

CHAPTER 18

CHANGING GENDER STATUS — ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- Dr. Meena Acharya*

18.1 Introduction – The Framework for Analysis

Decennial censuses are the most comprehensive information on a country's population characteristics¹. They provide a comprehensive data base for evaluating the end-impact of various government /non-government policies, programs and activities. With a shift in development objectives and strategies to focus on people's lives and options, poverty alleviation and equitable development, collection and supply of a meaningful census data, amenable to dis-aggregated analysis for various groups of population, has acquired specific importance.

Specifically, the Ninth Plan had switched from Women in Development or Women and Development (WID\WAD) perspective to gender perspective to women's promotion and adopted mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality and empowerment as its major policies on women. Mainstreaming was further explained as clearly defined policies, targets and programs in all sectors at national and regional levels, more scientific and realistic calculation of GDP statistics to include women's contributions therein, and development of more effective coordination and monitoring instruments and mechanisms. With transformation from WID\WAD to gender approach in development, the data requirements have also expanded. It is not adequate to have a sex des-aggregated data but they must be meaningful for gender analysis, that they must reflect not only the male realities but also capture the female realities.

Gender approach to women's advancement is different from WID or WAD in the fact that it recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of women's subordination. This has implications for statistics as well. Particularly gender approach to development and its statistical implications are:

- While women as physical beings are universally the same with the exclusive responsibility of physical reproduction of human beings, as cultural beings "females" are context-specific,

* Dr. Meena Acharya is a Senior Economist and Gender Specialist, and Senior Advisor to SAHAVAGI, and a Board Member in IIDS.

¹ All 2001 Tabulations are from CBS publications where not specifically mentioned.

changing with time and context. Accordingly for the statistics to be realistic, they must take account of the specific context.

- Patriarchy is an overwhelming ideology which pervades all aspects of social existence. Women's subordination is all round - economic, social, religious, cultural, political and ideological, each of which reinforce each other. Therefore the efforts to liberate women from the oppressive gender relations must be all round. This means the statistics also must reflect the multi-dimensional nature of women's existence in relation to men.

Much improvement was needed in both census used definitions and data collection methodology in the above context. The Nepal Census 2001, was specially important in this aspect, because specific efforts were made to improve the definitions of economic/non-economic activities as per ILO standards, define the household heads more precisely as also to incorporate new questions specifically relevant for women and children, such as their living arrangements, asset ownership, engagement in household level enterprises, causes of migration etc. The following sections present a picture of the changing gender status, primarily on the basis of census data.

18.2 Overall Indicators of Gender Status

Human Development Index (HDI), is a combined indicator of per capita income, life expectancy and educational attainment. As per the overall HDI, Nepal has made substantial progress, by 171 points in the last two decades. This gain was slightly faster during the 1980s than during the 1990s. In a comparative analysis women's life expectancy seems to indicate progress towards gender equity. The achievement in the educational fields has been greater for women than for men. Gender Development Index comparing male and female attainments show that female/ male disparities have been reduced faster than the overall gains, during the 1990s (Table 18.1). Still women are behind by 20 points.

Moreover, these achievements however, are not distributed equally as between the urban/rural population. Neither are all development and ecological regions prospering with equal speed. In less development regions gender disparity in these indicators are higher, but no vital statistics are available as yet for further analysis.

Table 18.1: Overall indicators of gender status, (1981- 2001)

Indicators\Years	1981	1991	2001
HDI Index	0.328	0.416	0.499
GDI Index	---	0.312	0.479
Per Capita Purchasing Power Parity Ratio PPP \$			
---Male		---	1734
---Female		---	867
Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)			
---Male	50.9.	55.0	60.1
---Female	48.1	53.5	60.7
Adult Literacy (15 Years+)			
---Male	20.6	38	62.2
---Female	9.2	13	34.6
Economically Active (15 Years+)			
--- Male	87.7	79.8	81.7
--- Female	45.7	48.7	60.4

Sources : HDR, 1995, and 2003; Population Census Reports for 1991 and 2001 (Vol, II Table 25).

