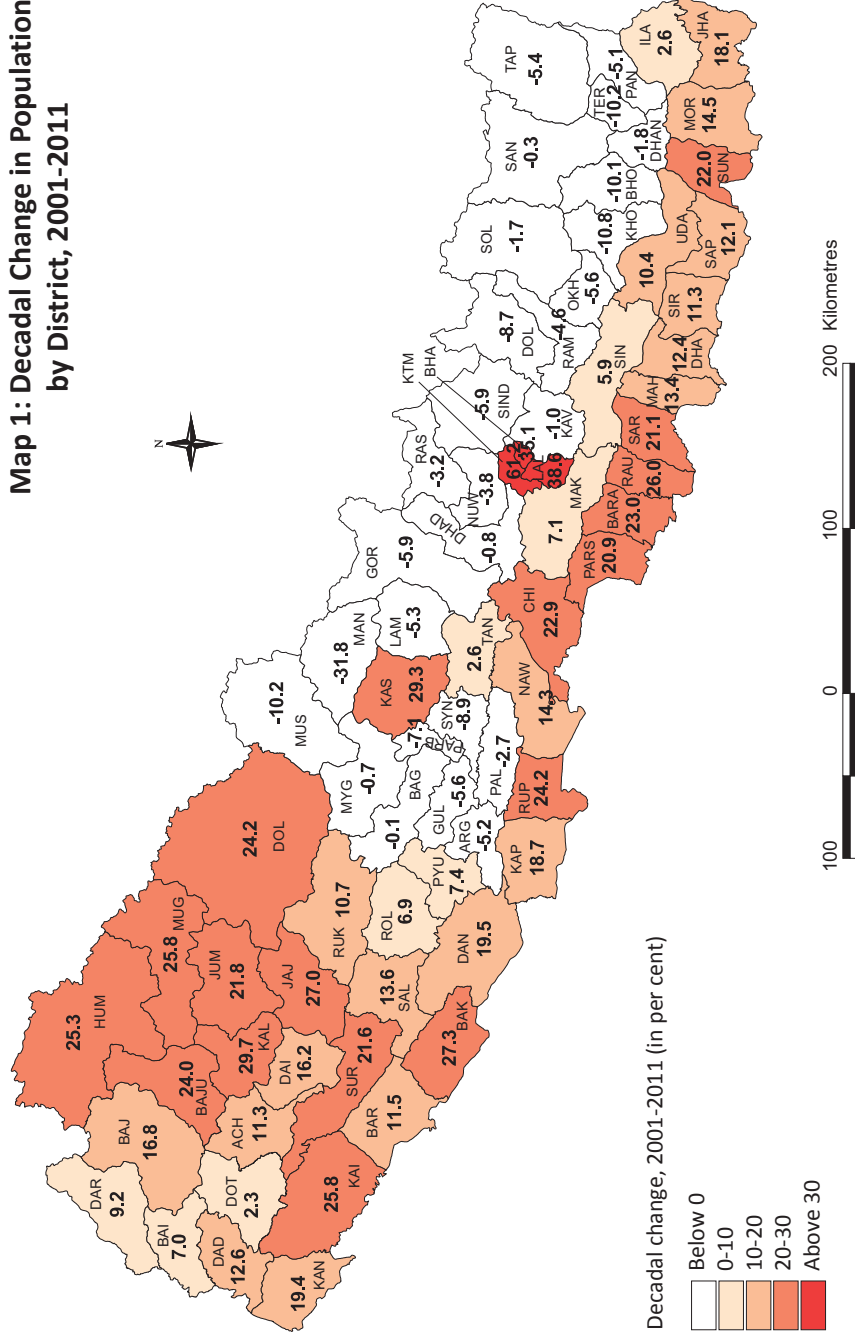
2. Population Growth Dynamics

The decadal change in the total population during 2001-2011 was 14.4%. There are notable variations among geographical regions. Growth in the 20 Tarai districts was 18.8%, 11.1% in the 39 hill districts, and 5.6% in the 16 mountain districts. The district-wise change in population also varies considerably. The highest decadal change was in urban districts like Kathmandu (61.2%), Lalitpur (38.6%) and Bhaktapur (35.1%). The population increased between 20 and 30% in the hill and mountain districts of Kalikot, Kaski, Jajarkot, Mugu, Humla, Dolpa, Bajura, Jumla and Surkhet, all in the Mid- and Far-west with the exception of Kaski, which is a relatively urbanised district by virtue of Pokhara being located in it. Similar growth was seen in the Tarai districts of Banke, Rautahat, Kailali, Rupandehi, Bara, Chitwan, Sunsari, Sarlahi and Parsa. Eighteen district, of which eight are in the hills, experienced a growth of between 10% and 20%, and nine districts, all in the hills, had a growth of between 0% and 10%.

For the first time in the modern demographic history of Nepal 27 contiguous hill districts, from Baglung in the west to Taplejung and Panchthar in the east, experienced an absolute decline in population over the last inter-censal decade (Map 1, Annex 1). These districts with increasing rates of decline are Baglung (-0.1), Sankhuwasabha (-0.3), Myagdi (-0.7), Dhading (-0.8), Kavrepalanchowk (-1.0), Solukhumbu (-1.7), Dhankuta (-1.8), Palpa (-2.7), Rasuwa (-3.2), Nuwakot (-3.8), Ramechhap (-4.6), Panchthar (-5.1), Arghakhanchi (-5.2), Lamjung (-5.3), Taplejung (-5.4), Gulmi (-5.6), Okhaldhunga (-5.6), Sindhupalchowk (-5.9), Gorkha (-5.9), Parbat (-7.1), Dolakha (-8.7), Syangja (-8.9), Bhojpur (-10.1), Tehrathum (-10.2), Mustang (-10.2), Khotang (-10.8), and Manang (-31.8).

Districts experiencing an absolute decline in population are generally characterised by (i) a lack of major urban centres, (ii) sharp declines in fertility, and (iii) increasing out-migration. On the other hand, Tarai districts experiencing migration from the hills, and what may be termed 'hidden' immigration (i.e., a situation where immigrants melt easily into

**Map 1: Decadal Change in Population
by District, 2001-2011**



the social landscape) from India, and hill districts with moderate fertility declines and lower out-migration, mostly from the Mid-west show increasing population growth. In general, hill districts with low development indices, including human development, are the ones that show high population growth rates.

In the 2001-2011 inter-censal decade, there was a phenomenal rise in absentees abroad, although the decadal growth of absentees was lower in 2001 than in 1991 (Table 5). There was a significant rise in the number of absentees abroad by district as well as absentees as a proportion of district population in 2011 compared to 2001 (Annex 2). In 2011, there were six contiguous districts in the western hills with the number of absentees abroad more than double the national average (7.3%). These are Gulmi (20.9%), Arghakhanchi (20.2%), Syangja (17.5%), Pyuthan (16.2%), Baglung (15.9%), and Palpa (15.1%) (Map 2).

Table 5. Trends in Absentees Abroad, 1981-2011

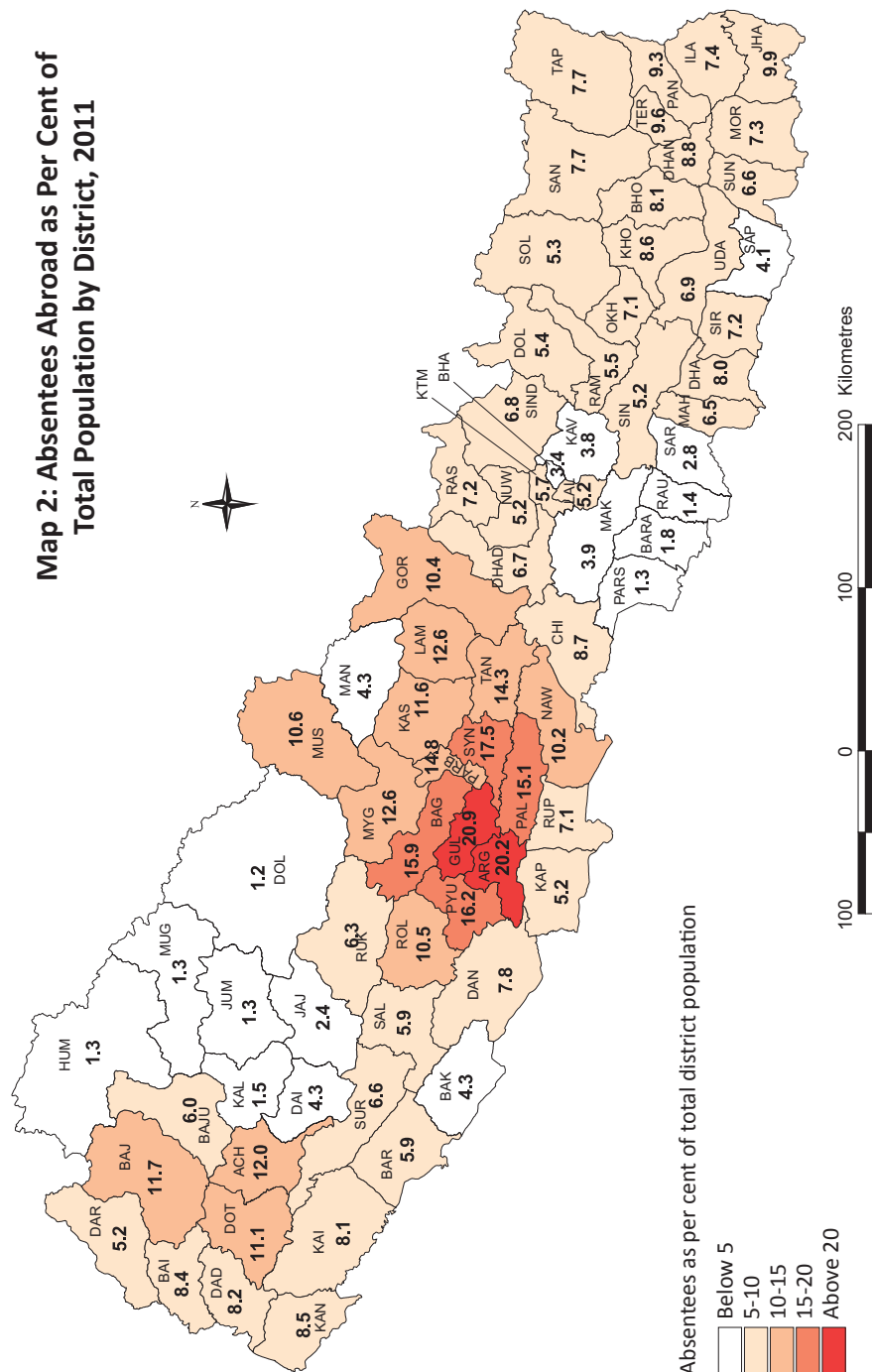
Census Year	Total Population	Absentees	Absentees as Per Cent of Total Population	Decadal Growth in Absentee Population
1981	15,022,839	402,977	2.7	—
1991	18,491,097	658,290	3.6	63.4
2001	23,151,423	762,181	3.3	15.8
2011	26,494,504	1,921,494	7.3	152.1

Source: CBS, 2003, Vol 2, Chapter 14. Table 14.16, and CBS, 2012.

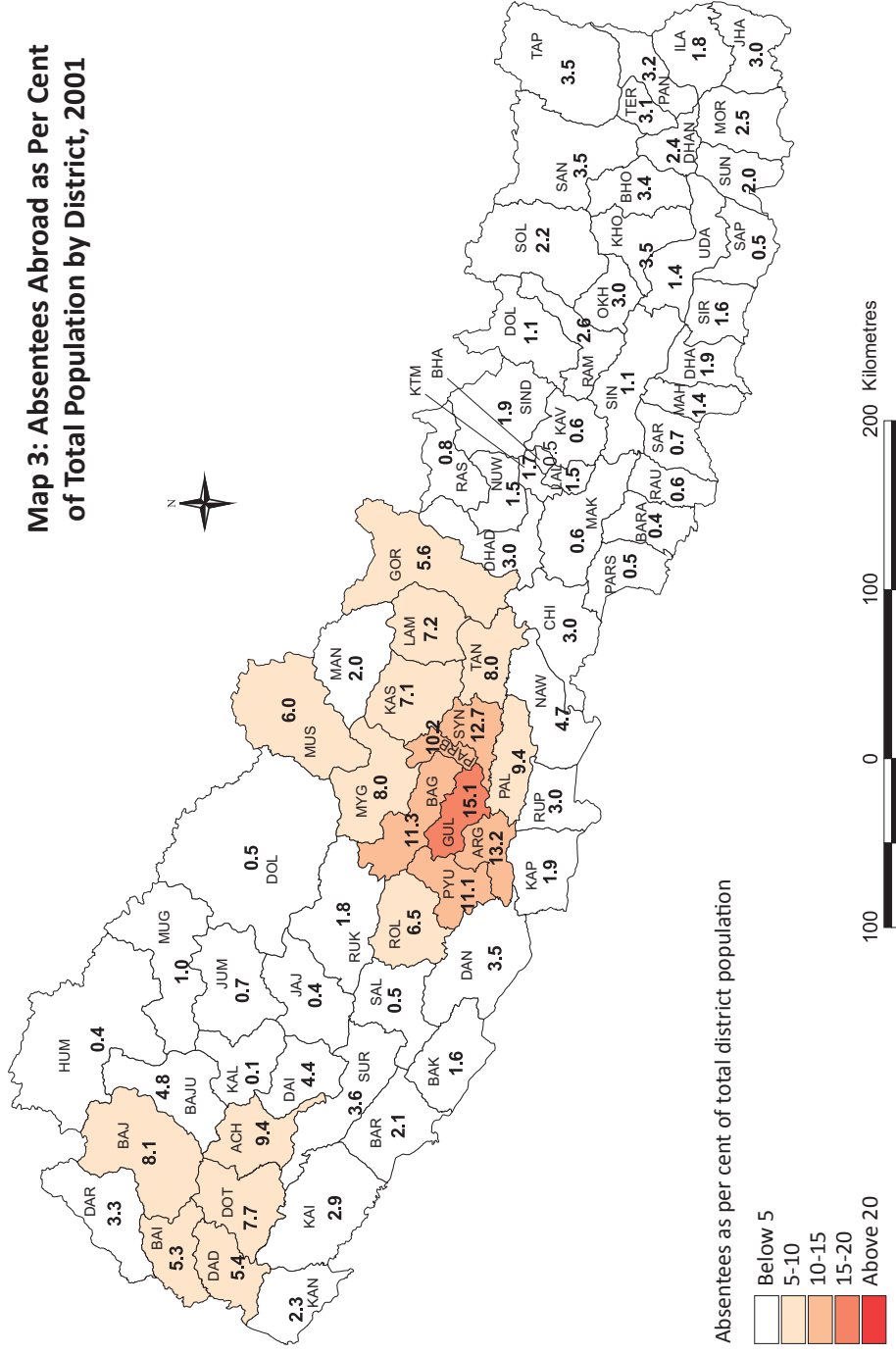
Another 12 districts, mainly clustered around the high-absentee districts with a few in the Mid- and Far-western hills, had between 10 and 15% absentees abroad. Among districts with the lowest proportion of absentees abroad were 17 districts that include the seven contiguous districts of Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Jumla, Kalikot, Dailekh and Jajarkot in the Mid-west. Remoteness, problems of access and information and ability to meet the cost of migration could well be responsible for low rates of absentees abroad in these districts. In the case of contiguous Central hill and Tarai districts such as Makwanpur, Kavrepalanchowk, Parsa, Rautahat, Bara and Sarlahi, the low rates may just be a statistical artefact reflecting the large population size of these districts.

The result of this phenomenal outflow of population has been the increasing contribution of remittances to the country's GDP. In fiscal year 2011/12, remittances comprised 21.2% relative to the GDP (MoF 2012). The increasing dependence on remittances is an indicator of the

Map 2: Absentees Abroad as Per Cent of
Total Population by District, 2011



Map 3: Absentees Abroad as Per Cent of Total Population by District, 2001



sluggish growth of the country's productive sectors, and the inability of the economy to create enough gainful employment opportunities domestically. Remittances can compliment domestic economic growth if it leads to increasing investments in the real economy. Available information in Nepal shows that the bulk of the remittance income is spent in consumption expenditure and only 2.4% goes for capital formation (NLSS 2011).

In 2001, the districts with the highest percentage of absentees abroad were Gulmi (15.1%), Arghakhanchi (13.1%), Syangja (12.7%), Baglung (11.3%), Pyuthan (11.1%), and Parbat (10.2%). A comparison between the last two censuses shows that there has been a marked demonstration effect of absentee abroad from core districts such as Gulmi and Arghakhanchi radiating out to an increasing number of contiguous districts. The spread of the fact/rumour of remittances sent to particular households by word of mouth, and stories of returnees must have played a role in the diffusion of information.

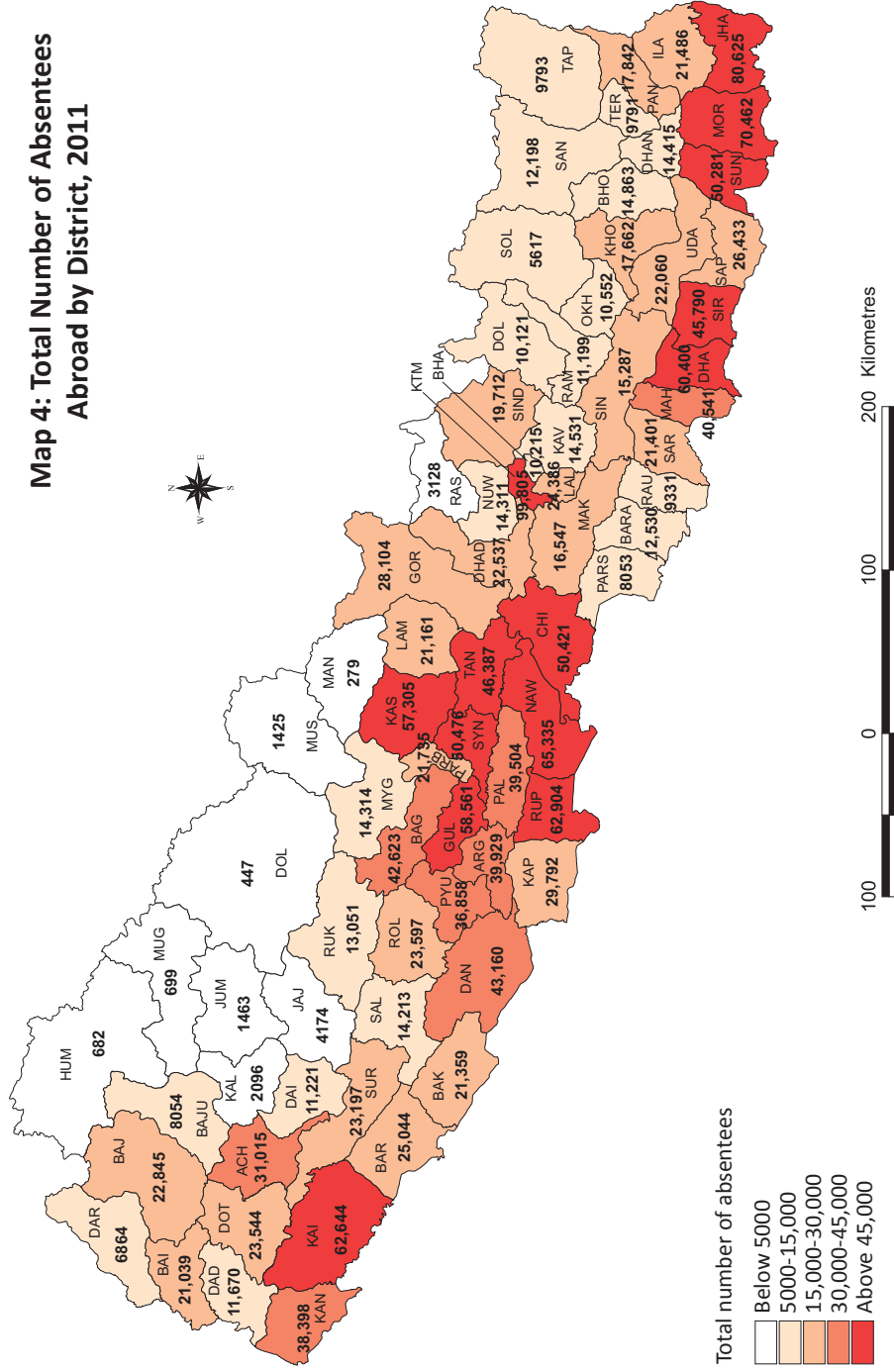
There is some association between districts with high population growth and those with lower percentage of absentees abroad and vice versa. Of the 21 districts with over 20% decadal growth, 12 had less than 5% absentees. Similarly, among the 27 districts with absolute decline in population 10 had over 10% absentees and another 15 had between 5-10% absentees abroad (Table 6).