18.3 Sex Ratio and the Health Status

Sex composition of a country as reflected in the sex ratio (men per 100 women) is one of most important indicator of women's status in a society. It reflects overall survival chances of women in relation to men, as also differential rates of male/female immigration and out migration. If a society discriminates against female population severely in relation to men in fulfillment of their basic physical needs or even has a high preference for male child, there will be more surviving men than women at a particular moment of time. By nature there should be more women than men, because female of the species have greater survival chances. In Nepal sex-ratio was changing in favor of women in the eighties, indicating women's improving access to services and survival chances. It has slightly increased during the nineties (Table 18.2).

Table 18.2 : Age specific sex ratio, (1981- 2001) (males per 100 female).

Age Group	1981	1991	2001
0-4	105.9	102.6	102.7
5-9	104.1	103.9	103.5
10-14	116.7	108.3	105.9
5-14	108.1	104.7	104.0
15-19	110.0	96.0	98.6
20-24	91.2	85.1	88.5
25-29	96.4	89.3	90.8
30-34	92.3	91.8	95.1
35-39	107.1	101.0	98.8
40-44	100.2	94.7	98.5
15-44	99.1	92.3	94.6
45-49	113.9	104.0	103.5
50-54	115.2	105.6	105.2
55-59	119.3	115.8	112.4
60-64	109.0	99.7	101.4
65-69	115.8	110.1	102.6
70-74	112.9	105.0	107.2
45 -74	114.3	106.3	105.8
75+	108.4	97.4	96.2
Total	105.0	99.5	99.8

Source : Population Census 1981,1991 and 2001, CBS

The decline in child mortality ratio seems to have increased survival chances for the female babies up to age four faster than for male babies during the eighties. During the nineties this trend has been somewhat reversed. For the 5-9 age group population also the improvement in the sex ratio for females is only very slight, indicating continuing sex discrimination for this age group of girls. With equal access to survival chances this ratio should equalize by the age of 12. But there are still almost 106 boys to each 100 girls in 10-14 age group. The impact of expanding health facilities seems to have been more substantial on girl's survival chances during the eighties than during the nineties, although Nepal's health facilities have improved continuously during the eighties and the nineties.

A significant decline in MMR during the seventies from 850 to 539 in the eighties clearly had an impact on changing the sex ratio in favor of women in 1991. However, such improvement is not visible during the nineties; the sex ratio has slightly increased.

The number of men per 100 women is lowest in the 15 - 44 age group of population. This is the reproductive age, when most of the deaths due to high MMR occur, which should have increased the number of men per women. The data indicate opposite trend. This must be due to out

migration. Proportion of men in the population starts to increase from the 45-49 age group, by which time migrants may be expected to return. In the 45 -74, age group there are almost 106 men per 100 women. This indicates the continuing neglect of women's health. For population of 75 and above, this ratio declines drastically, indicating higher death rate for older men.

Regional level sex-ratios, in addition to external migration also capture the internal migratory patterns. Table 18.3 below shows higher proportion of men in the Terai areas. This could indicate both greater discrimination against females in Terai areas as also male migration from the hill and mountain areas to Terai plains. As to the development regions, the three western regions seem to have larger male migration to the central and eastern part of the country or to other countries. These issues need further in-depth investigation.

Table 18.3: Sex ratios of population by ecological zones and development regions (males per 100 females, 1981-2001)

Ecological Zone\Year	1981	1991	2001
Mountain	104.71	98.43	98.39
Hill	102.14	95.34	95.84
Terai	108.33	103.85	103.77
Development Regions			
Eastern	105	100	100
Central	107	104	105
Western	103	93	93
Mid Western	103	99	99
Far-Western	105	96	98
Nepal	105.02	99.47	99.80
Rural	104.30	98.61	98.8
Urban	115.24	108.39	106.4

Urban rural sex ratios also show higher number of men per hundred women in urban areas in spite of the better health facilities in urban areas, which must have a dampening effect on MMR. These figures therefore, could be interpreted as indicating the pressure of migration from rural areas to urban areas from within the country and pressure of in-migration of men from the neighboring countries to Nepal's urban areas.