However, because of the larger size of the population in the Tarai, the districts with a lower proportion of absentees abroad were not necessarily the ones with lower volume of absentees. Of the 12 districts with over 50,000 absentees in 2011 (Kathmandu, Jhapa, Morang, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Kailali, Dhanusha, Gulmi, Kaski, Syangja, Chitwan and Sunsari), eight were from the Tarai (Map 4). Districts like Jhapa, Morang, Nawalparasi and Rupandehi had over 20,000 absentees each in 2001 also (Map 5). All the six districts with over 15% absentees abroad (Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Syangja, Pyuthan, Baglung and Palpa) were from the Western hills. While Kathmandu recorded the highest number of absentees abroad (99,805), the lowest was from Manang (279). The highest percentage of absentees was from Gulmi (20.9%) and the lowest from Dolpa (1.2%). Absentees abroad have clearly emerged as an important determinant of district demography.

Table 6. Districts by Average Annual Population Growth Rates and Absentees Abroad

Absentees Abroad (% of District Population)	Decadal Change in Population (%)			
	Over 20%	10% < 20%	0% < 10%	Less than 0%
Less than 5%	Banke, Bara, Bhaktapur, Dolpa, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Parsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi = 12	Dailekh, Saptari = 2	Makwanpur = 1	Kavrepalanchowk, Manang = 2
5–10%	Bajura, Chitwan, Kailali, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Rupandehi, Sunsari, Surkhet = 8	Bardiya, Dadeldhura, Dang, Dhanusha, Jhapa, Kanchanpur, Kapilbastu, Mahottari, Morang, Rukum, Salyan, Siraha, Udayapur = 13	Baitadi, Darchula, Ilam, Sindhuli = 4	Bhojpur, Dhading, Dhankuta, Dolakha, Khotang, Nuwakot, Okhaldhunga, Panchthar, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, Sankhuwasabha, Sindhupalchowk, Solukhumbu, Taplejung, Tehrathum = 15
Over 10%	Kaski = 1	Achham, Bajhang, Nawalparasi = 3	Doti, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Tanahu = 4	Arghakhanchi, Baglung, Gorkha, Gulmi, Lamjung, Mustang, Myagdi, Palpa, Parbat, Syangja = 10
	21	18	9	27
				18
				40
				18
				75

**Map 4: Total Number of Absentees
Abroad by District, 2011**



3. Caste and Ethnic Groups

Caste/ethnic groups have been reported in Nepal since the 1991 census. There is no universally accepted definition of caste/ethnic groups, but, in general, caste groups are regarded as social groups within the Hindu *varna* system, while ethnic groups, referred to as Janajati in Nepali, are social groups outside the *varna* system with their 'own mother tongue, native area and religious traditions' (Gurung 2003). Janajatis are also construed as nationalities to differentiate them from Hindu groups.

The 1991 census identified 60 caste/ethnic (CE) groups. Of these, 30 were caste groups, 26 ethnic groups, and four in the 'others' category (Table 7, Annex 3). The 2001 census identified 100 CE groups with the addition of 21 caste and 19 ethnic groups. While 11 ethnic groups were added in the hill-mountains, eight were added in the Tarai. All the additions in the caste groups were in the Tarai, 16 in non-Dalit castes and five within the Dalits. There was a further addition of caste and ethnic groups in the 2011 census, bringing the total to 125. A total of 58 caste and 64 ethnic groups were identified apart from three in the 'others' category. In 2011, four Tarai caste groups (Dev, Koiri, Natuwa and Rajdhob), four Tarai Dalit caste groups (Dhandi, Dhankar, Kalar and Sarbariya), and 19 Janajati groups (Aathpariya, Amat, Bahing, Bantawa, Chamling, Ghale, Khaling, Khawas, Kulung, Lhomi, Lhopa, Loharung, Mewahang/Bala, Nachhiring, Sampang, Thulung, Topkegola, Yamphu and Dolpo) were added. Of the latter, 14 were added in the hills, four in the mountains and one in the Tarai. Of the 125 caste/ethnic groups identified in 2011, 66 were of Tarai origin, seven of Inner Tarai origin, 43 of hill origin and nine of mountain origin. Two groups, Jain and Churaute, were dropped in 2011.

Since 1991, when ethnicity was first recorded there has been an addition of 28 caste and 38 ethnic groups. The numbers that have remained constant throughout are only in the case of hill castes, hill Dalits and Inner Tarai ethnic groups.

The continuing increase in the number of CE groups in each census has been attributed to various reasons. There is a certain subjectivity involved in the identification of social groups as there is no

Table 7. Number of Caste/Ethnic Groups by Census

Caste/Ethnic Group	1991	2001	2011	Increase, 1991-2011
Caste	30	51	58	28
Hill Caste	4	4	4	0
Tarai Caste	16	32	34	18
Hill Dalit	5	5	5	0
Tarai Dalit	5	10	15	10
Ethnic	26	45	64	38
Mountain	3	5	9	6
Hill	11	20	34	23
Inner Tarai	7	7	7	0
Tarai	5	13	14	9
Other	4	4	3	-1
Hill	1	1	0	-1
Tarai	3	3	3	0
Total	60	100	125	65

established objective and scientific criteria for identification nor has a scholarly consensus been developed for the purpose. There has been no comprehensive anthropological/ethnographic survey of the whole country and it is possible that certain distinct social groups have been subsumed under broad social categories while, conversely, groups that are similar in many respects may be claiming different status. Self-identification is often recognised as the basis for caste/ethnic identity.⁵ There have also been representations made to the Central Bureau of Statistics by a number of social groups for inclusion in the CE list. The upsurge in consciousness of identity, and the consequent desire to project one's group as

5 The High-Level Task Force established for the refinement of the list of Adibasi Janajati, for example, takes self-identity as a criterion (HTTF 2010) although the report, which is still under consideration of the government, has no bearing on the census classification of CE groups. The case of Ghale, a Gurung clan which is listed as a separate ethnic group in 2011, is instructive as there seem to be no distinct cultural differences between Ghales and Gurungs. There are also Ghale Tamangs in northern Dhading. However, Ghale Gurungs from northern Gorkha have been the most vocal in asserting their separate identity. Groups that were formerly included within the Rai group have claimed separate ethnic identities in the 2011 census. Examples are Aathpariya, Bahing, Bantawa, Chamling, Khaling, Kulung, Loharung, Mewahang/Bala, Nachhiring, Sampang, Thulung and Yamphu, among others. The 2011 census enumerated 28 distinct languages spoken by the Rais.

distinctive and unique, has also contributed to the increase in the number of CE groups. Perhaps there is also a belief that a place in the census CE list may be critically important for being a beneficiary group under the proportionate representation system at the local, if not the regional and national, levels.

In all the censuses since 1991, Chhetri has consistently remained the largest CE group with a share of 16.1% in 1991, 15.8% in 2001 and 16.6% in 2011. Bahun is the second largest group with a share of 12.9%, 12.7% and 12.2% in respective censuses. These two groups comprise 28% and the four non-Dalit hill caste groups (i.e., Chhetri, Bahun, Thakuri and Dasnami) constitute 31.2% of the total population. Kusunda is the smallest group with a population of 164 in 2001 and 273 in 2011. Kusunda, Raute and Nurang each had a population of less than 1000 in 2011, together constituting only 1169. The number of such groups with populations less than 1000 was five in 2001.

The number of CE groups with a population of more than a million increased from six in 2001 to nine in 2011 (Table 8). These include Chhetri (4.39 million), Bahun (3.22 million), Magar (1.89 million), Tharu (1.74 million), Tamang (1.54 million), Newar (1.32 million), Kami (1.26 million), Muslim (1.16 million), and Yadav (1.05 million). The last three groups are new entrants into this category. Four caste groups (Chhetri, Bahun, Kami and Yadav), four ethnic groups (Magar, Tharu, Tamang and Newar), and Muslim, a religious group but treated as

Table 8. Population Size Category by Caste/Ethnic Group, 2011

Population Size Category	Number of CE Groups	Caste	Ethnic	Other	Total Population	%	Cumulative %
Over 1 million	9	4	4	1	17,589,189	66.4	66.4
500,000-999,999	2	0	2	0	1,142,645	4.3	70.7
100,000-499,999	27	21	6	0	5,650,004	21.3	92.0
50,000-99,999	15	10	5	0	1,033,444	3.9	95.9
25,000-49,999	12	6	5	1	397,599	1.5	97.4
10,000-24,999	16	5	11	0	243,725	0.9	98.4
5000-9999	10	2	7	1	69,549	0.3	98.6
1000-4999	31	9	22	0	84,859	0.3	98.9
Less than 1000	3	1	2	0	1169	0.0	98.9
Others/Undefined	5*			5	282,321	1.1	100.0
Total	130	58	64	8	26,494,504	100.0	

a CE category because of its social distinctiveness, together make up two thirds of Nepal's population. Two groups, both ethnic (Rai and Gurung), have a population between half a million to less than a million. That was also the case in 2001. A total of 27 CE groups have between 100,000 to less than half a million people. Out of the 125 CE groups identified, 38 have a population size over 100,000 each, and make up 92% of the total population. In 1991 and 2001, there were 28 and 31 CE groups with populations of 100,000 and above respectively. In 2011, 87 caste/ethnic groups have populations less than 100,000, of which 44 have less than 10,000.

Over the last three decades the rank of the most numerous 15 CE groups has changed only marginally. The change in rank was only between Tamang and Newar, and Yadav and Muslim between 1991 and 2001, and Kami and Muslim between 2001 and 2011. These 15 major CE groups made up 77% of the population in 2001 as well as in 2011 (Table 9).

Table 9. Rank and Share in Population of 15 Most Numerous CE Groups, 1991- 2011

CE Group	2011		2001		1991		Social Group
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	
Chhetri	1	16.6	1	15.8	1	16.1	Hill Caste
Bahun	2	12.2	2	12.7	2	12.9	Hill Caste
Magar	3	7.1	3	7.1	3	7.2	Hill Ethnic
Tharu	4	6.6	4	6.7	4	6.5	Tarai Ethnic
Tamang	5	5.8	5	5.6	6	5.5	Hill Ethnic
Newar	6	5.0	6	5.5	5	5.6	Hill Ethnic
Kami	7	4.8	8	3.9	7	5.2	Hill Caste/Dalit
Muslim	8	4.4	7	4.3	9	3.5	Tarai Religious
Yadav	9	4.0	9	3.9	8	4.1	Tarai Caste
Rai	10	2.3	10	2.8	10	2.8	Hill Ethnic
Gurung	11	2.0	11	2.4	11	2.4	Hill Ethnic
Damai/Dholi	12	1.8	12	1.7	12	2.0	Hill Caste/Dalit
Thakuri	13	1.6	14	1.5	13	1.6	Hill Caste
Limbu	14	1.5	13	1.6	14	1.6	Hill Ethnic
Sarki	15	1.4	15	1.4	15	1.5	Hill Caste/Dalit
Per Cent of Total Population		77.1		76.9		78.5	

Although 100 ethnic groups were identified in 2001, there are only 98 CE groups that are comparable between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. There was enormous variation in the decadal growth of population among these comparable CE groups. During the decade when the total population grew by 14.4%,⁶ 62 CE groups experienced an increase equal to or above the national average. Nine (Hyolmo, Dhunia, Badi, Pattharkatta, Bin, Munda, Bangali, Punjabi and Baraee) show an increase of over 100%, and some small groups like Hyolmo and Dhunia grew by over 1000%. The numerical increase of some groups is staggering – Bin increased from 18,720 in 2001 to 75,195 in 2011, Baraee from 35,434 to 80,597, and Badi from 4442 to 38,603. All 36 CE groups experiencing an increase of over 25% are relatively small (i.e., less than 100,000) with the exception of five caste groups, including Kami, which had a population of over half a million in 2001. There are more caste groups in this category than ethnic groups (Table 10).

Table 10. Decadal Change in Population among CE Groups, 2011

Decadal Change Category	Total CE Groups	Caste	Ethnic	Other	CE Groups with over 100,000 Population in 2001*
Over 100%	9	4	3	2	None
50-99.9%	8	3	5	0	None
25-49.9%	19	13	6	0	Mallaha, Kami , Musahar, Dusadh, Thakuri
10-24.9%	33	18	14	1	Chamar, Chhetri , Koiri, Teli, Damai, Tamang , Muslim , Yadav , Sarki, Dhanuk, Magar , Sanyasi, Tharu , Bahun , Kalwar
0-9.9%	11	4	7	0	Kathbaniya, Kurmi, Limbu, Newar , Gharti/Bhujel
0- -9.9%	6	2	4	0	Rai , Gurung
Less than -10%	12	7	5	0	Sherpa, Sonar, Tarai Brahmin
Total	98	51	44	3	

* CE groups in bold italic had a population of over half a million each in 2001.

The major CE groups fell in the 10-25% decadal change category, but they, too, recorded significant differences. The Chhetri and Tamang population increased by 22.4% each, compared to 17.8% for Yadav, 16.4% for Magar, 13.3% for Tharu, 11.4% for Bahun, 7.8% for Limbu, and 6.2% for Newar. Eighteen CE groups experienced an absolute decline in

6 The 2001-2011 decadal change is 14.4% if we take 23,151,423 as the total population in 2001 instead of 22,737,934 for which the caste/ethnic data is provided.

population. Four ethnic groups—Rai, Gurung, Lepcha and Raute—and two caste groups—Tarai Brahmin and Kayastha—show a decline of less than 10%. Five ethnic groups—Sherpa, Sunuwar, Jhangad, Bhote and Kisan—and six caste groups—Rajput, Rajbhar, Sonar, Kamar, Chidimar and Nurang—show dramatic declines in population of over 10%. In terms of absolute numbers, the Sonar population decreased by 80,753, and is less than half of what it was in 2001. The Sherpa and Sunuwar populations declined by 41,676 and 39,542 respectively, which are 27% and 41.5% of their 2001 population.

What contributed to such dramatic increases as well as unprecedented declines of specific caste/ethnic populations? Some explanations, not all satisfactory, can be surmised. Increases could have occurred due to changing perceptions of identity, where a previously separate group identifies with another CE group. Similarly, declines could be caused due to several reasons. First, the 27 CE groups added in the 2011 census have obviously split from some earlier CE groups because they desired a separate and distinct identity. For example, there are at least 12 groups that now claim a distinct identity which were part of the Rai ethnic group in the 2001 census. Logically, this would lead to decline in the number of Rais, and if all the splinter groups were put together they should yield an expected natural rate of growth. However, this does not seem to be the case in all instances. Even if all the splinters from the Rai groups were combined in 2011 the decadal growth rate would only be 8.5%, much lower than the national average of 16.5%. Second, CE groups showing marked declines could have large numbers of absentees abroad. Only the availability of complete district-wise information of CE groups would allow such assessments in the future. Third, errors in recording and enumeration itself cannot be completely ruled out. But, the decline in population for particular CE groups in the 2011 census is not an altogether new phenomenon. The 2001 census showed similar declines for 12 CE groups (eight caste groups—Badi, Kalwar, Rajbhar, Kumhar, Tarai Brahmin, Kayastha, Rajput and Kami, and four ethnic groups—Raute, Raji, Lepcha and Thakali) compared to the 1991 census. For the Tarai Brahmin, Kayastha, Rajbhar and Rajput, all Tarai caste groups, the decline has continued through to 2011 as well. There is clearly a need to search for rational explanations for such population declines and/or change in identity of such CE groups.

Harka Gurung (2003:30) had identified various caste/ethnic groups

of Nepal in terms of their association with traditional or native areas of occupation. First, there are ethnic groups traditionally inhabiting the high mountains of the Himalaya. Nine such identified groups were recorded in the 2011 census: Bhote, Byasi/Sauka, Dolpo, Lhomi, Lhopa, Sherpa, Thakali, Topkegola and Walung. Similarly, there are 34 ethnic groups associated with the hill region, seven with the Inner Tarai and 14 with the Tarai (Annex 3). There are also nine caste groups (including five Dalit groups) with origins in the hill region and 49 caste groups (15 Dalit groups included) in the Tarai. Muslims, included in the 'Other' category, also belong mainly to the Tarai region.

The population of the Tarai, also referred to as Madhes in the past, can be categorised as Madhesi (CE groups traditionally associated with the Tarai or Madhes region although self-perception of some of the ethnic groups has changed), and Pahadi (CE groups with origins in the hill-mountains). The Pahadi population comprises four CE groups: hill caste, hill Dalit, hill ethnic and mountain ethnic. People of Tarai origin, or Madhesis, consists of five groups—Tarai caste, Tarai Dalit, Tarai ethnic, Inner Tarai ethnic and Muslims. This definition of Madhesi is not without controversy. Some regard ethnic groups found in the Tarai, and particularly in the Inner Tarai, including the Tharu, as distinctly different from the Madhesis by virtue of the geographical peculiarities of the Inner Tarai, history of occupation, and absence of the Tarai caste population in the Inner Tarai (Sharma 2008). The term 'Madhesi' has acquired a political connotation in recent years and certain Janajati groups such as the Tharu from western Tarai in general consider themselves 'sons of the soil' and quite different from Madhesis (Chaudhury 2007).

Following the definition of Madhesi and Pahadi indicated above, the Madhesi population in the country as a whole was 28.6%, 32.7% and 33.4% in 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively, while the Pahadi population was 66.9% in 1991 and 65.4% in 2001 as well as 2011. The rest comprised other and unspecified groups. In the 2011 census, the population in the 20 Tarai districts consisted of 63.1% of Madhesis, 35.7% Pahadis and 1.2% Others.⁷

Notwithstanding the increase in the number of CE groups, there has

7 The proportion of the Madhesi population by social group in the broadest sense in the Tarai is: Tarai caste 28.3%, Tarai Dalit 8.8%, Inner Tarai Ethnic 1.2%, Tarai Ethnic 16.4%, Muslim 8.3% and Other Tarai 0.2%; and the Pahadi population in the Tarai is: Hill Caste 19.9%, Hill Dalit 4.4%, Hill Ethnic 11.3% and Mountain Ethnic 0.1%.

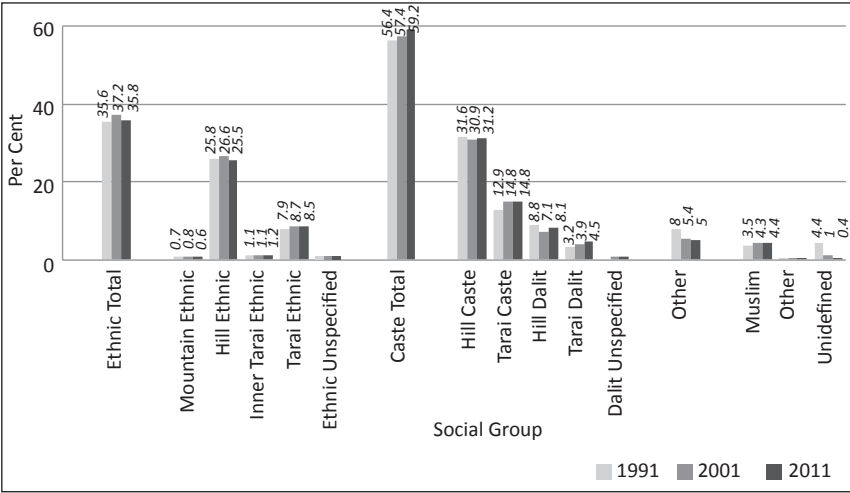
been no dramatic change in the share of CE groups in the total population (Table 11). Ethnic groups comprised 35.6% and 37.2% in 1991 and 2001 respectively; it was 35.8% in 2011 despite the addition of 19 ethnic groups. There was a slight increase in the share of caste groups in the total population, from 56.4% in 1991 to 59.2% in 2011. The share of Dalit groups together rose from 11.8% in 2001 to 13.2% in 2011. The share of Tarai caste groups remained the same in 2001 and 2011. The social groups that showed consistent growth in the share of the national population in all the three censuses are the Tarai Dalits and Muslims. Also, in absolute numbers the 'Other' and 'Undefined' categories went down from 813,471 (or 4.4%) in 1991 to 119,088 (or 0.4%) in 2011.

Table 11. Population Change by Social Group, 1991-2011

Social Group	1991		2001		2011	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Caste	10,425,518	56.4	13,055,729	57.4	15,679,280	59.2
Hill Caste	5,837,736	31.6	7,023,220	30.9	8,278,401	31.2
Tarai Caste	2,386,001	12.9	3,357,327	14.8	3,912,404	14.8
Hill Dalit	1,619,434	8.8	1,615,577	7.1	2,151,626	8.1
Tarai Dalit	582,347	3.2	886,204	3.9	1,181,495	4.5
Dalit Unspecified		0.0	173,401	0.8	155,354	0.6
Ethnic	6,572,265	35.6	8,460,701	37.2	9,491,472	35.8
Mountain	136,552	0.7	190,107	0.8	154,570	0.6
Hill	4,776,993	25.8	6,038,530	26.6	6,752,816	25.5
Inner Tarai	206,068	1.1	251,117	1.1	321,077	1.2
Tarai	1,452,652	7.9	1,975,688	8.7	2,261,781	8.5
Ethnic Unspecified		0.0	5259	0.0	1228	0.0
Other	1,485,505	8.0	1,220,504	5.4	1,323,752	5.0
Muslim	653,055	3.5	971,056	4.3	1,164,255	4.4
Other	18,979	0.1	17,807	0.1	40,409	0.2
Undefined	813,471	4.4	231,641	1.0	119,088	0.4
Total	18,483,288	100.0	22,736,934	100.0	26,494,504	100.0

Over the decades, there has been a significant dispersal of the population from the mountains and hills to the Tarai. As indicated above, this process has influenced the caste/ethnic mix of the Tarai population. This

Fig. 1: Population Change by Social Group, 1991- 2011

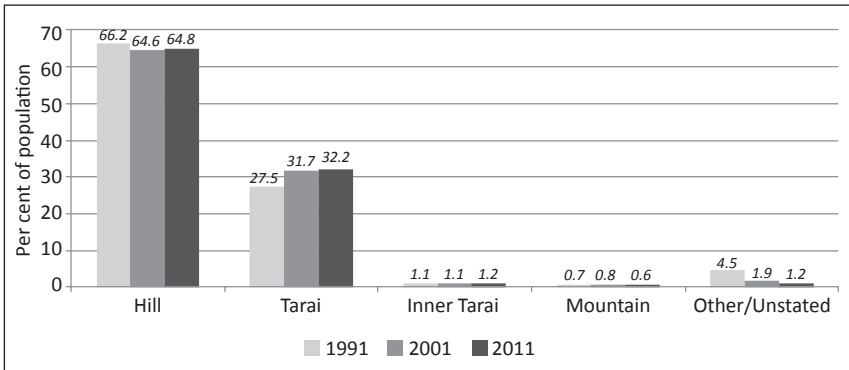


process can be analysed from two perspectives: first, from that of geographical regions, and second from the perspective of social groups associated with particular regions.

If there had been no inter-regional migration one could expect each geographical region to have a large proportion of social groups associated with that region, i.e., who are native to that region. Table 12 presents this picture for the three geographical regions for 2001 and 2011. Of the total hill population, 94% and 94.7% were of hill origin in 2001 and 2011 respectively. The mountain region has an overwhelming proportion of people of hill origin. This is because many ethnics of hill origin inhabit the mountain region and because the caste population

Table 12. Population in Geographical Region by Native Area of Caste/Ethnic Population, 2001 and 2011

Native Area of CE Population	Distribution by Geographical Region (%)					
	Mountain		Hill		Tarai	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Mountain	5.9	4.4	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.1
Hill	90.2	92.7	94.0	94.7	34.5	35.6
Inner Tarai	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2
Tarai	1.2	0.9	2.1	2.5	53.7	61.7
Other/Unspecified	2.0	1.2	1.9	1.0	10.5	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Fig. 2: Social Composition by Geographic Origin, 1991-2011

form a significant proportion in the Mid- and Far-western mountains. The situation in the Tarai is distinctly different. Because of decades of hill-to-Tarai migration, the population of hill origin has increased in the Tarai and made up 34.5% and 35.6% of the Tarai population in 2001 and 2011 respectively.

We can also look at the major social groups in terms of their regional distribution in 2001 and 2011. This gives an idea of the extent of dispersal of social groups regionally. Mountain ethnics are overwhelmingly in the mountains and the hills. But, in 2011, only 69.9% of hill ethnic remained in the hills, with 22.3% in the Tarai. The Inner Tarai ethnic population was equally distributed in the hills and the Tarai since significant parts of the Inner Tarai fall in the hill districts. Tarai ethnics were almost wholly in the Tarai. This is also true with respect to Tarai caste groups and Muslims. But, among hill castes and Dalits, only 56.8% and 63.2% respectively were in the hills. The Tarai harboured 32% and 27.3% of the hill caste and Dalit population respectively (Table 13). This is a significant shift in population. The overall picture is of a process of population dispersal from the highlands to the lowlands in which all hill caste and ethnic groups are increasingly involved.

Although the 2011 data on migration is not available, the geographical distribution of specific major hill caste/ethnic groups showed a continued movement of the hill population to the Tarai. With the exception of Newar, Thakuri and Sarki, all major hill caste/ethnic groups have an increased share of their population in the Tarai in 2011 compared to 2001. In 2011, 26.6% of the Chhetri, 39.4% of the Bahun, 29.1% of the Kami, and 29.5% of the Damai populations were in the Tarai. Ethnic

Table 13. Caste/Ethnic Population by Native Area of CE Population, 2001 and 2011

Social Group	Year	Total	Mountain %	Hill %	Tarai %
Caste					
Hill Caste	2001	7,023,220	10.3	59.1	30.6
	2011	8,278,401	11.2	56.8	32.0
Tarai Caste	2001	3,357,327	0.5	4.4	95.2
	2011	3,912,404	0.3	3.4	96.3
Hill Dalit	2001	1,615,577	8.0	66.3	25.7
	2011	2,151,626	9.5	63.2	27.3
Tarai Dalit	2001	886,204	0	0.8	99.1
	2011	1,181,495	0.1	1.1	98.9
Ethnic					
Mountain Ethnic	2001	190,107	46.5	42.1	11.3
	2011	154,570	51.0	42.1	6.9
Hill Ethnic	2001	6,038,530	8.3	70.4	21.3
	2011	6,752,816	7.8	69.9	22.3
Inner Tarai Ethnic	2001	251,117	4.1	48.7	47.2
	2011	321,077	4.2	47.3	48.5
Tarai Ethnic	2001	1,975,688	0.1	2.9	97.0
	2011	2,261,781	0.1	3.5	96.4
Other					
Muslim	2001	971,056	0.1	3.7	96.2
	2011	1,164,255	0	4.8	95.1
Others	2001	17,807	2.9	15.3	81.8
	2011	33,758	0.5	17.6	81.9
Unspecified	2001	410,301	7.2	36.7	56.1
	2011	282,321	7.5	37.1	55.4
All Total	2001	22,736,934	6.6	44.3	49.1
	2011	26,494,504	6.7	43.0	50.3

groups like the Limbu (31.5%), Magar (28.4%), Rai (25%) and Gurung (21.6%) also had an increased presence in the Tarai (Table 14). What is interesting is that caste/ethnic groups that experienced an increase in population in the Tarai did so irrespective of the rate of decadal growth. Thus, Rai and Gurung increased their share of population in the Tarai as did Chhetri and Magar.

Fig. 3a: Social Composition of Population, 1991 (%)

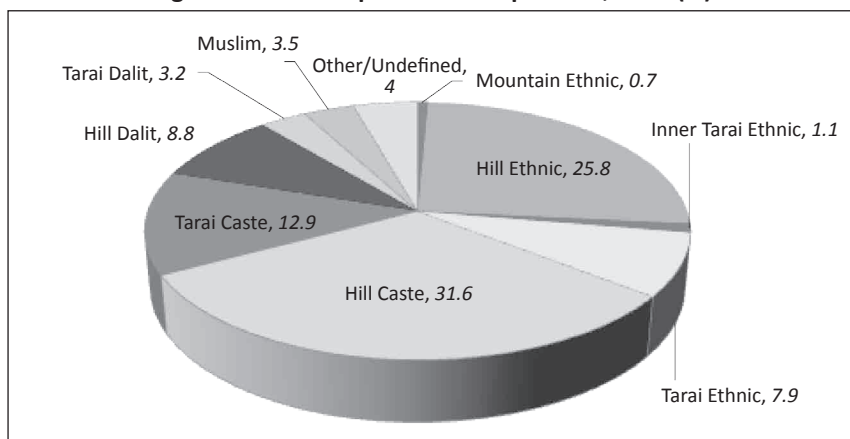


Fig. 3b: Social Composition of Population, 2001 (%)

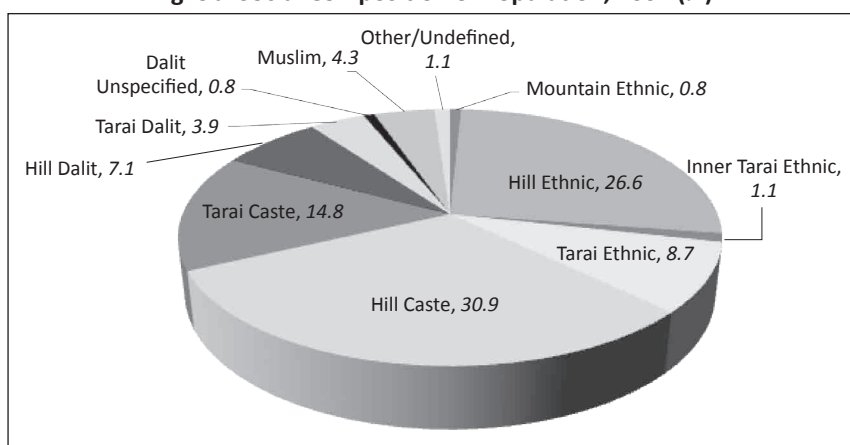


Fig. 3c: Social Composition of Population, 2011 (%)

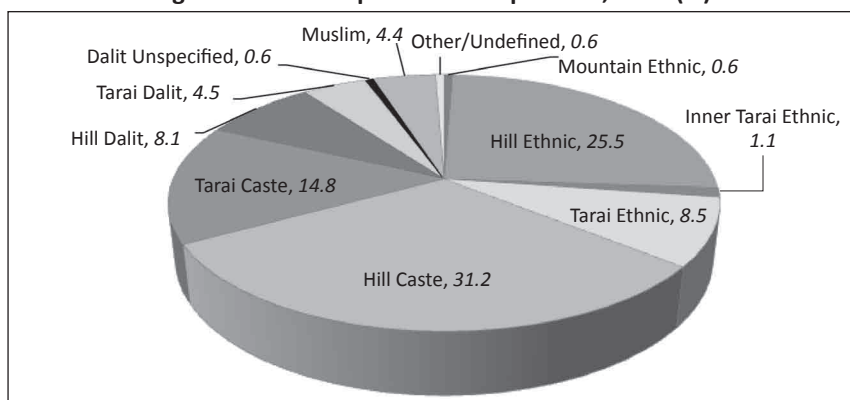


Table 14. Proportion of Major Hill Caste/Ethnic Population in the Tarai, 2001 and 2011

Caste/Ethnic Group	Decadal Growth	Population in Tarai (%)	
		2001	2011
Chhetri (HC)	22.4	24.9	26.6
Bahun (HC)	11.4	37.6	39.4
Magar (HE)	16.4	25.4	28.4
Tamang (HE)	20.1	15.0	16.1
Newar (HE)	6.2	17.4	15.7
Kami (HD)	40.5	26.4	29.1
Rai (HE)	-2.4	21.1	25.0
Gurung (HE)	-3.9	19.8	21.6
Damai/Dholi (HD)	21.2	28.3	29.5
Limbu (HE)	7.8	27.8	31.5
Thakuri (HC)	27.4	26.8	23.0
Sarki (HD)	17.5	19.7	17.6

HC: Hill Caste; HD: Hill Dalit; HE: Hill Ethnic

Ethnic groups who have moved away from their native areas were more concentrated in the Tarai areas adjoining their hill habitats. Thus, among hill ethnic groups in the Tarai, 94% of the Limbu and 83% of the Rai were in the Eastern Tarai, 80% of the Tamang and 74% of the Newar were in the Central Tarai, and 44% of the Magar in the Western Tarai. The earliest migrants to the Tarai were the Bahun and Chhetri from the Eastern hills, but in recent decades other caste and ethnic groups have increasingly joined the flow.

Compared to the relatively mobile hill population, the major Tarai caste/ethnic groups remained by and large in their native areas. Thus, 98.7% of the Yadav population, 95.9% of the Tharu, 95.1% of the Muslim, and 95.1% of the Tarai Brahmin remained in the Tarai. This is true for all caste/ethnic groups of the Tarai.

4. Languages and Language Groups

As would be expected, Nepal's ethnic diversity is also reflected in its linguistic diversity. While there is a certain continuity in the distribution of the major language groups, the number as well as growth of languages remains less consistent.

The 1952/54 census report mentioned 58 languages spoken as mother tongues in Nepal of which five were grouped as regional dialects.⁸ The decline in the number of languages in subsequent censuses – 36 in 1961, 17 in 1971 and 18 in 1981 – has been attributed to the high-handed state policy of promoting the Nepali language and the consequent neglect of other languages (Gurung 2003). With the restoration of democracy and the enumeration of ethnicity, the number of languages reported went up to 32 in 1991. The rising awareness among minority ethnic groups regarding their cultural and linguistic identity has led to an unprecedented increase in the number of mother tongues reported in successive censuses. Thus, 92 mother tongues were reported in 2001, which went up further to 123 in 2011. In addition, the 2001 census included 168,340 speakers in the 'Not Stated/Unknown' category. In 2011, there were 47,718 in the 'Not Reported' and 21,173 in the 'Other' category, which means that there are still languages that remain unidentified. In 2011, Satar, Jhangar and Churaute, though enumerated in 2001, were not recorded. Santhal/Satar were grouped together. Jhangar seems to have been replaced by Uranw/Urau, which is regarded as another nomenclature for it.

Compared to 2001, a total of 33 mother tongues were added in 2011: Achhami, Arabic, Aathpariya, Baitadeli, Bajhang, Bajureli, Bankariya, Belhare, Dadeldhuri, Dailekhi, Darchuleli, Dhuleli, Dolpali, Doteli, French, Garhwali, Ganagai, Jumli, Kham, Khash, Lhopa, Malpande, Manange, Musalman, Phangduwali, Rai, Russian, Sonaha, Spanish, Sural, Tajpuriya, Urau and Walung. The speakers of 10 mother tongues included in 2011, namely, Achhami, Baitadeli, Bajureli, Bajhang, Dadeldhuri, Dailekhi, Darchuleli, Doteli, Jumli and Khash would have

8 These included Eastern Tarai dialects, Maithili Pradesh dialects, Mid-western Tarai dialects, Morang Pradesh dialects, and Far-western Tarai dialects.

been recorded as Nepali in earlier censuses. Four (Athpariya, Belhare, Phangduwali and Rai) were added from the Rai-Kirati group. In 2001, 25 separate languages were recorded from the Rai-Kirati group. Rai, which was not recorded separately as a mother tongue in 2001, was included again. There were a total of 28 languages (including Rai and Sunuwar) from the Rai-Kirati group in 2011.⁹ Bankariya was recorded as a mother tongue for the first time although there is no ethnic group identified as Bankariya. Also, Musalman was recorded as a mother tongue, again for the first time, although it denotes a religious affiliation rather than a language. The difference between Urdu and Musalman language remains unexplained.

Fourteen non-Nepali languages were recorded in the 2001 census (Yadava 2003). Five more such languages (Arabic, French, Garhwali, Russian and Spanish) were added in 2011.¹⁰ The language with the least number of speakers recorded is Arabic, with just 8 speakers. Among the Nepali languages, Kusunda, Kaike and Bankariya, with 28, 50 and 69 speakers, respectively, had the smallest number of speakers, while the largest number of speakers belonged to Nepali (11.82 million), Maithili (3.09 million) and Bhojpuri (1.58 million) languages.

The increase in the number of mother tongues in successive censuses since 1991 can be attributed to the lack of a comprehensive linguistic survey and inadequate assessment of mother tongues from a linguistic perspective. Rising identity consciousness among different population groups as well as linguistic sensitivity in the census undertaking may also have contributed to the increase in this number. This can be better assessed by linguistic scholars as more data at the district and VDC levels become available.

Of the 123 mother tongues recorded in 2011, only 19 language groups had more than 100,000 speakers and five had over a million speakers, and 11 over half a million speakers. Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu and Tamang were the only languages spoken as the mother tongue by more than a million people. Tamang was the only such Sino-Tibetan

9 These are Athpariya, Bahing, Bantawa, Belhare, Chamling, Chhiling, Chhintang, Dumi, Dungmali, Hayu, Jerung, Khaling, Koyee, Kulung, Lingkhim, Lohorung, Mewahang, Nachhiring, Phangduwali, Puma, Sam, Sampang, Thulung, Tilung, Wambule and Yakkha. For Rai-Kirati groups, see Yadava (2003) and Gurung (2003).