The vital statistics, such as crude birth and death rates, infant mortality rates and total fertility rates have declined (Table 18.4). Access to social services in terms of schools and health posts and hospital beds has increased significantly.

Table 18.4 : Selected vital statistics, (1981- 2001).

Indicators\Years	1981	1991	2001
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) per 100,000 Delivery	850	539	
Crude Death Rate (CDR) per 1000 Population	17.1	13.3	10.0
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) per 1000 Live Births	117	97	64.4
TFR (15-49 ages, 1995-2000 period) (Number)	5.6	5.1	4.1

Sources : (1) Population Census, 2001; (2) HDR, 2003 (3) Population Monograph, CBS 1995, 1987.

18.4 Marriage and Fertility

Marriage is compulsory for all men and women in Nepal. For women besides the social need to produce progeny, marriage is also seen as a primary means of livelihood for women in all most all communities (Acharya and Bennett, 1981; Gurung, 1999). This results in high proportion of married population. Even in 2001, ninety-four percent of the women and 81 percent of the men were married before they reached the age of thirty. Nearly two percent of the 10-14 year girls and 33 percent of 15-19 girls were already married.

Table 18.5 : Ever married population in percent to total age cohort by age group, Nepal (1981- 2001).

Age Group	Male			Female		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
10-14	14.9	4.2	0.8	14.3	7.4	1.8
15-19	25.9	19.9	11.8	50.8	46.3	33.5
20-24	59.2	61.3	48.0	86.9	86.1	78.5
25-29	80.5	86.9	81.5	94.7	95.7	94.2
30-34	87.6	94.5	93.9	96.9	97.7	97.1
35-39	91.1	97.0	96.8	97.4	98.4	98.0
40-44	92.0	97.6	97.4	97.5	98.7	98.1
45-49	92.6	98.1	97.8	97.1	98.8	98.3
50-54	93.1	98.2	97.9	96.4	98.5	97.5
55-59	93.0	98.3	98.1	95.8	98.4	97.7
60-64	92.9	98.3	97.8	94.9	98.1	97.2
65+	91.6	98.0	97.5	92.9	97.5	96.7
Total	62.1	64.0	60.0	70.8	73.6	69.2

Early marriage, however, seems to be declining perceptibly. Proportion of married girls in between 10 and 25 ages has come down substantially since 1981, particularly during the nineties (Table 18.5). Consequently the mean age of marriage for both the girls and the boys has increased

significantly (Table 18.6), by 2.3 years for girls. The significant gains in the nineties may be interpreted as a result of multiple factors, increased literacy and education of women, increased awareness raising activities of NGOs/INGOs and the government and also increasing employment of women in the non-agricultural sectors.

This gain nevertheless is distributed very unevenly as among the three ecological zones and five development regions. Further there are substantial urban/rural and regional differences. In Tarai girls are still married earlier. Nevertheless, the gain in years in mean age of marriage of girls since 1981 in Tarai has been highest at 3.1 years. Development-region wise, the far- west region lags behind the Eastern region, for example by almost two years. But all ecological and development regions have achieved at least one years gain, since 1991. Tarai among the ecological zones and the EDR and FWDR among the development regions have gained most in terms of increased mean age of marriage for the girls. The urban rural difference of about one year in the girls' mean age of marriage however has remained constant since 1981. This gap had actually increased in 1991 compared to 1981 but it seems to be declining subsequently.

Table 18.6 : Singulate mean age of marriage by urban/rural ecological zones and development regions, (1981-2001).