10 Yadava (2003, p. 156) noted 14 non-Nepali languages recorded in the 2001 census: Chinese, English, Oriya, Sindhi, Koche, Hariyanvi, Magahi, Kurmali, Dzongkha, Kuki, Mizo, Nagamese, Assamese and Sadhani.

language. The speakers of these five languages as mother tongue comprised 73.2% of the national population (Table 15). Among languages spoken by over half a million people were two other Sino-Tibetan languages – Newar and Magar. The 19 mother tongues with more than 100,000 speakers made up 95.9% of the total population. In 2001, there were 16 mother tongues with over 100,000 speakers. Three additional such mother tongues in 2011, namely, Doteli, Baitadeli and Achhami, must have been counted as Nepali in earlier censuses. The diversity of mother tongues is revealed by the fact that 74 languages had fewer than 10,000 speakers, of which 37 had less than 1000. These include mainly region-specific local languages/dialects and foreign languages (Annex 4). In 2001, the number of languages with less than 1000 speakers was 28.

Table 15. Population by Mother Tongue and Size Cohort, 2011

Population Size Category	No of Language Groups	Population	%	Cumulative %
Over 1 million	5	19,387,627	73.2	73.2
500,000 to <1 million	6	4,409,628	16.6	89.8
100,000 to <500,000	8	1,613,277	6.1	95.9
50,000 to < 100,000	3	221,950	0.8	96.7
25,000 to <50,000	9	336,995	1.3	98.0
10,000 to <25,000	18	299,917	1.1	99.1
5000 to < 10,000	10	70,849	0.3	99.4
1000 to < 5000	27	74,242	0.3	99.7
Less than 1000	37	11,128	0.0	99.7
Others/Not Reported		68,891	0.3	100.0
	123	26,494,504	100.0	

Nepali, with 11.827 million speakers, or 44.6% of the population, remained the predominant mother tongue in the country. There has been a slight decline in Nepali mother-tongue speakers over the decades; it slipped from 50.3% in 1991 to 48.6% in 2001 and 44.6% in 2011. However, if regional Nepali dialects from the Mid- and the Far-west, namely, Doteli, Baitadeli, Achhami, Bajhang, Bajureli, Darchuleli, Dailekhi, Khash, Jumli and Dadeldhura, are taken together with Nepali, the number of Nepali mother tongue speakers reaches 13.12 million, which is 49.5% of the total population.

Over the last three decades the rank of the first six languages has remained the same (Table 16). Bajjika, first recorded in 2001 as the 12th

major language, is the 7th major language in 2011. As a result of the enumeration of regional dialects like Doteli and Baitadeli, and the separate enumeration of languages comprising the Rai-Kirat group, the rank of major languages beyond rank 8 has been affected. Urdu is now the 10th major language while Limbu and Gurung have gone down the ranks. The 15 major languages made up about 96% of the mother-tongue speakers in 2011.

Table 16. Rank and Share of 15 Major Mother Tongues

	1991		2001		2011		Decadal Change, 2001-2011
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	%
Nepali	1	50.3	1	48.6	1	44.6	7.0
Maithili	2	11.9	2	12.3	2	11.7	10.5
Bhojpuri	3	7.5	3	7.5	3	6.0	-7.4
Tharu	4	5.4	4	5.9	4	5.8	14.9
Tamang	5	4.9	5	5.2	5	5.1	14.8
Newar	6	3.7	6	3.6	6	3.2	2.6
Bajjika	NR	NR	12	1	7	3.0	233.4
Magar	8	2.3	7	3.4	8	3.0	2.4
Doteli	NR	NR	NR	NR	9	3.0	-
Urdu	12	1.1	13	0.8	10	2.6	295.5
Rai	7	2.4	9	2.4	11	2.3	-
Abadhi	9	2	8	2.5	12	1.9	-10.5
Limbu	10	1.4	10	1.5	13	1.3	3.0
Gurung	11	1.2	11	1.5	14	1.2	-3.9
Baitadeli	NR	NR	NR	NR	15	1.0	-
Total		94.1		96.2		95.7	16.5

NR: Not recorded

Population Change by Language Family

Broadly, four language families are represented in the mother tongues spoken in Nepal: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Of the 123 languages recorded in 2011, 47 are Indo-European languages, 66 Sino-Tibetan, two Austro-Asiatic, three Dravidian and five ‘Other’ languages. There has been a slight rise in Indo-European language speakers over the decades. In 2011, four out of every five person spoke an Indo-European language as the mother tongue (Table 17). Although

Table 17. Population Change by Language Family, 1952/54-2011

Language Family	1952/54		1991		2001		2011	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Indo-European	6,386,979	77.5	14,791,272	80.0	18,242,822	80.2	21,751,540	82.1
Sino-Tibetan	1,805,093	21.9	3,137,990	17.0	4,248,595	18.7	4,584,042	17.3
Austro-Asiatic	17,258	0.2	33,332	0.2	41,835	0.2	50,096	0.2
Dravidian	4812	0.1	15,175	0.1	29,104	0.1	34,829	0.1
Others	24,197	0.3	513,328	2.8	174,578	0.8	73,997	0.3
Total	8,238,339	100.0	18,491,097	100.0	22,736,934	100.0	26,494,504	100.0

the number of Sino-Tibetan language is quite large the speakers comprised only 17.3% of the population in 2011. Many of the Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken by ethnic populations in their traditional habitats. Migration from these places appears to result in first-language attrition, i.e., proficiency in the language declines or there is a shift to another, more universally understood language of communication or education. In Nepal, this seems to be invariably the Nepali language that has been promoted and patronised by the state as the *lingua franca*. The share of Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages has remained almost the same throughout.

Gurung (2003) has categorised the languages of Nepal into two groups: those spoken in the highlands, and those in the lowlands. Of the Indo-European languages spoken in Nepal, 13 fall in the highland and 20 in the lowland group. Similarly, of the Sino-Tibetan languages, 59 belong to the highland and three to the lowland group. The rest are foreign languages or languages that cannot be categorised either in the highland or lowland group.

The highland group of languages is the mother tongue of 66.8% of the population of which 49.6% are Indo-European languages (Table 18). These languages are Nepali, its regional dialects, and Majhi. All highland Sino-Tibetan languages are associated with one or the other ethnic groups. The number of such languages has gone up over the years. The lowland groups of languages are spoken by 32.7% of the population and constitute mainly six Indo-European languages, namely, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Bajjika, Urdu and Abadhi. The share of lowland Indo-European languages has been rising slightly over the decades.

The decadal change in speakers of specific mother tongues, as among ethnic groups, has been quite erratic. Among the 91 comparable languages between 2001 and 2011, positive growth was recorded by 67. Of these 67 languages, 33 returned a decadal growth of over 100%, 10 a growth of 50 to 100%, and the remaining 24 a growth of up to 10%. Some languages spoken in the lowlands such as Urdu and Bajjika experienced phenomenal growth of 295.5% and 233.4% respectively in the last decade, adding over half a million speakers each, while Abadhi (-10.5%), Bhojpuri (-7.4%), Hindi (-26.7%) and Rajbanshi (-5.9%) recorded absolute declines. Among highland languages, Limbu, Newar and Magar recorded a decadal growth of 3.0%, 2.6% and 2.4% while Tharu, Tamang and Nepali showed growth rates of 14.9%, 14.8% and 7%, respectively. Of

Table 18. Population Change by Language Group*

Language Family	1952/54		1991		2001		2011	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Highland	5,817,204	70.6	12,434,219	67.2	15,299,536	67.3	17,701,199	66.8
Indo European	4,019,296	48.8	9,314,202	50.4	11,075,096	48.7	13,144,983	49.6
Sino-Tibetan	1,797,908	21.8	3,120,017	16.9	4,224,440	18.6	4,556,216	17.2
Lowland	2,396,938	29.1	5,540,766	30.0	7,259,515	31.9	8,675,604	32.7
Indo European	2,367,683	28.7	5,474,286	29.6	7,165,554	31.5	8,563,246	32.3
Sino-Tibetan	7185	0.1	17,973	0.1	23,022	0.1	27,433	0.1
Austro-Asiatic	17,258	0.2	33,332	0.2	41,835	0.2	50,096	0.2
Dravidian	4812	0.1	15,175	0.08	29,104	0.1	34,829	0.1
Others	24,197	0.3	516,112	2.8	177,883	0.8	117,701	0.4
Total	8,238,339	100.0	18,491,097	100.0	22,736,934	100.0	26,494,504	100.0

* The highland and lowland groups of languages exclude non-Nepali languages, namely, Arabic, Assamese, Chinese, Dzongkha, English, French, Garhwali, Hariyanvi, Koche, Kuki, Kurmali, Magahi, Mizo, Nagamese, Oriya, Russian, Sadhani, Sindhi and Spanish, or languages that cannot be ascribed to specific regions such as Sanskrit. All such languages are categorised in the 'Others' category.

the 24 languages that recorded absolute declines, Bantawa Rai showed a decline by 238,473 speakers, Bhojpuri by 127,578, Abadhi by 58,992, Hindi by 28,196, Sherpa by 14,941, and Gurung by 13,303. Many minority languages suffered declines while many others registered increases. In some cases, like Bantawa Rai, the inclusion of Rai as a separate category in 2011 could have influenced the census outcome. Like ethnic identity, particularly among broadly similar groups, language identity also seems to be in a state of flux in Nepal. This state of affairs begs more study and analysis from linguistic scholars so that the state of Nepal's languages can be better understood and assessed, and language reporting becomes more scientific in the future.

Trends in Mother Tongue Retention

The major languages in Nepal are traditionally associated with particular geographical areas where there is a relative concentration of mother-tongue speakers. Thus, Maithili speakers are mainly concentrated in the Eastern and Central Tarai. Similarly, Abadhi speakers are relatively concentrated in the Western Tarai, Bhojpuri in the Central and Western Tarai, Bajjika in the Central Tarai, Tharu in the Mid- and Far-western Tarai, Magar in the Western hills, Tamang in the Central hills, Gurung in the Western hills, Limbu in the Eastern mountain and hills, and Sherpa in the Eastern and Central mountains and hills. The 2011 census outcome shows that in spite of the mobility of the population, this pattern seems to have maintained pretty well.

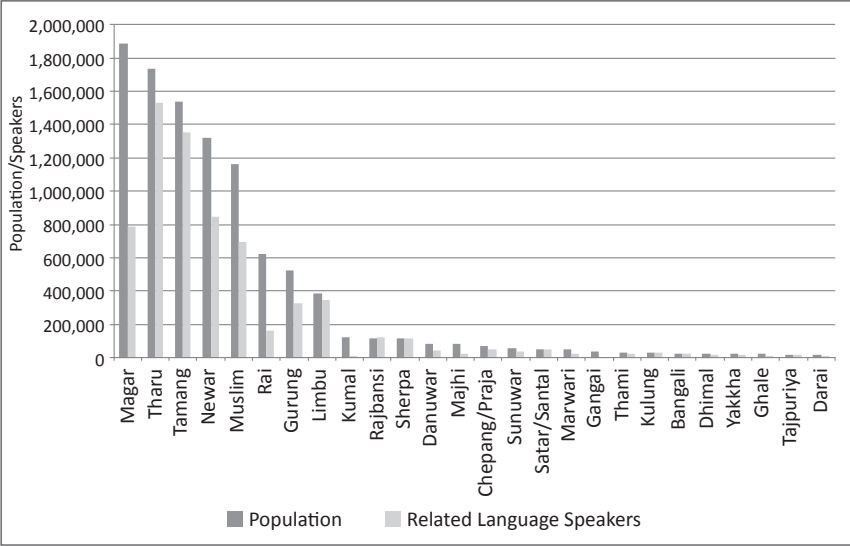
With the exception of a few languages like Nepali and its regional dialects in the hills and major Tarai languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Abadhi and Bajjika, all other language groups can be associated with particular caste/ethnic groups. A comparison of ethnic population and speakers of the associated language gives an idea of the state of mother-tongue retention (Table 19).

Thakali was the only languages with a consistently declining retention rate, from 51.8 in 1991 to 39.7 in 2011. The retention rate was less than 50% for 10, mostly smaller, languages, with the exception of Magar, which was the eighth largest language. The major ethnic languages, Tamang and Tharu, had relatively high retention rates (above 80%) while the retention rates for Gurung and Newar was moderate, around 60%. An interesting observation is that the retention rate for most languages was highest in 2001, after which it declined slightly or remained more or less

Table 19. Mother Tongue Retention in Selected Languages (%)

	Language/Region	1991	2001	2011
<i>Mountain</i>				
1	Sherpa	110.4	83.9	101.7
2	Thakali	51.8	49.6	39.7
3	Byansi		82.5	12.3
<i>Hill</i>				
4	Chepang	68.5	70.5	70.9
5	Gurung	50.7	62.4	62.3
6	Magar	32.1	47.5	41.8
7	Newar	66.3	66.3	64.0
8	Tamang	88.8	92.0	87.9
9	Baram		4.6	1.9
10	Bhujel		9.1	18.3
11	Chhantyal		60.2	36.3
12	Dura		65.7	40.0
13	H Yolmo/Yholmo		688.4	94.6
14	Jirel	86.5	92.5	83.6
15	Kusunda		53.0	10.3
16	Raute		78.7	74.6
17	Lepcha		77.2	217.7
18	Limbu	85.5	92.8	88.7
<i>Inner Tarai</i>				
19	Thami	75.4	82.6	80.7
20	Bote		35.4	84.3
21	Danuwar	46.7	59.8	54.5
22	Darai	60.6	68.7	69.6
23	Kumal	1.8	6.6	10.1
24	Majhi	20.6	30.1	29.2
25	Raji	90.9	100.6	88.7
<i>Tarai</i>				
26	Dhimai	89.5	88.6	73.4
27	Rajbanshi	104.1	135.5	106.0
28	Tharu	83.2	86.8	88.1
29	Kisan		17.0	67.7
30	Koche		3.8	127.2
31	Meche		87.7	89.9
32	Santhali/Satar		94.3	96.4
33	Tharu	83.2	86.8	88.1

Fig. 4: Population of Ethnic Groups and Related Language Speakers, 2011
(for groups with over 10,000 population)



stable. If retention rates were a function of rising ethnic consciousness one would have expected the rates to rise further in 2011, at least for the major ethnic groups. Perhaps mother-tongue retention among migrants is influenced by the ethno-specific environment of the destination, i.e., ethnic migrants to specific ethnic-dominated areas could have low first-language attrition rates. For example, according to the 2011 data, 31% of ethnic Limbu were in the Eastern Tarai, and 30% of Limbu speakers were also in the Eastern Tarai.

5. Religious Groups

In 1952/54, only three religious groups were reported in the census: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. By 1961, two other religions, Jain and Christianity, had been added. The latter was dropped in the 1971 census and added again in the 1981 census. Kirat and Sikh were added in the 1991 census; and Bahai in 2001. The 2011 census recorded ten religions that included Bon, an indigenous religious tradition of the Himalayan region, and Prakriti (broadly, nature worship, but not adequately defined) in addition to the earlier groups.

Hindu is by far the predominant religion in Nepal. Until recently, Nepal was officially a Hindu kingdom. Hinduism enjoyed the status and privilege of a state religion as it does in everyday life even today. In 1991, 86.5% of the population claimed to be Hindu, the rate declined to 80.6% in 2001, and rose slightly to 81.3% in 2011 (Table 20). Buddhism was the second major religion and a slight rise in the share of Buddhist population was seen, from 7.8% to 10.7% between 1991 and 2001, and declined slightly to 9% in 2011. The religions that have consistently grown much above the national average are Islam and Christianity. Islam is Nepal's third largest religion with a share of 4.4% in 2011. The decadal growth of Islam was 46% and 21.8% respectively in the last two inter-censal decades. The growth was phenomenal in the case of Christianity – 226% and 268.4% in the same period. As in the case of language there was a resurgence of religions other than Hinduism in 2001. In 2011, the decadal growth of Buddhism, Kirat, Jainism and Sikhism was negative with absolute declines in their followers.

Hinduism is dominant in all regions. The proportion was relatively lower in the mountain and the hill regions (72.5% and 78.6% respectively). On the contrary, and, as would be expected, Buddhism had a relatively higher following in the mountains (17.9%) and the hills (14.1%) compared to the national average (9%). Kirat, Prakriti and Bon are minority religions in the national context. Islam had a large following in the Tarai, almost twice as high (8.3%) as the national average (4.4%).

All religions, with the exception of Jainism and Sikhism, had a predominant following in the rural areas (Table 21). The distribution of

Table 20. Population by Religion, 1991-2011

Religion	Population 1991	%	Population 2001	%	Population 2011	%	Decadal Growth, 1991-2001	Decadal Growth, 2001-2011
Hinduism	15,996,953	86.5	18,330,121	80.6	21,551,492	81.3	14.6	17.6
Buddhism	1,439,142	7.8	2,442,520	10.7	2,396,099	9.0	69.7	-1.9
Islam	653,218	3.5	954,023	4.2	1,162,370	4.4	46.0	21.8
Kirat	318,389	1.7	818,106	3.6	807,169	3.0	157.0	-1.3
Christianity	31,280	0.2	101,976	0.4	375,699	1.4	226.0	268.4
Prakriti		0.0		0.0	121,982	0.5		
Bon		0.0		0.0	13,006	0.0		
Jainism	7561	0.0	4108	0.0	3214	0.0	-45.7	-21.8
Bahai		0.0	1211	0.0	1283	0.0		5.9
Sikhism	9292	0.1	5890	0.0	609	0.0	-36.6	-89.7
Others/Unstated	35,262	0.2	78,979	0.3	61,581	0.2	124.0	-22.0
Total	1,849,1097	100.0	22,736,934	100.0	26,494,504	100.0	23.0	16.5

Table 21. Distribution of Religion by Region, 2011

[illegible]

Hinduism followed the distribution of the population in general – 52.5% in the Tarai followed by the hills (41.5%). Two thirds of the followers of Buddhism were in the hills. Islam was overwhelmingly a Tarai-based religion while Kirat was prevalent mainly in the rural Eastern hills. Almost 60% of the followers of Christianity were in the hills. Compared to other religions, Christianity and Bon had a higher share of followers in urban areas. More than half the followers of Prakriti were in the Tarai as were 70% of the adherents of Bahai. Jainism and Sikhism were followed predominantly in the urban Tarai.

6. Literacy of Population

Literacy competence in the census is defined as the ability to both read and write in any language with understanding (CBS, 1987, p. 127). Literacy can be generally indicative of the most basic skill to have access to knowledge. Census information, however, is not based on any functional literacy test and just reflects the response from the respondents. A caveat in literacy data is that the 2011 census reports literacy rates for the population five years of age and above while all earlier censuses reported literacy rate for population six years of age and above.