Zones \Regions	Male			Female		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Ecological Zones						
Mountain	21.8	21.9	22.1	18.5	18.6	19.6
Hill	23.0	22.2	23.4	18.0	18.9	20.2
Terai	19.7	20.6	22.5	15.8	17.0	18.9
Development Regions						
Eastern	21.7	22.5	23.7	16.9	19.2	20.3
Central	20.5	21.3	23.1	16.8	17.7	19.5
Western	20.8	21.2	22.7	17.3	18.0	19.5
Mid Western	20.1	20.7	21.8	16.9	17.6	18.9
Far-Western	19.5	20.4	21.8	15.7	16.9	18.5
Nepal	20.7	21.4	22.9	17.2	18.1	19.5
Urban	22.5	23.5	24.5	18.5	19.6	20.7
Rural	20.6	21.1	22.5	17.1	17.9	19.3

As to the other variables on marital status, proportion of widowed, divorced and separated women is declining. But still there were women widowed already by 19 years of age. Young widows, particularly, in the Indo-Aryan community, are subject to covert and overt violence and face both psychological (as forerunners of misfortune) and physical violence, often for her share of property.

Table 18.7 : Marital status of 10 years and above female population (1981- 2001).

Details	Male			Female		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Never Married	35.1	35.6	39.2	23.3	25.7	30.3
Ever Married	64.9	64.4	60.6	76.7	74.3	69.2
Currently Married	62.1	60.5	58.5	70.8	65.7	65.4
Divorced/Separated	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.1
Widowed	2.4	3.0	1.3	5.5	7.2	3.7
Not Stated	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Although with higher ages all women face the problem of widowhood and single life in all communities due to the decline in their sexual attraction and presence of children, at younger ages, women from non-Brahmin\Chhetry castes within the Hindu community and other ethnic groups and religion, may get remarried easily. This is illustrated by the figures in Table 18.8 below. The Census of 2001 has expanded the scope of information on patterns of marriage to capture this reality.

Table 18.8: Selected indicators on kind of marriage, Nepal 2001 (percentage of ever married population aged 10 years and above)

Variables	Living with More than One Spouse		Re-Marriage		Women in Polygynous Marriage
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	5.5	0.04	4.2	2.7	559250
Rural	5.7	0.04	4.5	2.9	493656
Urban	4.4	0.01	2.4	1.1	65592
Ecological Zone					
Mountain	6.6	0.36	5.9	4.3	46836
Hill	6.8	0.03	5.4	3.7	289215
Terai	4.4	-	3.0	1.6	223198
Development Regions					
Eastern	6.0	0.06	4.0	2.3	138988
Central	4.7	0.01	3.0	1.6	176348
Western	7.1	0.06	4.8	3.1	134978
Mid-Western	5.5	0.04	7.3	5.8	64600
Far-Western	4.8	0.03	4.4	3.0	44334

Source : CBS, 2002 National Report. Vol. II.

Information is generated on the kind of marriage and extent of remarriage among men and women in the country. This is one of the very important information which captures the realities of women's every day life in Nepal. The Hindu ideology of sexual purity of women prohibits remarriage for women. Hence until 2001 the Census authorities had assumed that there would be few cases of female remarriage in the country. Similarly polygamy is prohibited by law, so it was assumed that there would be only few such marriages. But both these assumptions represent only partial reality. Nepal is a multi-ethnic country. Many of the ethnicities in Nepal do not prohibit widow remarriage. Further even within the Hindu communities, this ideology has been adopted to fit their own culture (e.g. Newars, Maithili non-Brahamin/ Chhetrias). On top of that, the poorer communities hardly care about the ideology or the law. Alcohol and polygyny related violence in the domestic arena is reported high all over Nepal and across all communities. Therefore it was important to collect this information to picture the realities of women's every day life more accurately.

The 2001 Census shows that at least 559,250 women are living in polygyneous marriages. The number could be more, because this number has been estimated by multiplying the number of men in polygenous marriages by 2. Since these men may have more than two wives, the number could be higher.

Number of women living with more than one man is limited to 0.36 percent of total married women in the Mountains and 0.03 percent in the Hills, since this practice is prevalent only in one small community of Tibetan origin. The proportion of women remarried is highest in the Mountains and lowest in the Tarai, reflecting the greater cultural restrictions for women in Tarai areas. As for the Development Regions, mid-Western has highest remarriage percentage for both women and men, probably reflecting the concentration of Gurungs and Magars, who attach no stigma to remarriage of women, in this region. .

As mentioned above, marriage and then children are considered almost compulsory in life in all communities. Also son-preference, although varying in degree prevails almost among all of them. Consequently, the fertility rate in Nepal is quite high, even higher than in India or Bangladesh (HDR, 2003). The Table 18.9 below features the age specific and total fertility rates.

Table 18.9 : Age specific and total fertility rates, by residence, (1991 - 2001).

Age Group	Urban		Rural	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
15-19	0.085	0.075	0.089	0.079
20-24	0.212	0.201	0.267	0.243
25-29	0.181	0.146	0.257	0.212
30-34	0.106	0.079	0.204	0.148
35-39	0.058	0.037	0.149	0.126
40-44	0.026	0.018	0.076	0.050
45-49	0.011	0.007	0.028	0.015
TFR	3.40	2.82	5.35	4.37

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), indicates average number of children born to woman of reproductive age group (15-49). This number has also been declining since 1971. The rate of decline has accelerated during the nineties. Current TFR (in 2001) is estimated at 4.1 per women against 5.5 in 1991. What is also significant is that the declining trend is visible in all age groups.

There is significant difference between TFR for rural and urban areas, at 2.5 per women. This difference is attributable to the higher mean age of marriage, higher awareness and education levels and higher employment opportunities for women in the non-agricultural sector in urban areas. Regionally, Mountains have the highest TFR. Mid-West and the Far-West have higher TFR than other Development Regions

Table 18.10 : TFR by ecological and development regions, (1991 - 2001)..

Regions\Year	1991	2001
Ecological Zones		
Mountain	5.93	4.57
Hill	5.33	3.77
Terai	4.72	3.64
Development Regions		
Eastern	5.00	3.68
Central	4.37	3.56
Western	5.13	3.60
Mid-Western	5.96	4.31
Far-Western	6.00	4.53

18.5 Education

Literacy levels in Nepal have increased significantly, particularly during the last two decades. Male literacy among 6 and above age group has reached 65 percent in 2001 from 34 percent in 1981. Similarly female literacy rate among this age group has more than trebled, from 12.0 percent in 1981 to 42.5 percent in 2001. Nevertheless, in literacy and education gender disparities are decreasing only slowly. Girl's enrolment has not attended parity even at the primary level. Compared to 1991, the difference in male/female literacy levels is declining only from the 30-34 age-group (Table 18.11).

Table 18.11 : Percent literate population 6 years and over by age group, (1991- 2001).

Age Group	1991			2001		
	Male	Female	Male/Female Difference	Male	Female	Male/Female Difference
6-9	55.7	38.0	17.7	57.9	51.3	6.6
10-14	76.0	49.3	26.7	83.7	73.3	10.4
15-19	71.5	38.6	32.9	82.5	66.1	16.4
20-24	64.3	26.3	38.0	78.2	53.4	24.8
25-29	54.7	17.6	37.1	70.8	41.1	29.7
30-34	49.6	13.9	35.7	66.9	32.2	34.7
35-39	45.3	11.2	34.1	59.6	24.4	35.2
40-44	41.2	7.9	33.3	55.0	19.2	35.8
45-49	36.5	6.3	30.2	50.7	15.2	35.4
50-54	30.9	4.7	26.2	44.7	10.9	33.8
55-59	28.5	4.2	24.3	40.6	8.2	32.4
60-64	24.0	3.1	20.9	31.9	5.5	26.4
65+	24.5	3.5	21.0	27.0	4.1	22.9
Total	54.5	25.0	29.5	65.1	42.5	22.6

Further, the number of women with SLC and higher degrees still constitute only 43 to 100 men with such qualifications. Similarly, the number of women with graduate and higher degrees is still less than 23 to 100 men with such degrees. What is more, this ratio has remained almost constant as compared to 1991 figure. The male: female ratio of full time students is still only 57:43.

Table 18.12 : Selected educational indicators, (1981- 2001).