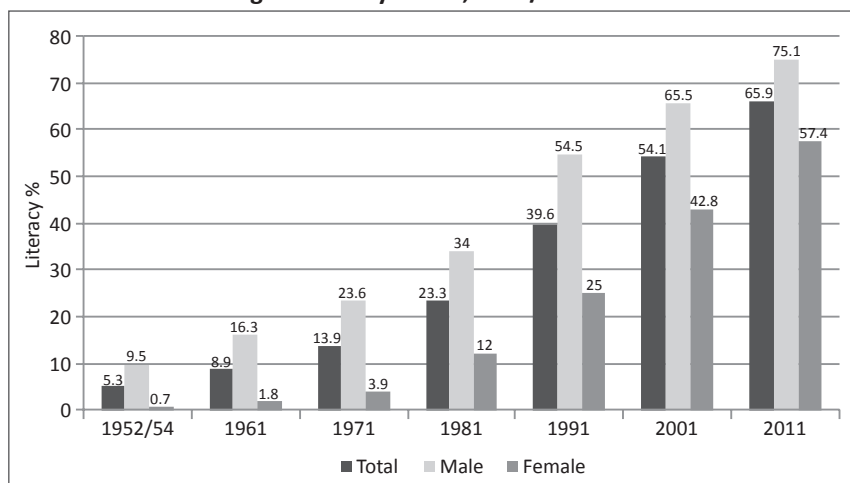
From a dismal 5.3% total and 0.7% female literacy rate in 1952/54 to 65.9% total and 57.4% female literacy in 2011, there has been considerable progress in literacy in Nepal, although more concerted efforts could have wiped away illiteracy altogether in the past six decades (Table 22). Total literacy as well as female literacy rates shows that the progress has been faster only since the 1970s. Between 1981 and 2011, total male and female literacy increased by over 40 percentage points, with the female rate slightly higher than that of males. At the national level, however, female literacy was lower by 18 percentage points than male literacy.

Table 22. Literacy Rate of Population, 1952/54-2011*

Census	Total	Male	Female
1952/54	5.3	9.5	0.7
1961	8.9	16.3	1.8
1971	13.9	23.6	3.9
1981	23.3	34.0	12.0
1991	39.6	54.5	25.0
2001	54.1	65.5	42.8
2011*	65.9	75.1	57.4

* Literacy rate for 2011 is for the population five years and above while it was six-plus for the earlier censuses.

The educational attainment of the literate population reveals that among the literate the proportion with no schooling has been declining since the 1990s. In 1991, nearly 10% of the literate had no schooling. It declined to 4.7% in 2001 and 2.7% in 2011. On the other hand, those

Fig. 5: Literacy Levels, 1952/54–2011

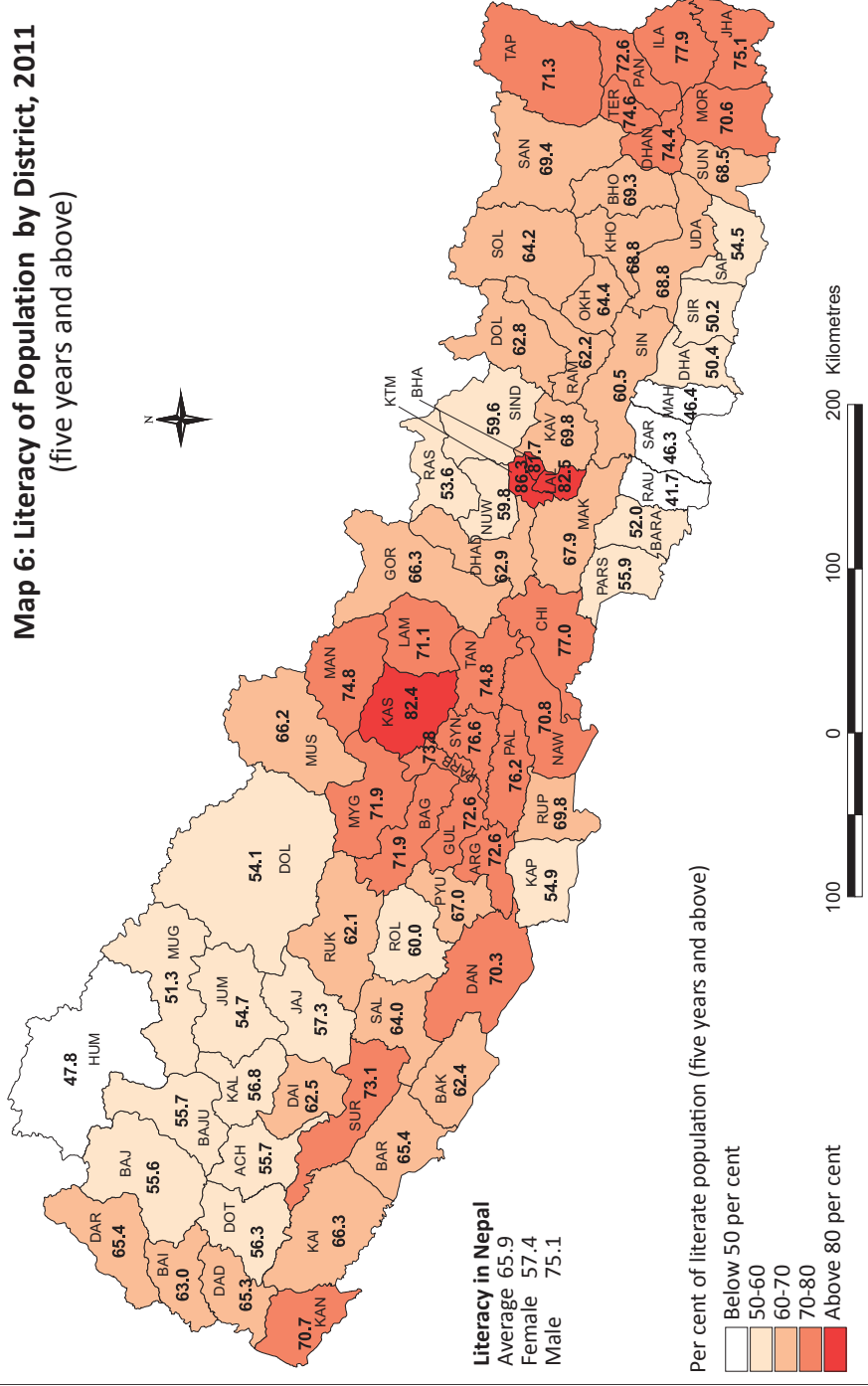
with educational attainment of at least 1–5 grades has been consistently rising: 5.8% in 1971, 11.3% in 1981, 16.2% in 1991, 22.7% in 2001 and 39.8% in 2011. The 2011 census did not have the no-schooling category and had instead a beginners' category, while the population included as literate (16.098 million) was larger than the population that 'can read and write' (15.777 million).

The progress in literacy by district in the last two decades since 1991 is summarised in Table 23. While 64 of the 75 districts had a total literacy rate of 50% or less in 1991, only four had figures in that category in 2011. Fifty-two districts had literacy of over 60% in 2011. There were only two such districts in 1991 and 19 in 2001. It may be noted that eight of the 11 Tarai districts east of Parsa had literacy rates below 60% in 2011.

Table 23. Number of Districts Categorised by Per Cent Literate, 1991–2011

Category	1991	2001	2011
80% and over	0	0	4
70–80%	1	5	22
60–70%	1	14	26
50–60%	9	24	19
40–50%	20	17	4
25–40%	36	15	0
Less than 25%	8	0	0
Total	75	75	75

Map 6: Literacy of Population by District, 2011
(five years and above)



The spatial picture of literacy by district in 2011 is shown in Map 6. Other than the high literacy districts of the Kathmandu Valley, there were two clusters of districts with over 70% literacy. The first comprised 14 contiguous districts centring around the Western hills, namely, Kaski, Syangja, Parbat, Myagdi, Baglung, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Dang, Palpa, Tanahu, Lamjung, Manang, Nawalparasi and Chitwan. The second comprised seven districts in the east: Taplejung, Panchthar, Terhathum, Dhankuta, Ilam, Jhapa and Morang. Together with the Kathmandu Valley, these districts have a proportionally higher representation in Nepal's public services. There were two other clusters of districts with medium to low literacy. These include the districts in the Eastern Tarai and the Mid and Far-western hills.

Table 24. Ten Districts with Highest Literacy Rates, 1991-2011

1991			2001		2011*	
	District	Total Literacy %	District	Total Literacy %	District	Total Literacy %
1	Kathmandu	70.1	Kathmandu	77.2	Kathmandu	86.3
2	Lalitpur	62.4	Kaski	72.1	Lalitpur	82.5
3	Bhaktapur	58.8	Chitwan	71.1	Kaski	82.4
4	Kaski	57.2	Lalitpur	70.9	Bhaktapur	81.7
5	Jhapa	56.3	Bhaktapur	70.6	Ilam	77.9
6	Terhathum	55.7	Jhapa	67.1	Chitwan	77.0
7	Chitwan	53.1	Syangja	66.7	Syangja	76.6
8	Ilam	52.5	Ilam	66.5	Palpa	76.2
9	Parbat	51.9	Palpa	66.2	Jhapa	75.1
10	Syangja	51.3	Rupandehi	66.2	Manang	74.8

* For the population five years of age and above in 2011.

Over the past two decades eight of the 10 most literate districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Kaski, Bhaktapur, Ilam, Chitwan, Syangja and Jhapa) have remained the same (Table 24). With some exceptions, these are districts that have a high level of urbanisation, and districts that have a high migrant population. Terhathum and Parbat, which were among the top 10 in 1991, are the 12th and 14th highest literacy districts in Nepal with rates of above 70% in 2011 (Annex 5).

If we look at the other end of the spectrum, five of the 10 districts with the lowest literacy (Rautahat, Humla, Mugu, Rasuwa and Dolpa)

Table 25. Ten Least Literate Districts, 1991-2011

District	1991			2001			2011*		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Jumla	25.4	41.5	8.5	35.5	57.6	15.2	54.1	67.9	40.6
Bajura	25.2	43.4	7.7	35.0	49.6	19.8	53.6	60.9	46.5
Achham	23.9	45.3	5.5	34.7	45.9	22.4	52.0	62.8	40.7
Rautahat	23.7	34.7	11.9	34.3	42.8	24.8	51.3	65.2	36.9
Jajarkot	23.6	38.0	9.0	34.1	51.2	17.3	50.4	60.6	40.2
Dolpa	23.3	37.5	8.4	33.8	54.1	16.0	50.2	61.9	39.2
Rasuwa	23	33.8	11.3	32.7	42.9	21.7	47.8	62.1	33.0
Mugu	22	37.9	5.2	32.5	47	16.8	46.4	56.6	36.6
Humla	19.6	33.7	4.6	28.0	45.4	9.3	46.3	55.8	36.6
Kalikot	19.6	33.6	5.1	27.1	41.3	11.8	41.7	50.9	32.0

* For the population five years of age and above in 2011.

in 1991 were also the lowest in 2001 as well as 2011 (Table 25). A closer look reveals that eight of the 10 least literate districts were from the remote Mid- and the Far-western hills in 1991, and only one from the Tarai. In 2011, six such districts (Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Siraha, Dhanusha and Bara) were from the Tarai. Clearly, the pace of literacy in these Tarai districts has lagged behind much of the Mid-western and Far-western hills and mountains. The fact that Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Siraha and Dhanusha had a male literacy rate behind Mugu and Humla is evidence not only of the low level of social awareness but also a lack of social mobilisation, and persistent social inequities and discrimination that inhibit literacy since the infrastructure for literacy in these districts is in no way inferior to that of the Mid- and Far-western hills.

Table 26. Ten Districts with Largest Gain in Literacy, 1991-2011*

	District	Gain in Total Literacy (% points)	District	Gain in Male Literacy (% points)	District	Gain in Female Literacy (% points)
1	Kalikot	37.2	Kalikot	34.3	Salyan	42.7
2	Kailali	36.0	Bardiya	31.9	Rukum	42.6
3	Bardiya	36.0	Kailali	30.9	Kailali	42.0
4	Pyuthan	34.3	Dolpa	30.4	Pyuthan	41.6
5	Salyan	34.2	Humla	28.4	Dailekh	41.6
6	Jajarkot	33.7	Manang	28.1	Bardiya	41.1
7	Rukum	33.3	Jajarkot	27.9	Kalikot	40.6
8	Dailekh	32.7	Mugu	27.3	Ramechhap	40.6
9	Rolpa	32.3	Rasuwa	27.1	Rolpa	40.3
10	Myagdi	32.3	Pyuthan	26.8	Udayapur	40.0

* For the population five years of age and above in 2011

The districts that recorded the largest gain in total, male and female literacy in the two decades since 1991 are mainly from the Mid- and the Far-west. Seven districts – Salyan, Rukum, Kailali, Pyuthan, Dailekh, Bardiya, Kalikot and Rolpa – from the Mid and the Far-west gained over 40 percentage points in female literacy between 1991 and 2011 (Table 26). The average national gain in total, male and female literacy between 1991 and 2011 were 26.3%, 20.6% and 32.4% respectively.

A comparative picture of literacy by eco-development region is pre-

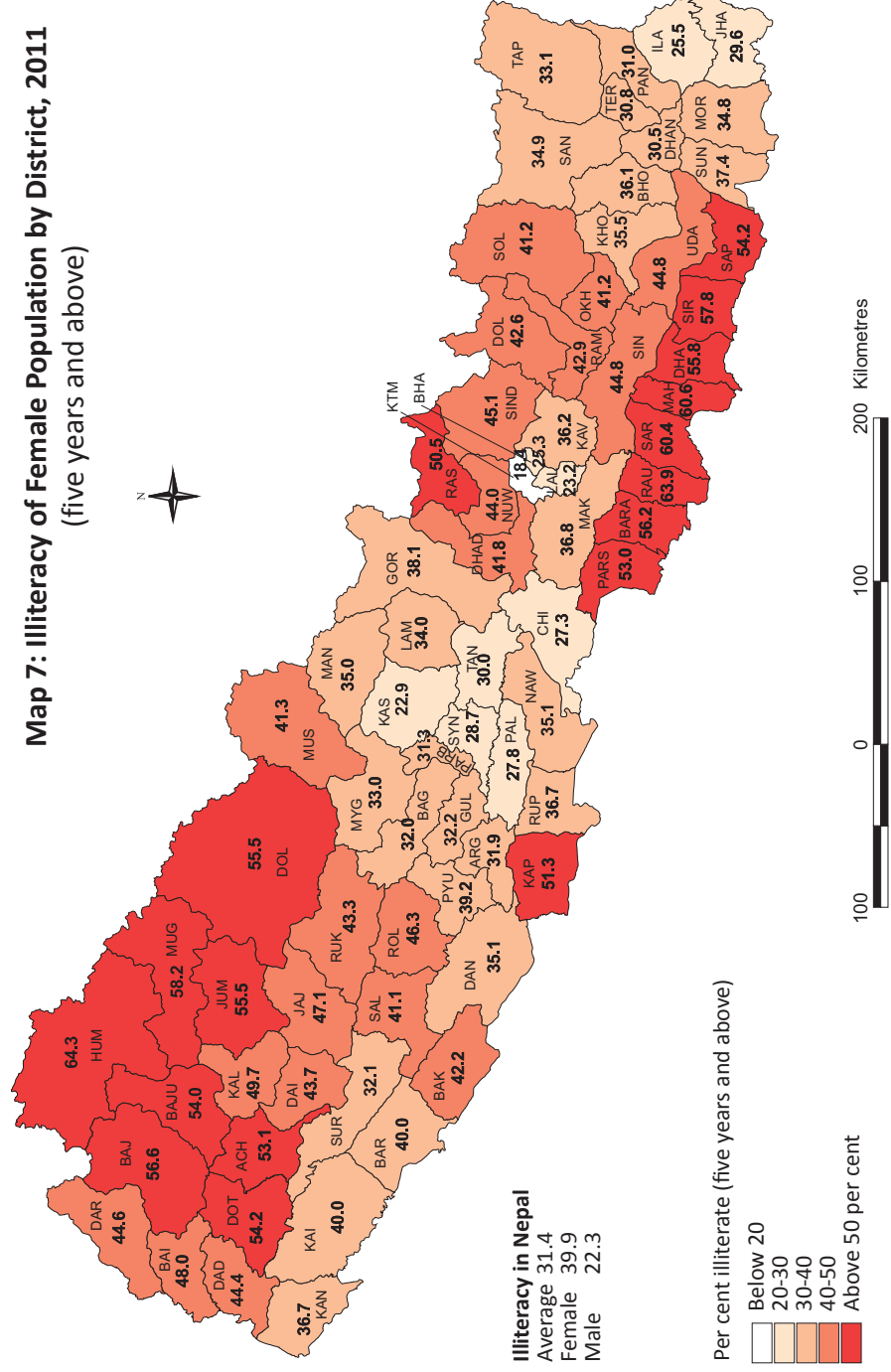
sented in Annex 6. It shows the significant disparity in literacy levels as well as male-female differentials among ecological belts in each census since 1991, although the differentials have been narrowing over time. Among the ecological regions, the literacy rates remained relatively and consistently higher in the hills, followed by the Tarai and the mountains. In 2011, total literacy in the hills was 72.3% compared to 61.2% in the Tarai and 60.5% in the mountains. Male literacy likewise was 81.4% in the hills compared to 70.3% in the Tarai and 71.6% in the mountains. Female literacy was 12 and 14 percentage points higher in the hills than in the Tarai and the mountains respectively. The Mid- and Far-western mountains and the Central Tarai recorded the lowest literacy rates in 1991 as well as in 2011.

As would be expected, there are significant urban-rural differentials in total as well as male and female literacy. In 2011, total, male and female literacy in urban areas were 82.2%, 89% and 75.2% compared to 62.5%, 72% and 54.2% respectively in the rural areas, a difference of over 20 percentage points. The differential rise in literacy among different ecological regions notwithstanding, there has been a consistent decline in overall male-female literacy differential over time. At the national level, the differential declined from 29.5 percentage points in 1991 to 17.7 percentage points in 2011. At the urban and rural levels the differentials were 23.2 and 29.9 percentage points in 1991 and went down to 13.8 and 17.8 percentage points in 2011. This is also true for all the three ecological regions. In the mountains the decline was from 33.7% to 21.5%, in the hills from 31.7% to 17.3% and in the Tarai from 27.1% to 18.0% between 1991 and 2011.

All the ten districts that exhibit high male-female literacy differentials in 2011 were from the Mid- and the Far-west hills and mountains and include Dadeldhura, Darchula, Baitadi, Bajhang, Achham and Doti, which were also the districts that showed the highest male-female literacy differentials in 1991 (Table 27). This is clearly indicative of the enormous gender gap that continues to persist in literacy in the Mid- and Far-western hills and mountains.

The national picture of female illiteracy in 2011 (Map 7) shows that some of the most accessible districts of the Eastern Tarai shared features similar to the remotest districts of the Mid- and Far-western districts of Nepal. All the eight Eastern Tarai districts, from Saptari to Parsa, had female illiteracy levels above 40%, a feature similar to the eight remote

Map 7: Illiteracy of Female Population by District, 2011
(five years and above)



Illiteracy in Nepal

Average, 31.4

Female 39.9

Male 22.3

Per cent illiterate (five years and above)



Table 27. Ten Districts with Highest Male-Female Literacy Differential, 1991 and 2011

District	1991		District	2011	
	Total Literacy (%)	MF Differential (% points)		Total Literacy (%)	MF Differential (% points)
Dadeldhura	36.6	49.3	Bajhang	55.6	32.9
Darchula	41.4	47.4	Doti	56.3	31.1
Baitadi	35.7	46.5	Baitadi	63.0	29.8
Bajhang	27.6	43.1	Humla	47.8	29.1
Achham	23.9	39.8	Mugu	51.3	28.2
Doti	28.6	38.8	Achham	55.7	27.8
Terhathum	55.7	37.3	Jumla	54.7	27.4
Dailekh	29.8	37.0	Dolpa	54.1	27.2
Rolpa	27.7	36.4	Dadeldhura	65.3	26.7
Ramechhap	30.4	36.4	Darchula	65.4	26.4

districts of Dolpa, Jumla, Mugu, Humla, Bajura, Bajhang, Achham and Doti. The only three districts in the country with over 50% female illiteracy, namely, Mahottari, Sarlahi and Rautahat, lie in the Eastern Tarai. Clearly, while remoteness and low access to literacy facilities have played a role in the Karnali, in the Eastern Tarai it is the prevailing social attitudes that have inhibited female literacy.