Indicators\Years	1981	1991	2001
Female in Total School Enrolment (Percent)			
---Primary		37.2	44.1
---Secondary		31.5	41.5
---Higher Secondary		28.7	40.6
Female Percent Among Full Time Students	27.2	34.7	43.1
SLC and Above (Females\100 Male) (Number)	21.0	28.2	43.2
Graduates and Above (Females \ 100 Male) (Number)	18.4	22.5	22.9

Sources: (1) Population Census, 2001; (2) HDR, 1995 and 2002 (3) Population Monograph, CBS 1995.

In addition, these achievements are very unequally distributed as between the regions, rural and urban areas, among castes and various ethnic groups (Tables 18.13- 18.14). The difference in male/female literacy is higher in rural areas and mountains among the ecological zones. As to the development regions the Far- West displays much larger male/female difference in literacy levels than other development regions.

Table 18.13 : Male\ female literacy rate by ecological & development regions, (1981-2001).

Regions \Year	6 Years and Over					
	Male			Female		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Ecological Zones						
Mountain	27.6	50.2	56.6	7.8	16.5	30.1
Hill	36.9	60.2	70.3	12.9	28.5	47.0
Tarai	32.1	49.8	61.7	11.9	22.7	39.9
Development Regions						
Eastern	39.5	59.3	66.2	14.5	29.2	44.7
Central	32.3	51.6	63.4	12.5	24.6	41.4
Western	38.3	58.5	70.1	13.2	28.9	49.0
Mid West	25.2	47.6	60.7	7.3	16.3	37.4
Far West	26.8	52.0	64.1	7.6	13.3	32.8
Nepal	34.0	54.2	65.1	12.0	24.7	42.5
Urban	61.1	80.0	80.9	38.2	51.2	61.6
Rural	32.0	54.2	62.2	10.3	20.4	59.3

Table 18.14 : Male \ female difference in literacy rate by ecological & development regions, (1981-2001).

Regions \Year	6 Years and Over		
	1981	1991	2001
Ecological Zones			
Mountain	19.8	33.7	26.5
Hill	24.0	31.7	23.3
Tarai	20.2	27.1	21.8
Development Regions			
Eastern	25.0	30.1	21.5
Central	19.8	27.4	22.0
Western	25.1	29.6	21.0
Mid Western	17.9	31.3	23.3
Far Western	19.2	38.7	31.3
Nepal	22.0	29.5	22.6
Urban	22.9	23.2	19.3
Rural	21.7	29.9	22.9

One additional bit of information which Census 2001 has generated is on the school going children between the ages of 10-16 by the living arrangements. Overall in this age group 80 percent boys and 68 percent girls get to go to school. There are various causes of this difference, greater work burden of female children being one of them. One additional factor that could be a factor in this is living arrangements. The data on Table 18.15 below does show that lowest proportion of children living with employers get to go to school. Male-female difference in school-going proportion of children seems to hover around 9 -11 percentage points among the various living arrangements other than employers and other relatives. The difference in these cases is reduced but not because higher proportion of girls gets to go to school but because lower proportion of boys is sent to school. Highest proportion of girls and boys are sent to school when they are living with biological mother. Next rank in this case is taken by household with biological parents living together with children. Lowest proportions of boys and girls are sent to school when they are living with their employers. Generally, higher the working proportion, lower the proportion of children going to school.

Table 18.15 : Percent male/female below 16 years by living arrangement, economic activity and school attendance, 2001.

Living Arrangements	Any Activity =100			Total Age Cohorts
	For 10-16 Age Cohort			10 - 16 =100
	Economic Activity	Other than Economic Work	Total Working	School Attendance Rate
Male	11.8	2.1	13.9	80.0
Biological Parents	10.2	2.1	12.3	80.6
Biological Mother	14.5	1.6	16.1	82.7
Biological Father	21.4	3.2	24.6	71.9
Biological Father and Step Mother	21.6	2.4	24.0	72.8
Biological Mother and Step Father	24.2	3.1	27.3	69.5
Other Relatives	21.1	2.5	23.6	64.7
Employer	39.7	4.4	44.1	61.7
Others	20.5	2.4	22.9	76.7
Female	14.9	10.4	25.3	68.4
Biological Parents	12.9	9.7	22.6	72.4
Biological Mother	17.4	8.7	26.1	75.4
Biological Father	26.7	16.6	43.3	60.9
Biological Father and Step Mother	27.2	16.9	44.1	62.0
Biological Mother and Step Father	28.5	18.0	46.5	59.6
Other Relatives	24.4	16.5	40.9	64.7
Employer	40.1	19.0	59.1	55.8
Others	24.5	15.8	40.3	65.7