Literacy and Ethnicity

Literacy levels by ethnicity provide a picture of the differential access to opportunities for individual and social advancement and is often taken as an indicator of inequalities and disparities in social and economic achievements by different social groups. There has been progress in literacy among all caste/ethnic groups since 1991 when the data for literacy by ethnicity became available. However, the improvement has been remarkable for caste and specific ethnic groups. Dalits continue to lag behind.

In 1991, of the 19 caste groups recorded, 12 had literacy above 40%, and five above 60%. Among the 25 ethnic groups, only six had literacy above 40% and two above 60% (Table 28). All 10 Dalit groups had less than 40% literacy, with four having less than 20%. In 2011, 125 specific CE groups were recorded. Thirty-three of the 38 caste groups had literacy of over 40%, with 14 above 60%. Among the 64 ethnic groups, 63 had

literacy above 40% and 43 above 60%, and of the 20 Dalit groups, 12 had levels above 40% with five above 60%. Eight Dalit groups had literacy levels of less than 40% although none had literacy levels of less than 20%. The over-60% literacy for 43 ethnic groups was largely a result of the increase in the number of Rai-Kirati groups in the 2011 census, raising the number of ethnic groups with that level of literacy.

Table 28. Literacy Levels of CE Groups, 1991-2011

Literacy Level	CE Group	1991	2001	2011
Over 60%	Caste	4		14
	Ethnic	2	14	43
	Dalit	0	0	5
	Other	0	2	2
40-60%	Caste	7	14	19
	Ethnic	4	25	20
	Dalit	0	5	7
	Other	2	2	1
20-40%	Caste	7	7	5
	Ethnic	19	5	1
	Dalit	6	8	8
	Other	2	0	0
Less than 20%	Caste	1	1	0
	Ethnic	1	1	0
	Dalit	4	2	0
	Other	0	0	0
Total		59	100	125

Differentiation of CE groups by geographical region provides a more discerning picture of literacy among different social groups. In 2011, hill caste groups in general showed a high literacy rate of 76% (Table 29). Tarai caste groups in contrast had a medium literacy rate of 56% and there was enormous variation in terms of specific caste group (Annex 7). Dalits in general had low literacy, but hill Dalits had a literacy of 61.9% compared to 34.6% for Tarai Dalits. Tarai Dalits had the lowest literacy in Nepal followed by Muslims at 43.6%. Among the ethnic groups as well, those from the hills fared much better with 71.2% compared to Inner Tarai (60.7%), Tarai (62.5%) and mountain ethnics (64.8%) and there is

Table 29. Literacy by Major Caste/Ethnic Groups, 2011

Caste/Ethnicity	Total Population Five Years and Above	Number Literate	Per cent Literate
Hill Caste	7,536,873	5,730,017	76.0
Tarai Caste	3,493,780	1,957,074	56.0
Caste Total	11,030,653	7,687,091	69.7
Hill Dalit	1,893,124	1,172,490	61.9
Tarai Dalit	1,035,963	358,416	34.6
Dalit Total	3,063,552	1,606,571	52.4
Mountain Ethnic	141,394	91,589	64.8
Hill Ethnic	6,176,553	4,399,707	71.2
Inner Tarai Ethnic	289,031	175,398	60.7
Tarai Ethnic	2,067,218	1,291,208	62.5
Ethnic Total	8,675,337	5,958,651	68.7
Muslim	1,013,255	441,402	43.6
Others	143,744	84,071	58.5
Total	23,926,541	15,777,786	65.9

also considerable variation in literacy among specific ethnic groups. The picture that emerges is that the gaps in literacy, particularly in the hills, is narrowing among all social groups but more so among the ethnic groups. The Tarai groups in general and Dalits and Muslims in particular lag much behind in literacy.

In the last three censuses, the top 10 literate groups were mainly caste groups – six in 1991, six in 2001 and again six in 2011 (Table 30). The Tarai

Table 30. Comparative Ranking of Top 10 Caste/Ethnic Groups by Literacy Levels

Rank	Caste/Ethnicity	1991 (%)	Caste/Ethnicity	2001 (%)	Caste/Ethnicity	2011 (%)
1	Marwari	88.0	Jain	98.5	Kayastha	87.3
2	Kayastha	64.4	Marwari	91.7	Marwari	87.1
3	Thakali	62.2	Kayastha	85.8	Dev	84.5
4	Brahman-Tarai	61.8	Byasi/Sauka	81.1	Bahun	81.9
5	Bahun	61.6	Holmo	80.5	Brahman-Tarai	81.1
6	Newar	60.4	Bahun	80.0	Thakali	80.5
7	Rajput	51.7	Thakali	79.9	Newar	80.1
8	Bangali	51.2	Brahman-Tarai	76.1	Rajput	79.9
9	Churaute	47.3	Newar	76.0	Loharung	79.4
10	Thakuri	46.9	Bangali	75.6	Bantawa	78.1

caste groups, Marwari and Kayastha, are among those ranking highest in all the censuses. Hill Bahuns rank 5th, 6th and 4th while Tarai Brahmins rank 4th, 8th and 5th respectively in the last three censuses. Thakali and Newar are the two ethnic groups that have consistently remained among the top 10 since 1991.

There is wide variation in literacy among the most numerous caste/ethnic groups. Of the nine CE groups with over a million people in 2011, only two – Bahun and Newar – have literacy of over 80%. Chhetri and Magar have a literacy rate of 71% and 72% respectively. Tharu, Kami and Tamang have rates between 62% and 65%. Yadav has a rate of 51.8% and Muslims have the lowest literacy rate in the country of 43.6%. Although literacy has improved over the years, the fact that many of the most numerous groups have literacy rates below the national average is a cause for serious concern.

The comparable caste/ethnic groups that have gained the most in literacy in the 1991-2011 period are hill Dalits and hill ethnics. Among the former are Badi, Gaine, Sarki and Kami and among the latter are Bote, Tharu, Majhi, Thami and Tamang. All have gained between 34 to 43 percentage points.

Among the bottom 10 in literacy levels are invariably Tarai Dalits – six in 1991 as well as 2001 and five in 2011 (Table 31). Musahar and Dom have the lowest literacy levels in the country.

Table 31. Comparative Ranking of Bottom 10 Caste/Ethnic Groups by Literacy Levels, 1991-2011

Bottom	Caste/Ethnicity	1991 (%)	Caste/Ethnicity	2001 (%)	Caste/Ethnicity	2011 (%)
10	Raji	21.5	Bantar/Sardar	26.1	Khatwe	35.7
9	Bote	21.2	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	24.8	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	35.4
8	Dhobi	20.7	Dhunias	24.0	Nuniya	35.2
7	Badi	20.6	Chamar/Harijan/Ram	23.8	Dhunias	34.3
6	Chepang/Praja	13.9	Khatwe	23.5	Kori	34.1
5	Mallaha	12.0	Kamar	22.0	Natuwa	32.0
4	Khatwe	11.5	Bin	19.5	Dolpo	28.4
3	Chamar/Harijan/Ram	10.1	Pattharkatta/Kushwadiya	19.5	Bin	27.5
2	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	9.9	Dom	13.8	Musahar	21.8
1	Musahar	4.2	Musahar	11.1	Dom	20.3

The 2011 census also shows that there has been an unlikely decline in literacy rates among seven caste/ethnic groups. Among these groups are Nurang, which showed a decline by 28.8 percentage points, Byansi by 21.8 points, and Hyolmo by 18 percentage points. Other groups – Marwari, Kathbaniya, Halkhor and Raute – showed declines of less than 5%. It may be noted that the Hyolmo and Byasi populations showed a phenomenal increase between 2001 and 2011, while the Nurang population declined (See Annex 1).

7. Concluding Observations

The 2011 census returns show that Nepal's demographic transition is well established with slow but steady declines in fertility and mortality regimes. Not all regions of Nepal are undergoing similar transitions though. Compared to the Central and Eastern hills, the Mid- and Far-western hills and mountains are in relatively early stages. As the pace of development (expansion of road infrastructure, expanded access to health and education services as well as development opportunities) gathers momentum the pace of demographic transition in these regions is likely to hasten.

The trends in the spatial shift of population also appears to be well set in terms of the continuing movement from the hill-mountains to the Tarai, and from rural to urban areas. In this sense, the future Goldstein et al had foreseen in 1983 – that of a mountain-rural society turning into a plains-urban society – appears to be coming true (Goldstein et al 1983). The relatively high growth rates of the Tarai population may be indicative of the continuing demographic shift from the hills. The pace of urbanisation is likely to remain high and steady as the road network expands, subsistence production gives way to commercialisation, and as value-added opportunities expand in urban centres, market towns and bazaars along major highways. The attraction of the Kathmandu Valley towns will remain strong unless other counter-magnets of urban development emerge. A carefully planned process of federalisation could have the potential to induce such growth. In view of the population density and infrastructural constraints, urban development in the Mid- and the Far-western hills is likely to fall behind. The urban potential of the Inner Tarai valleys will, however, expand.

The increasing proportion of absentees abroad is already impacting the demography of the hills and is likely to be a major factor influencing the problems and prospects of hill development. The major causes of concern will be (i) movement of remittance-receiving households from rural locations to market towns, district headquarters and urban centres; (ii) dependence on remittance for increasing consumption expenditure; and (iii) lack of productive investments in the rural areas. Unless domestic

employment opportunities are expanded, particularly for the youth, any drastic decline in the demand for Nepali labour abroad will have serious and far-reaching consequences for Nepal's political economy.

Nepal's ethnic and linguistic diversity revealed by the 2011 census re-establishes the fact that Nepal is largely a country of minorities. Judging by the ethnic and linguistic data it appears that the initial phase of identity assertion is giving way to a process where broadly similar groups claim differentiation. Ethnic and linguistic consciousness are manifest in numerous ways and have to be accommodated as a critically significant factor in managing and defining Nepali nationhood.

In terms of the religious composition of the population the only significant trend that emerges from the 2011 census is the rapid growth of Christianity and, to a lesser extent, of Islam. Hinduism, in spite of the ethnic upsurge, remains entrenched in the belief system in Nepal.

Over the past two decades, Nepal has made progress in literacy but there are also areas of serious concern, mainly in the Eastern Tarai and the Mid- and Far-western hills. The Eastern Tarai lags in literacy in general and female literacy in particular despite the fact that it is one of the most accessible regions with the required infrastructure needed to improve literacy. This indicates that the political consciousness of the Eastern Tarai remains limited to the largely educated and landed elite seemingly unconcerned about social inequalities (manifest in the high illiteracy) rife within the socio-cultural fabric of the region. In the Mid- and Far-west, literacy levels are rising but the male-female differentials remain high.

The most encouraging aspect is the rising literacy levels, particularly among hill Dalits and many Janajati groups from the hill region, which need to be replicated among their counterparts in the Tarai and the Inner Tarai.

At the same time, there is also a need to assess literacy data in view of the fact that census information is not based on functional tests.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Districts Gaining and Losing Population, 2001-2011
(ranked by decadal change)

(a) Districts Gaining Population

SN	Districts	Population 2001	Population 2011	Population Gain/Loss	Decadal Change
1	Kathmandu	1,081,845	1,744,240	662,395	61.2
2	Lalitpur	337,785	468,132	130,347	38.6
3	Bhaktapur	225,461	304,651	79,190	35.1
4	Kalikot	105,580	136,948	31,368	29.7
5	Kaski	380,527	492,098	111,571	29.3
6	Banke	385,840	491,313	105,473	27.3
7	Jajarkot	134,868	171,304	36,436	27.0
8	Rautahat	545,132	686,722	141,590	26.0
9	Mugu	43,937	55,286	11,349	25.8
10	Kailali	616,697	775,709	159,012	25.8
11	Humla	40,595	50,858	10,263	25.3
12	Rupandehi	708,419	880,196	171,777	24.2
13	Dolpa	29,545	36,700	7,155	24.2
14	Bajura	108,781	134,912	26,131	24.0
15	Bara	559,135	687,708	128,573	23.0
16	Chitwan	472,048	579,984	107,936	22.9
17	Sunsari	625,633	763,487	137,854	22.0
18	Jumla	89,427	108,921	19,494	21.8
19	Surkhet	288,527	350,804	62,277	21.6
20	Sarlahi	635,701	769,729	134,028	21.1
21	Parsa	497,219	601,017	103,798	20.9
22	Dang	462,380	552,583	90,203	19.5
23	Kanchanpur	377,899	451,248	73,349	19.4
24	Kapilbastu	481,976	571,936	89,960	18.7
25	Jhapa	688,109	812,650	124,541	18.1
26	Bajhang	167,026	195,159	28,133	16.8
27	Dailekh	225,201	261,770	36,569	16.2
28	Morang	843,220	965,370	122,150	14.5
29	Nawalparasi	562,870	643,508	80,638	14.3
30	Salyan	213,500	242,444	28,944	13.6
31	Mahottari	553,481	627,580	74,099	13.4
32	Dadeldhura	126,162	142,094	15,932	12.6
33	Dhanusha	671,364	754,777	83,413	12.4

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SN	Districts	Population 2001	Population 2011	Population Gain/Loss	Decadal Change
34	Saptari	570,282	639,284	69,002	12.1
35	Bardiya	382,649	426,576	43,927	11.5
36	Siraha	572,399	637,328	64,929	11.3
37	Achham	231,285	257,477	26,192	11.3
38	Rukum	188,438	208,567	20,129	10.7
39	Udayapur	287,689	317,532	29,843	10.4
40	Darchula	121,996	133,274	11,278	9.2
41	Pyuthan	212,484	228,102	15,618	7.4
42	Makwanpur	392,604	420,477	27,873	7.1
43	Baitadi	234,418	250,898	16,480	7.0
44	Rolpa	210,004	224,506	14,502	6.9
45	Sindhuli	279,821	296,192	16,371	5.9
46	Ilam	282,806	290,254	7,448	2.6
47	Tanahu	315,237	323,288	8,051	2.6
48	Doti	207,066	211,746	4,680	2.3

b) Districts Losing Population

SN	Districts	Population 2001	Population 2011	Population Gain/Loss	Decadal Change
1	Baglung	268,937	268,613	-324	-0.1
2	Sankhuwasabha	159,203	158,742	-461	-0.3
3	Myagdi	114,447	113,641	-806	-0.7
4	Dhading	338,658	336,067	-2,591	-0.8
5	Kavrepalanchowk	385,672	381,937	-3,735	-1.0
6	Solukhumbu	107,686	105,886	-1,800	-1.7
7	Dhankuta	166,479	163,412	-3,067	-1.8
8	Palpa	268,558	261,180	-7,378	-2.7
9	Rasuwa	44,731	43,300	-1,431	-3.2
10	Nuwakot	288,478	277,471	-11,007	-3.8
11	Ramechhap	212,408	202,646	-9,762	-4.6
12	Panchthar	202,056	191,817	-10,239	-5.1
13	Arghakhanchi	208,391	197,632	-10,759	-5.2
14	Lamjung	177,149	167,724	-9,425	-5.3
15	Taplejung	134,698	127,461	-7,237	-5.4
16	Gulmi	296,654	280,160	-16,494	-5.6
17	Okhaldhunga	156,702	147,984	-8,718	-5.6
18	Sindhupalchowk	305,857	287,798	-18,059	-5.9
19	Gorkha	288,134	271,061	-17,073	-5.9
20	Parbat	157,826	146,590	-11,236	-7.1
21	Dolakha	204,229	186,557	-17,672	-8.7
22	Syangja	317,320	289,148	-28,172	-8.9
23	Bhojpur	203,018	182,459	-20,559	-10.1
24	Terhathum	113,111	101,577	-11,534	-10.2
25	Mustang	14,981	13,452	-1,529	-10.2
26	Khotang	231,385	206,312	-25,073	-10.8
27	Manang	9,587	6,538	-3,049	-31.8

Annex 2. Change in Number of Absentees Abroad by District, 2001-2011

SN	District	2001		2011	
		Total Absentees	Per Cent of District Population	Total Absentees	Per Cent of District Population
1	Achham	21,707	9.4	31,015	12.0
2	Arghakhanchi	27,413	13.2	39,929	20.2
3	Baglung	30,292	11.3	42,623	15.9
4	Baitadi	12,326	5.3	21,039	8.4
5	Bajhang	13,572	8.1	22,845	11.7
6	Bajura	5,166	4.7	8,054	6.0
7	Banke	6,329	1.6	21,359	4.3
8	Bara	2,023	0.4	12,530	1.8
9	Bardiya	8,168	2.1	25,044	5.9
10	Bhaktapur	1,027	0.5	10,215	3.4
11	Bhojpur	6,844	3.4	14,863	8.1
12	Chitwan	14,280	3.0	50,421	8.7
13	Dadeldhura	6,794	5.4	11,670	8.2
14	Dailekh	9,809	4.4	11,221	4.3
15	Dang	16,224	3.5	43,160	7.8
16	Darchula	4,053	3.3	6,864	5.2
17	Dhading	10,021	3.0	22,537	6.7
18	Dhankuta	3,967	2.4	14,415	8.8
19	Dhanusha	13,058	1.9	60,400	8.0
20	Dolakha	2,335	1.1	10,121	5.4
21	Dolpa	153	0.5	447	1.2
22	Doti	15,947	7.7	23,544	11.1
23	Gorkha	16,189	5.6	28,104	10.4
24	Gulmi	44,848	15.1	58,561	20.9
25	Humla	161	0.4	682	1.3
26	Ilam	5,160	1.8	21,486	7.4
27	Jajarkot	556	0.4	4,174	2.4
28	Jhapa	20,801	3.0	80,625	9.9
29	Jumla	611	0.7	1,463	1.3
30	Kailali	17,763	2.9	62,644	8.1
31	Kalikot	136	0.1	2,096	1.5
32	Kanchanpur	8,707	2.3	38,398	8.5
33	Kapilbastu	9,217	1.9	29,792	5.2
34	Kaski	26,852	7.1	57,305	11.6
35	Kathmandu	18,358	1.7	99,805	5.7
36	Kavrepalanchowk	2,465	0.6	14,531	3.8
37	Khotang	8,030	3.5	17,662	8.6
38	Lalitpur	4,996.00	1.5	24,386	5.2