Analyzing the age-specific data at higher education levels, while the male/female difference is declining, for all educational levels, the difference is still significant. More over it increase with level of education. For example in 25-29 age group there are only about 50 women to each 100 men with SLC and above education, this ratio has increased to 70.1 percent in 15-19 age group. Similar increasing trends are visible in the case of graduate education. Yet, higher the education level, lower the number of women with comparable educational degrees. For example there are 86 girls with primary education to 100 boys with similar level of education in 20-24 age group, but only 63 women to 100 men with SLC and higher education and 47 women to 100 men with graduate and above educational qualifications (Table 18.16).

Table 18.16 : Female per 100 male by educational status by five year age groups, 2001.

Age Group	Literate	Primary (1 - 5)	SLC & Equivalent	SLC & Above	Graduate & Above
6-9	85.9	86.0			
10-14	82.6	82.9			
15-19	81.3	89.1	71.6	70.1	
20-24	77.1	85.8	74.0	62.9	47.2
25-29	63.9	74.9	66.9	49.6	30.3
30-34	50.6	60.5	48.4	36.0	21.8
35-39	41.4	47.2	34.0	26.5	17.1
40-44	35.5	36.8	27.2	21.1	14.3
45-49	29.0	29.5	22.3	17.9	12.1
50-54	23.3	23.6	15.4	13.8	11.5
55-59	17.9	19.5	11.2	9.9	8.9
60-64	17.0	18.4	10.6	9.8	8.0
65+	14.8	17.1	7.6	7.7	5.5
Total	65.8	76.8	55.5	43.6	22.9

Urban \rural and regional differences in gender disparity in education are also significant. For example while there are 51 women with SLC certificates to each 100 men with similar qualifications in rural areas, this number is 70 for urban areas. Similar urban\rural differences are visible at all levels of education. Similarly, the gender disparities are much greater at all levels of education in the mid and far western parts of the country (Table 18.17).

Table 18.17 : Female per 100 male by educational status, by urban/rural and development regions 2001.

Regions\Status	Primary	SLC	SLC and Above	Graduate and Above
Development Regions				
Eastern	74.6	56.6	43.8	19.5
Central	74.0	53.8	43.8	26.5
Western	87.2	67.6	50.6	20.4
Mid Western	69.9	49.1	39.4	19.3
Far Western	63.6	37.0	28.6	12.6
Nepal	76.8	55.5	43.6	22.9
Urban	84.5	69.6	53.3	21.3
Rural	75.7	50.8	39.1	19.4

18.6 Economic Status

On the economic side women's participation in formally defined labor force has increased substantially between 1981 and 2001. Much of the definitional problems in the economic activity rates are also being taken care of slowly. As per the Census, 2001 women constitute more than 43 percent of the labor force, 73 percent in agriculture and 27 percent in the non-agriculture sectors. Women's proportion has increased almost in all occupations to some extent. But their greater concentration in agriculture is also visible. A positive trend is also visible in their empowerment as reflected in their increasing proportion among the professionals and technicians as also in administration and management.

Table 18.18 below shows increased economic activity rates for men and women for both rural and urban areas, for all ecological and development regions between 1991 and 2001. More rural men and women are economically active than urban men or women. The urban rural differences are much higher for women. This difference of 28 percentage points in 1991 has, however, declined to 20 percentage points in 2001. It means opportunities for women's employment have expanded faster in urban areas for women. Also more women are entering the market as labor force in urban areas.