SN	District	2001		2011	
		Total Absentees	Per Cent of District Population	Total Absentees	Per Cent of District Population
39	Lamjung	12,749	7.2	21,161	12.6
40	Mahottari	7,485	1.4	40,541	6.5
41	Makwanpur	2,467	0.6	16,547	3.9
42	Manang	189	2.0	279	4.3
43	Morang	20,934	2.5	70,462	7.3
44	Mugu	444	1.0	699	1.3
45	Mustang	905	6.0	1,425	10.6
46	Myagdi	9,148	8.0	14,314	12.6
47	Nawalparasi	26,501	4.7	65,335	10.2
48	Nuwakot	4,255	1.5	14,311	5.2
49	Okhaldhunga	4,751	3.0	10,552	7.1
50	Palpa	25,196	9.4	39,504	15.1
51	Panchthar	6,516	3.2	17,842	9.3
52	Parbat	16,126	10.2	21,735	14.8
53	Parsa	2,502	0.5	8,053	1.3
54	Pyuthan	23,510	11.1	36,858	16.2
55	Ramechhap	5,527	2.6	11,199	5.5
56	Rasuwa	352	0.8	3,128	7.2
57	Rautahat	3,323	0.6	9,331	1.4
58	Rolpa	13,592	6.5	23,597	10.5
59	Rukum	3,414	1.8	13,051	6.3
60	Rupandehi	20,886	2.9	62,904	7.1
61	Salyan	1,163	0.5	14,213	5.9
62	Sankhuwasabha	5,516	3.5	12,198	7.7
63	Saptari	2,918	0.5	26,433	4.1
64	Sarlahi	4,526	0.7	21,401	2.8
65	Sindhuli	2,970	1.1	15,287	5.2
66	Sindhupalchowk	5,661	1.9	19,712	6.8
67	Siraha	8,981	1.6	45,790	7.2
68	Solukhumbu	2,334	2.2	5,617	5.3
69	Sunsari	12,799	2.0	50,281	6.6
70	Surkhet	10,454	3.6	23,197	6.6
71	Syangja	40,195	12.7	50,476	17.5
72	Tanahu	25,174	8.0	46,387	14.3
73	Taplejung	4,714	3.5	9,793	7.7
74	Terhathum	3,493	3.1	9,791	9.6
75	Udayapur	4,153	1.4	22,060	6.9
Total		762,181	3.3	1,921,494	7.3

Annex 3. Population Change by Caste/Ethnic Group, 1991-2011

SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Decadal Growth 1991-2001 %	Population 2011	Decadal Growth 2001-2011 %
	Hill Castes	5,837,736	7,023,220	20.3	8,278,401	17.9
1	Bahun	2,388,455	2,896,477	21.3	3,226,903	11.4
2	Chhetri	2,968,082	3,593,496	21.1	4,398,053	22.4
3	Sanyasi/Dasnamī	181,726	199,127	9.6	227,822	14.4
4	Thakuri	299,473	334,120	11.6	425,623	27.4
	Tarai Castes	2,386,001	3357,327	40.7	3,912,404	16.5
1	Badhaee		45,975		28,932	-37.1
2	Baraee		35,434		80,597	127.5
3	Bin		18,720		75,195	301.7
4	Brahman-Tarai	162,886	134,496	-17.4	134,106	-0.3
5	Dev				2147	
6	Dhunīa		1231		14,846	1,106.0
7	Gaderi/Bhedihār		17,729		26,375	48.8
8	Hajām/Thakur		98,169		117,758	20.0
9	Haluwāi	44,417	50,583	13.9	83,869	65.8
10	Jain*		1015			
11	Kahār		34,531		53,159	53.9
12	Kalwār	162,046	115,606	-28.7	128,232	10.9
13	Kamār		8761		1787	-79.6
14	Kanū	70,634	95,826	35.7	125,184	30.6
15	Kathabaniyan	101,868	126,971	24.6	138,637	9.2
16	Kayastha	53,545	46,071	-14.0	44,304	-3.8
17	Kewat	101,482	136,953	35.0	153,772	12.3
18	Koiri/Kushwaha	205,797	251,274	22.1	306,393	21.9
19	Kori				12,276	
20	Kumhar	72,008	54,413	-24.4	62,399	14.7
21	Kurmi	166,718	212,842	27.7	231,129	8.6
22	Lodh		24,738		32,837	32.7
23	Lohār		82,637		101,421	22.7
24	Mali		11,390		14,995	31.7
25	Mallaha	110,413	115,986	5.0	173,261	49.4
26	Marwari	29,173	43,971	50.7	51,443	17.0

SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Decadal Growth 1991-2001 %	Population 2011	Decadal Growth 2001-2011 %
27	Nuniya		66,873		70,540	5.5
28	Nurang		17,522		278	-98.4
29	Rajbhar	33,433	24,263	-27.4	9,542	-60.7
30	Rajdhob				13,422	
31	Rajput	55,712	48,454	-13.0	41,972	-13.4
32	Sonar		145,088		64,335	-55.7
33	Sudhi		89,846		93,115	3.6
34	Teli	250,732	304,536	21.5	369,688	21.4
35	Yadav	765,137	895,423	17.0	1,054,458	17.8
	Hill Dalit	1,619,434	1,615,577	-0.2	2,151,626	33.2
1	Badi	7082	4,442	-37.3	38,603	769.0
2	Damai/Dholi	367,989	390,305	6.1	472,862	21.2
3	Gaine	4484	5,887	31.3	6791	15.4
4	Kami	963,655	895,954	-7.0	1,258,554	40.5
5	Sarki	276,224	318,989	15.5	374,816	17.5
	Tarai Dalit	582,347	886,204	52.2	1,181,495	33.3
1	Bantar/Sardar		35,839		55,104	53.8
2	Chamar/Harijan Ram	203,919	269,661	32.2	335,893	24.6
3	Chidimar		12,296		1254	-89.8
4	Dhandi				1982	
5	Dhankar/Dharikar				2681	
6	Dhobi	76,594	73,413	-4.2	109,079	48.6
7	Dom		8,931		13,268	48.6
8	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	93,242	158,525	70.0	208,910	31.8
9	Halkhor		3,621		4003	10.5
10	Kalar				1077	
11	Khatwe	66,612	74,972	12.6	100,921	34.6
12	Musahar	141,980	172,434	21.4	234,490	36.0
13	Natuwa				3062	
14	Sarbaria				4906	
15	Tatma/Tatwa		76,512		104,865	37.1

SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Decadal Growth 1991-2001 %	Population 2011	Decadal Growth 2001-2011 %
Mountain Ethnic		136,552	190,107	39.2	154,570	-18.7
1	Bhote	12,463	19,261	54.5	13,397	-30.4
2	Byasi/Sauka		2,103		3895	85.2
3	Dolpo				4107	
4	Lhomi				1614	
5	Lhopa				2624	
6	Sherpa	110,358	154,622	40.1	112,946	-27.0
7	Thakali	13,731	12,973	-5.5	13,215	1.9
8	Topkegola				1,523	
9	Walung		1,148		1,249	8.8
Hill Ethnic		4,776,993	6,038,530	26.4	6,752,816	11.8
1	Aathpariya				5,977	
2	Bahing				3096	
3	Bantawa				4604	
4	Brahmu/Baramo		7383		8,140	10.3
5	Chamling				6668	
6	Chebang/Praja	36,656	52,237	42.5	68,399	30.9
7	Chhantyal/Chhantel		9814		11,810	20.3
8	Dura		5169		5394	4.4
9	Ghale				22,881	
10	Gharti/Bhujel		117,568		118,650	0.9
11	Gurung	449,189	543,571	21.0	522,641	-3.9
12	Hayu		1821		2925	60.6
13	H Yolmo		579		10,752	1,757.0
14	Jirel	4889	5316	8.7	5774	8.6
15	Khaling				1571	
16	Khawas				18,513	
17	Kulung				28,613	
18	Kusunda		164		273	66.5
19	Lepcha	4826	3,660	-24.2	3445	-5.9
20	Limbu	297,186	359,379	20.9	387,300	7.8
21	Loharung				1153	
22	Magar	1,339,308	1,622,421	21.1	1,887,733	16.4
23	Mewahang/Bala				3100	
24	Nachhiring				7154	
25	Newar	1,041,090	1,245,232	19.6	1,321,933	6.2
26	Pahari		11,505		13,615	18.3

SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Decadal Growth 1991-2001 %	Population 2011	Decadal Growth 2001-2011 %
27	Rai	525,551	635,151	20.9	620,004	-2.4
28	Sampang				1681	
29	Sunuwar	40,943	95,254	132.7	55,712	-41.5
30	Tamang	1,018,252	1,282,304	25.9	1,539,830	20.1
31	Thami	19,103	22,999	20.4	28,671	24.7
32	Thulung				3535	
33	Yakkha		17,003		24,336	43.1
34	Yamphu				6933	
	Inner Tarai Ethnic	206,068	251,117	21.9	321,077	27.9
1	Bote	6718	7969	18.6	10,397	30.5
2	Danuwar	50,754	53,229	4.9	84,115	58.0
3	Darai	10,759	14,859	38.1	16,789	13.0
4	Kumal	76,635	99,389	29.7	121,196	21.9
5	Majhi	55,050	72,614	31.9	83,727	15.3
6	Raji	3274	2399	-26.7	4235	76.5
7	Raute	2878	658	-77.1	618	-6.1
	Tarai Ethnic	1,452,652	1,975,688	36.0	2,261,781	14.5
1	Amat				3,830	
2	Dhanuk	136,944	188,150	37.4	219,808	16.8
3	Dhimal	16,781	19,537	16.4	26,298	34.6
4	Gangai	22,526	31,318	39.0	36,988	18.1
5	Jhangad/Dhagar		41,764		37,424	-10.4
6	Kisan		2876		1739	-39.5
7	Koche		1429		1635	14.4
8	Meche		3763		4867	29.3
9	Munda		660		2350	256.1
10	Pattharkatta/ Kuswadia		552		3182	476.4
11	Rajbanshi	82,177	95,812	16.6	115,242	20.3
12	Satar/Santhali		42,698		51,735	21.2
13	Tajpuriya		13,250		19,213	45.0
14	Tharu	1,194,224	1,533,879	28.4	1,737,470	13.3
	Others	672,034	988,863	47.1	1,198,013	21.2
1	Bangali	7909	9860	24.7	26,582	169.6
2	Churaute*	1778	4893	175.2		
3	Muslim	653,055	971,056	48.7	1,164,255	19.9
4	Punjabi/Sikh	9292	3054	-67.1	7176	135.0

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SN	Caste/Ethnic Group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Decadal Growth 1991-2001 %	Population 2011	Decadal Growth 2001-2011 %
	<i>Unspecified</i>	813,471	410,301		282,321	-31.2
1	Adibasi/Janajati		5259			
2	Dalit Others		173,401		155,354	-10.4
3	Janajati Others				1228	
4	Tarai Others				103,811	
5	Undefined Others	813,471	231,641	-71.5	15,277	-93.4
6	Foreigner				6651	
	Total	18,483,288	22,736,934	23.0	26,494,504	16.5

Source: CBS. Respective Censuses. * Not included in the 2011 census.

Annex 4. Population Change by Language Group, 1952/54–2011

Language Group		Population 1952/54		Population 1991		Population 2001		Population 2011	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Highland Group									
A. Indo-European									
1	Achhami							142,787	0.54
2	Baitadeli							272,524	1.03
3	Bajhang							67,581	0.26
4	Bajureli							10,704	0.04
5	Bankariya							69	0.00
6	Dadeldhuri							488	0.00
7	Dailekhi							3102	0.01
8	Darchuleli							5928	0.02
9	Doteli							787,827	2.97
10	Jumli							851	0.00
11	Khash							1747	0.01
12	Majhi	5729	0.07	11322	0.06	21841	0.10	24,422	0.09
13	Nepali	4,013,567	48.72	9,302,880	50.31	11,053,255	48.61	11,826,953	44.64
B. Sino-Tibetan									
1	Aathpariya*							5530	0.02
2	Bahing*					2765	0.01	11,658	0.04
3	Bantawa*					371,056	1.63	132,583	0.50
4	Baram					342	0.00	155	0.00
5	Belhare*							599	0.00
6	Bhujel					10,733	0.05	21,715	0.08
7	Byansi	1786	0.02	1314	0.01	1734	0.01	480	0.00
8	Chamling*					44,093	0.19	76,800	0.29
9	Chepan	14,261	0.17	25097	0.14	36,807	0.16	48,476	0.18
10	Chhantyal					5912	0.03	4283	0.02
11	Chhiling*					1314	0.01	2046	0.01
12	Chhintang*					8	0.00	3712	0.01
13	Dolpali							1667	0.01
14	Dumi*					5271	0.02	7638	0.03
15	Dungmali*					221	0.00	6260	0.02
16	Dura					3397	0.01	2156	0.01
17	Ghale					1649	0.01	8092	0.03
18	Gurung	162,192	1.97	227,918	1.23	338,925	1.49	325,622	1.23
19	Hayu/Vayu*					1743	0.01	1520	0.01
20	Hyolmo/ Yholmo					3986	0.02	10,176	0.04
21	Jero/Jerung*					271	0.00	1763	0.01

Language Group		Population 1952/54		Population 1991		Population 2001		Population 2011	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
22	Jirel	2721	0.03	4229	0.02	4919	0.02	4829	0.02
23	Kagate					10	0.00	99	0.00
24	Kaike					794	0.00	50	0.00
25	Khaling*					9288	0.04	14,467	0.05
26	Kham							27,113	0.10
27	Khamchi (Raute)					518	0.00	461	0.00
28	Koyee*					2641	0.01	1271	0.00
29	Kulung*					18,686	0.08	33,170	0.13
30	Lapcha					2826	0.01	7499	0.03
31	Lhomi					4	0.00	808	0.00
32	Lhopa							3029	0.01
33	Limbu	145,511	1.77	254,088	1.37	333,633	1.47	343,603	1.30
34	Lingkhim*					97	0.00	129	0.00
35	Lohorung*					1207	0.01	3716	0.01
36	Magar	273,780	3.32	430,264	2.33	770,116	3.39	788,530	2.98
37	Manange							392	0.00
38	Mewahang*					904	0.00	4650	0.02
39	Nachhiring*					3553	0.02	10,041	0.04
40	Newar	383,184	4.65	690,007	3.73	825,458	3.63	846,557	3.20
41	Pahari					2995	0.01	3458	0.01
42	Phangduwali*							290	0.00
43	Puma*					4310	0.02	6686	0.03
44	Rai*	236,049	2.87	439,312	2.38			159,114	0.60
45	Sam*					23	0.00	401	0.00
46	Sampang*					10,810	0.05	18,270	0.07
47	Sherpa	70,132	0.85	121,819	0.66	129,771	0.57	114,830	0.43
48	Sunuwar*					26,611	0.12	37,898	0.14
49	Surel							287	0.00
50	Tamang	494,745	6.01	904,456	4.89	1,179,145	5.19	1353,311	5.11
51	Thakali	3307	0.04	7113	0.04	6441	0.03	5242	0.02
52	Thami	10,240	0.12	14,400	0.08	18,991	0.08	23,151	0.09
53	Thulung*					14,034	0.06	20,659	0.08
54	Tibetan					5277	0.02	4445	0.02
55	Tilung*					310	0.00	1424	0.01
56	Waling/Walung							1169	0.00
57	Wambule*					4471	0.02	13,470	0.05
58	Yakkha*					14,648	0.06	19,558	0.07
59	Yamphu/Yamphe*					1722	0.01	9208	0.03

Language Group		Population 1952/54		Population 1991		Population 2001		Population 2011	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Others/Foreign/Not Grouped									
1	Arabic							8	0.00
2	Assamese					3	0.00	476	0.00
3	Chinese					1101	0.00	242	0.00
4	Churaui					408	0.00		0.00
5	Dhuleli							347	0.00
6	Dzongkha					9	0.00	80	0.00
7	English			2784	0.02	1037	0.00	2032	0.01
8	French							34	0.00
9	Garhwali							38	0.00
10	Haryanvi					33	0.00	889	0.00
11	Kuki					9	0.00	29	0.00
12	Kurmali					13	0.00	227	0.00
13	Kusunda					87	0.00	28	0.00
14	Magahi					30	0.00	35,614	0.13
15	Malpande							247	0.00
16	Mizo					8	0.00	32	0.00
17	Musalman							1075	0.00
18	Nagamese					6	0.00	10	0.00
19	Oriya					159	0.00	584	0.00
20	Russian							17	0.00
21	Sadhani					2	0.00	122	0.00
22	Sanskrit					823	0.00	1669	0.01
23	Sign Language					5743	0.03	4476	0.02
24	Sindhi					72	0.00	518	0.00
25	Spanish							16	0.00
	Others	23,445	0.28	504,171	2.73			21,173	0.08
	Not reported	752	0.01	9157	0.05	168,340	0.74	47,718	0.18
	Total	8,238,339	100	18,491,097	100	22,736,934	100	26494,504	100

Source: CBS. Respective Censuses. Gurung (2003) for 1952/54 data.

* Rai-Kirati group of languages

Annex 5. Literacy of Population by District, 1991-2011 *

		1991			2001			2011		
SN	District	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Achham	23.9	45.3	5.5	33.8	54.1	16.0	55.7	70.7	42.9
2	Arghakhanchi	43.3	59.5	29.7	56.1	67.2	46.9	72.6	81.8	65.8
3	Baglung	41.1	57.3	27.5	61.7	73.1	52.3	71.9	80.6	65.3
4	Baitadi	35.7	60.0	13.5	51.9	71.5	33.8	63.0	79.0	49.2
5	Bajhang	27.6	50.1	7.0	35.5	57.6	15.2	55.6	73.0	40.1
6	Bajura	25.2	43.4	7.7	34.1	51.2	17.3	55.7	68.8	43.3
7	Banke	34.6	46.4	21.8	57.8	66.0	49.2	62.4	70.0	54.9
8	Bara	28.2	41.7	13.7	42.7	55.2	29.1	52.0	62.8	40.7
9	Bardiya	29.4	41.6	16.8	45.7	55.5	35.9	65.4	73.5	57.9
10	Bhaktapur	58.8	74.8	42.7	70.6	81.1	59.6	81.7	90.5	72.7
11	Bhojpur	41.9	58.9	26.3	54.8	66.1	44.4	69.3	78.4	61.4
12	Chitwan	53.1	65.7	40.9	71.1	79.3	63.0	77.0	83.9	70.7
13	Dadeldhura	36.6	62.3	13.0	51.9	72.2	33.3	65.3	79.7	52.9
14	Dailekh	29.8	48.3	11.3	48.0	64.7	32.3	62.5	72.8	52.9
15	Dang	39.9	55.8	24.4	58.0	69.3	46.9	70.3	78.9	62.8
16	Darchula	41.4	65.4	18.0	49.5	67.4	32.5	65.4	79.3	52.9
17	Dhading	32.2	46.2	18.5	43.7	53.9	34.0	62.9	71.1	55.7
18	Dhankuta	49.6	66.3	33.5	64.3	74.5	54.5	74.4	82.4	67.4
19	Dhanusha	30.1	43.1	16.1	48.7	60.1	36.3	50.4	60.6	40.2
20	Dolakha	34.9	53.1	17.7	51.1	64.0	38.8	62.8	73.3	53.7
21	Dolpa	23.3	37.5	8.4	35.0	49.6	19.8	54.1	67.9	40.6
22	Doti	28.6	48.7	9.9	43.7	61.2	26.0	56.3	73.4	42.3
23	Gorkha	43.8	57.4	31.0	54.3	64.4	45.7	66.3	75.1	59.4
24	Gulmi	46.8	64.6	32.7	57.8	70.1	48.1	72.6	81.6	65.9
25	Humla	19.6	33.7	4.6	27.1	41.3	11.8	47.8	62.1	33.0
26	Ilam	52.5	65.9	39.0	66.5	74.4	58.6	77.9	84.2	72.0
27	Jajarkot	23.6	38.0	9.0	39.5	49.4	29.1	57.3	65.9	48.7
28	Jhapa	56.3	67.8	44.5	67.1	75.6	58.8	75.1	82.3	68.6
29	Jumla	25.4	41.5	8.5	32.5	47.0	16.8	54.7	68.2	40.8
30	Kailali	30.3	45.3	15.1	52.6	64.0	41.0	66.3	76.2	57.1
31	Kalikot	19.6	33.6	5.1	38.5	54.2	17.8	56.8	67.9	45.7
32	Kanchanpur	41.0	58.5	23.1	60.1	72.8	47.2	70.7	81.3	61.0
33	Kapilbastu	28.8	41.1	15.5	41.8	53.3	29.5	54.9	64.9	45.0
34	Kaski	57.2	71.0	44.5	72.1	83.2	61.8	82.4	90.1	75.4
35	Kathmandu	70.1	82.2	57.0	77.2	86.5	66.6	86.3	92.2	79.8
36	Kavrepalanchowk	39.6	56.2	23.7	64.0	75.7	52.8	69.8	79.6	60.9

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37	Khotang	40.3	58.4	23.6	50.2	62.3	38.8	68.8	77.7	61.1
38	Lalitpur	62.4	76.5	48.0	70.9	81.0	60.4	82.5	90.1	74.7
39	Lamjung	47.1	62.0	34.0	56.9	69.0	46.3	71.1	80.7	63.3
40	Mahottari	26.0	37.3	13.9	34.7	45.9	22.4	46.4	56.6	36.6
41	Makwanpur	38.6	52.1	24.7	63.4	72.6	53.9	67.9	75.4	60.6
42	Manang	43.1	54.9	30.1	60.4	67.3	52.7	74.8	83.0	64.2
43	Morang	48.9	62.2	35.2	57.0	67.1	46.8	70.6	78.7	63.1
44	Mugu	22.0	37.9	5.2	28.0	45.4	9.3	51.3	65.2	36.9
45	Mustang	48.5	60.8	34.8	52.1	61.1	41.1	66.2	75.4	55.8
46	Myagdi	39.6	55.0	26.1	56.0	67.9	45.9	71.9	81.1	64.5
47	Nawalparasi	39.2	53.3	25.2	53.3	66.0	40.9	70.8	79.9	62.8
48	Nuwakot	31.6	45.4	18.0	51.4	62.4	40.7	59.8	68.0	52.4
49	Okhaldhunga	39.1	56.2	23.1	49.3	63.6	36.3	64.4	74.3	56.0
50	Palpa	48.2	63.9	34.9	66.2	76.2	57.8	76.2	84.9	69.5
51	Panchthar	43.9	61.7	26.9	55.4	65.7	45.6	72.6	80.3	65.8
52	Parbat	51.9	68.5	38.1	57.0	68.2	47.7	73.8	83.4	66.4
53	Parsa	32.5	46.2	17.9	42.6	55.5	28.2	55.9	66.9	43.9
54	Pyuthan	32.7	51.4	17.0	46.9	62.4	34.0	67.0	78.2	58.6
55	Ramechhap	30.4	49.3	12.9	39.4	53.8	26.6	62.2	72.6	53.5
56	Rasuwa	23.0	33.8	11.3	34.3	42.8	24.8	53.6	60.9	46.5
57	Rautahat	23.7	34.7	11.9	32.7	42.9	21.7	41.7	50.9	32.0
58	Rolpa	27.7	46.6	10.2	37.5	53.1	23.1	60.0	71.5	50.5
59	Rukum	28.8	46.8	11.3	40.3	51.0	29.0	62.1	71.2	53.9
60	Rupandehi	40.0	53.4	26.2	66.2	76.2	55.9	69.8	79.2	60.8
61	Salyan	29.8	47.5	12.5	48.5	60.2	36.2	64.0	73.9	55.2
62	Sankhuwasabha	48.6	65.4	32.6	54.2	63.7	45.1	69.4	77.5	62.2
63	Saptari	34.8	51.4	17.8	49.6	63.2	35.5	54.5	67.0	42.6
64	Sarlahi	26.2	38.0	13.5	36.5	46.9	25.4	46.3	55.8	36.6
65	Sindhuli	33.1	48.6	17.7	50.5	62.6	38.5	60.5	69.8	52.1
66	Sindhupalchowk	29.7	44.1	15.0	40.6	51.8	29.5	59.6	68.0	51.9
67	Siraha	28.8	43.5	13.3	40.7	53.6	27.1	50.2	61.9	39.2
68	Solukhumbu	38.9	56.8	21.5	45.9	56.7	35.5	64.2	73.4	55.7
69	Sunsari	44.7	59.1	30.2	60.6	70.9	50.3	68.5	77.0	60.5
70	Surkhet	42.6	60.2	25.5	62.7	73.9	51.7	73.1	82.0	64.9
71	Syangja	51.3	66.9	38.4	66.7	77.9	57.7	76.6	86.1	69.6
72	Tanahu	50.4	66.5	36.2	62.0	72.6	53.0	74.8	83.7	67.9
73	Taplejung	46.1	62.4	30.6	52.6	62.9	42.8	71.3	79.3	64.1
74	Terhathum	55.7	74.9	37.6	59.3	71.3	48.2	74.6	83.5	67.0
75	Udayapur	38.2	55.2	21.5	53.6	64.8	42.5	68.8	77.2	61.5
	NEPAL	39.6	54.5	25.0	54.1	65.5	42.8	65.9	75.1	57.4

Source: CBS, Population Monograph of Nepal, 2003 and National Population Report 2011.

* For the population six years of age and above for 1991 and 2001, and five and above for 2011.

Annex 6. Literacy of Population by Eco-development Region, 1991-2011 *

	1991				2001				2011			
	Total	Male	Female	MF diff.	Total	Male	Female	MF diff.	Total	Male	Female	MF diff.
NEPAL	39.6	54.5	25.0	29.5	54.1	65.5	42.8	22.7	65.9	75.1	57.4	17.7
Rural	36.8	51.9	22.0	29.9	51.0	62.6	39.6	23.0	62.5	72.0	54.2	17.8
Urban	66.9	78.0	54.8	23.2	71.9	81.2	61.9	19.3	82.2	89.0	75.2	13.8
Mountain	33.2	50.2	16.5	33.7	43.5	56.9	30.4	26.5	60.5	71.6	50.1	21.5
Eastern Mountain	45.1	62.0	29.0	33.0	51.4	61.5	41.7	19.8	68.6	76.9	66.7	10.2
Central Mountain	31.1	46.5	15.7	30.8	43.7	55.1	32.4	22.7	60.2	69.2	52.1	17.1
Western Mountain	47.0	59.2	33.5	25.7	55.4	63.5	45.8	17.7	69.0	78.0	58.4	19.6
Mid-Western Mountain	22.0	36.9	6.4	30.5	31.2	46.2	14.7	31.5	54.0	66.8	41.0	25.8
Far-Western Mountain	31.2	53.1	10.5	42.6	39.7	59.1	21.3	37.8	58.5	73.6	44.8	28.8
Hill	43.9	60.2	28.5	31.7	58.6	70.6	47.3	23.3	72.3	81.4	64.1	17.3
Eastern Hill	44.6	61.4	28.5	32.9	56.9	67.8	46.4	21.4	71.5	79.8	64.3	15.5
Central Hill	48.4	63.0	33.6	29.4	63.9	74.7	52.7	22.0	76.2	84.2	68.4	15.8
Western Hill	48.0	63.6	34.7	28.9	61.8	73.0	52.4	20.6	74.6	83.5	67.6	15.9
Mid-Western Hill	31.6	49.4	14.6	34.8	47.3	60.5	34.5	26.0	64.7	74.2	55.9	18.3
Far-Western Hill	30.6	53.3	10.1	43.2	44.6	64.1	26.6	37.5	59.6	75.3	46.3	29.0
Tarai	36.5	49.8	22.7	27.1	51.3	62.1	40.1	22.0	61.2	70.3	52.3	18.0
Eastern Tarai	44.0	57.9	29.7	28.2	55.7	66.5	44.7	21.8	65.1	74.3	56.5	17.8
Central Tarai	30.8	43.0	17.8	25.2	43.8	54.6	32.2	22.4	52.2	61.8	42.6	19.2
Western Tarai	36.6	49.9	23.0	26.9	55.4	66.7	44.0	22.7	66.0	75.5	57.3	18.2
Mid-Western Tarai	35.0	48.4	21.2	27.2	54.1	64.0	44.2	19.8	66.2	74.3	58.8	15.5
Far-Western Tarai	34.4	50.4	18.2	32.2	55.5	67.3	43.4	23.9	67.9	78.0	58.5	19.5

* For the population six years of age and above for 1991 and 2001, and five and above for 2011.

Annex 7. Literacy by Caste/Ethnic Group, 1991-2011*

SN	CE Grouping	Caste/Ethnicity	1991	2001	2011	Increase 1991-2011
1	HC	Bahun	61.6	80.0	81.9	20.3
2	HC	Thakuri	46.9	66.1	73.7	26.8
3	HC	Chhetri	45.0	65.9	72.1	27.1
4	HC	Sanyasi/Dasnami	44.4	65.0	70.3	25.9
5	TC	Kayastha	64.4	85.8	87.3	22.9
6	TC	Marwari	88.0	91.7	87.1	-0.9
7	TC	Dev			84.5	
8	TC	Brahman-Tarai	61.8	76.1	81.1	19.3
9	TC	Rajput	51.7	74.6	79.9	28.2
10	TC	Kathbaniya	46.8	71.9	71.7	24.9
11	TC	Kalwar		65.4	69.7	
12	TC	Sudhi	44.7	64.3	66.5	21.8
13	TC	Haluwai	41.2	62.6	66.5	25.3
14	TC	Teli	36.3	56.6	61.6	25.3
15	TC	Sonar		59.4	59.6	
16	TC	Rajdhob			59.0	
17	TC	Koiri/Kushwaha		48.9	57.0	
18	TC	Baraee		49.6	56.7	
19	TC	Kamar		22.0	56.3	
20	TC	Badhaee		47.7	55.6	
21	TC	Hajam/Thakur		48.3	55.4	
22	TC	Rajbhar	24.5	44.7	55.0	30.5
23	TC	Kanu	29.1	48.3	54.1	25.0
24	TC	Lohar		43.0	53.2	
25	TC	Yadav	26.3	46.0	51.8	25.5
26	TC	Kurmi	25.2	42.6	50.2	25.0
27	TC	Gaderi/Bhedhar		30.7	50.2	
28	TC	Kewat	22.4	42.1	49.8	27.4
29	TC	Mali		42.3	49.7	
30	TC	Kahar		38.1	48.3	
31	TC	Kumhar	27.7	42.9	47.6	19.9
32	TC	Nurang		74.4	45.6	
33	TC	Lodh		36.4	43.8	
34	TC	Mallaha	12.0	31.2	37.3	25.3
35	TC	Nuniya		28.1	35.2	
36	TC	Dhunia		24.0	34.3	
37	TC	Kori			34.1	
38	TC	Bin		19.5	27.5	

SN	CE Grouping	Caste/Ethnicity	1991	2001	2011	Increase 1991-2011
39	TC	Jain		98.5		
40	HD	Gaine	31.1	50.2	68.6	37.5
41	HD	Badi	20.6	42.6	62.8	42.2
42	HD	Damai/Dholi	27.9	50.1	62.5	34.6
43	HD	Kami	26.0	48.1	62.0	36.0
44	HD	Sarki	24.2	44.8	60.7	36.5
45	TD	Kalar			51.4	
46	TD	Dhandi			47.8	
47	TD	Sarbaria			46.2	
48	TD	Bantar/Sardar		26.1	44.1	
49	TD	Dhobi	20.7	39.1	43.1	22.4
50	TD	Dhankar/Kharikar			40.9	
51	TD	Chidimar		35.1	40.6	
52	TD	Tatma/Tatwa		29.1	39.1	
53	TD	Halkhor		37.8	37.7	
54	TD	Chamar/Harijan/Ram	10.1	23.8	37.0	26.9
55	TD	Khatwe	11.5	23.5	35.7	24.2
56	TD	Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	9.9	24.8	35.4	25.5
57	TD	Natuwa			32.0	
58	TD	Musahar	4.2	11.1	21.8	17.6
59	TD	Dom		13.8	20.3	
60	ME	Thakali	62.2	79.9	80.5	18.3
61	ME	Sherpa	35.6	57.9	66.0	30.4
62	ME	Walung		31.1	61.6	
63	ME	Byasi/Sanka		81.1	59.3	
64	ME	Topkegola			57.7	
65	ME	Bhote	31.0	50.0	57.6	26.6
66	ME	Lhomi			53.5	
67	ME	Lhopa			46.6	
68	ME	Dolpo			28.4	
69	HE	Newar	60.4	76.0	80.1	19.7
70	HE	Loharung			79.4	
71	HE	Bantawa			78.1	
72	HE	Chamling			77.1	
73	HE	Dura		67.8	76.9	
74	HE	Sampang			75.9	
75	HE	Lepcha	44.4	68.8	75.7	31.3
76	HE	Limbu	46.8	65.6	74.7	27.9
77	HE	Gurung	46.9	66.3	74.4	27.5

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SN	CE Grouping	Caste/Ethnicity	1991	2001	2011	Increase 1991-2011
78	HE	Rai	44.5	65.0	74.3	29.8
79	HE	Thulung			74.3	
80	HE	Bahing			73.4	
81	HE	Aathpariya			72.9	
82	HE	Chhantyal/Chhantel		64.0	72.7	
83	HE	Magar	39.3	62.5	71.1	31.8
84	HE	Khaling			70.5	
85	HE	Gharti/Bhujel		57.8	68.6	
86	HE	Mewahang Bala			68.2	
87	HE	Yamphu			66.8	
88	HE	Kulung			66.6	
89	HE	Jirel	32.7	65.9	66.4	33.7
90	HE	Yakkha		64.1	66.3	
91	HE	Sunuwar	37.8	51.7	65.6	27.8
92	HE	Khawas			65.0	
93	HE	Nachhiring			64.8	
94	HE	Ghale			63.5	
95	HE	Brahmu/Baramo		46.5	63.3	
96	HE	Kusunda		58.0	62.8	
97	HE	Tamang	27.8	51.8	62.6	34.8
98	HE	H Yolmo		80.5	62.0	
99	HE	Hayu		49.5	60.4	
100	HE	Thami	22.3	43.0	57.4	35.1
101	HE	Pahari		45.6	53.1	
102	HE	Chebang/Praja	13.9	36.1	48.2	34.3
103	ITE	Darai	36.5	62.3	71.0	34.5
104	ITE	Kumal	30.0	49.4	63.1	33.1
105	ITE	Bote	21.2	40.6	61.0	39.8
106	ITE	Danuwar	24.5	48.6	58.2	33.7
107	ITE	Majhi	22.2	42.5	58.0	35.8
108	ITE	Raji	21.5	42.0	54.3	32.8
109	ITE	Raute	25.5	46.6	42.7	17.2
110	TE	Dhimai	39.2	58.8	69.5	30.3
111	TE	Meche		57.8	68.3	
112	TE	Rajbanshi	33.7	54.7	67.2	33.5
113	TE	Tharu	27.7	53.7	64.4	36.7
114	TE	Gangai	35.9	52.2	63.4	27.5
115	TE	Tajpuriya		52.2	62.7	
116	TE	Kisan		40.6	58.5	

SN	CE Grouping	Caste/Ethnicity	1991	2001	2011	Increase 1991-2011
117	TE	Munda		47.8	56.8	
118	TE	Koche		35.7	56.7	
119	TE	Amat			52.7	
120	TE	Pattharkatta/ Kushwadiya		19.5	50.9	
121	TE	Jhangad/Dhagar		30.8	49.6	
122	TE	Dhanuk	22.8	41.4	48.8	26.0
123	TE	Satar/Santhai		29.7	48.3	
124	O	Punjabi/Sikh	26.1	51.9	71.1	45.0
125	O	Bangali	51.2	75.6	66.8	15.6
128	O	Muslim	22.2	40.1	43.6	21.4
129	O	Churaute	47.3	66.3		

Source: Gurung (2003) Annex F for 1991 and 2001 data, and CBS (2013) (personal communication) for 2011 data. The 2011 data pertains to population five years of age and above while it is the population six years of age and above for the 1991 and 2001 data.

HC: Hill Caste; TC: Tarai Caste; HD: Hill Dalit; TD: Tarai Dalit; ME: Mountain Ethnic; HE: Hill Ethnic; ITE: Inner Tarai Ethnic; TE: Tarai Ethnic; O: Other.

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Glossary

SN	District		SN	District	
1	Achham	ACH	39	Lamjung	LAM
2	Arghakhanchi	ARG	40	Mahottari	MAH
3	Baglung	BAG	41	Makwanpur	MAK
4	Baitadi	BAI	42	Manang	MAN
5	Bajhang	BAJ	43	Morang	MOR
6	Bajura	BAJU	44	Mugu	MUG
7	Banke	BAN	45	Mustang	MUS
8	Bara	BARA	46	Myagdi	MYA
9	Bardiya	BARD	47	Nawalparasi	NAW
10	Bhaktapur	BHA	48	Nuwakot	NUW
11	Bhojpur	BHO	49	Okhaldhunga	OKH
12	Chitwan	CHI	50	Palpa	PAL
13	Dadeldhura	DAD	51	Panchthar	PAN
14	Dailekh	DAI	52	Parbat	PARB
15	Dang	DAN	53	Parsa	PARS
16	Darchula	DAR	54	Pyuthan	PYU
17	Dhading	DHAD	55	Ramechhap	RAM
18	Dhankuta	DHANK	56	Rasuwa	RAS
19	Dhanusha	DHANU	57	Rautahat	RAU
20	Dolakha	DOL	58	Rolpa	ROL
21	Dolpa	DOLP	59	Rukum	RUK
22	Doti	DOT	60	Rupandehi	RUP
23	Gorkha	GOR	61	Salyan	SAL
24	Gulmi	GUL	62	Sankhuwasabha	SAN
25	Humla	HUM	63	Saptari	SAP
26	Ilam	ILA	64	Sarlahi	SAR
27	Jajarkot	JAJ	65	Sindhuli	SIND
28	Jhapa	JHA	66	Sindhupalchowk	SIN
29	Jumla	JUM	67	Siraha	SIR
30	Kailali	KAI	68	Solukhumbu	SOL
31	Kalikot	KAL	69	Sunsari	SUN
32	Kanchanpur	KAN	70	Surkhet	SUR
33	Kapilbastu	KAP	71	Syangja	SYA
34	Kaski	KAS	72	Tanahu	TAN
35	Kathmandu	KAT	73	Taplejung	TAP
36	Kavrepalanchowk	KAV	74	Terhathum	TER
37	Khotang	KHO	75	Udayapur	UDA
38	Lalitpur	LAL			

Pitamber Sharma, born in Falebas, Parbat district, in 1947, taught in the Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University, and worked as a Regional Planner at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). He was also Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission in 2008. His publications include *Urbanization in Nepal* (1989), *Tourism as Development* (2000), *Market Towns in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas* (2002), *Unravelling the Mosaic: Spatial Aspects of Ethnicity in Nepal* (2008), and *Towards a Federal Nepal: An Assessment of Proposed Models* (2009). He holds a PhD in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University, USA.

Some Aspects of Nepal's Social Demography provides an update based on the national-level data from the 2011 census. It considers the growth dynamics of the population as well as changes in ethnic, linguistic and religious composition and literacy, which together with brief commentaries by the author bring alive Nepal's social demographic story till date.