Table 18.18 : Economic activity rates by ecological and development regions, (1991- 2001).

Regions\Status	Male		Female	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
Ecological Zones				
Mountain	74.9	79.9	74.1	78.9
Hill	67.5	70.2	58.4	61.8
Tarai	68.9	71.9	27.5	45.6
Development Regions				
Eastern	68.1	72.4	42.6	55.0
Central	69.3	71.5	36.8	46.8
Western	64.19	68.6	51.8	59.9
Mid Western	72.31	74.1	52.7	61.2
Far Western	70.82	73.6	60.8	69.6
Nepal	68.7	71.7	45.5	55.3
Urban	59.4	65.5	20.3	38.0
Rural	69.8	72.8	48.1	58.3

Source : CBS, National Report on Census 2001, Vol. II, Table 25

Nevertheless, the trend observed internationally, that shift of the production processes from the households to the market tends to reduce women's role in the economic activities, is visible in Nepal as well. Several factors hinder women's participation in the organized labor market. Participation in the market as elementary workers is usually not acceptable to middle class households. Further, the separation of reproduction (reproducing human beings) and production of goods and services becomes inevitable spatially, and many women have to confine to household maintenance activities. Moreover, women from the rural labor class, who work in the labor market, lack the necessary educational prerequisites to work in the modernized sector. This process gets slowly reversed with the increase in educational levels and expansion of the market in the labor-intensive products.

Compared to 1991, Table 18.20 shows increased economic activity rates for all age groups except a slight decline in the case of 15-19 age group girls. The increase in economic activity rates for both men and women obtained in 2001, seem to be accounted for by three factors -- redefinition of the economic and non-economic activities, a more rigorous and precise definitions in the manual, and a change in the method of calculating economic activity to take account of multiple activities people perform for survival.

The definition of economic activity as featured in Table 18.19-18.20 includes extended economic activities. The category of extended economic activities is a new classification in 2001 Census. This category includes activities such as collection of water, fuel and processing of both primary and market purchased goods for household consumption. In the previous definitions, theoretically, the processing activities were considered non economic in the case of the households, which were not selling the good or the service in question. What it means is that if a farmer did not sell the butter he produced in the market, then the time spent on producing butter for the household consumption would not be considered economic. But if he also sold a part of the butter he produced in the market then his time spent on producing butter for the household would also be considered economic.

But, all producers of primary agricultural goods e.g. grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, meat etc, were considered economically active even by 1968 SNA. But in the case of Nepal even time devoted to production of primary goods for household consumption was not captured fully in the field interviews. Attempts were made in 2001 Census to redress this deficiency by a more rigorous definitions and clearer examples.

Table 18.19 : Age specific economic activity rate by sex 1981-2001.

Age Group	1981			1991			2001		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
10-14	56.9	61.3	51.9	22.9	18.1	28.0	28.8	27.3	30.4
15-19	60.7	69.2	51.3	49.1	49.2	49.0	48.9	49.7	48.1
20-24	66.1	86.3	47.6	66.0	80.0	54.1	68.7	76.9	61.5
25-29	68.7	93.4	44.9	72.0	92.3	53.9	78.2	91.9	65.7
30-34	68.2	95.3	43.3	73.6	95.2	53.8	81.8	96.6	67.8
35-39	70.8	95.8	44.1	75.3	95.9	54.5	83.3	97.4	69.3
40-44	70.4	96.0	44.1	74.3	95.5	54.1	83.4	97.1	69.9
45-49	72.3	96.4	44.7	73.8	94.7	52.1	83.3	96.8	69.4
50-54	71.2	94.3	44.9	70.4	91.7	48.0	80.8	94.5	66.4
55-59	69.9	92.2	43.3	66.6	88.2	41.5	77.5	91.4	62.0
60-64	62.5	83.3	39.9	45.7	66.2	25.4	67.2	81.9	52.3
65+	52.9	68.7	35.0	26.7	40.0	12.8	47.1	59.7	34.3
Nepal	65.1	83.2	46.2	56.6	68.2	45.2	63.4	71.7	55.3
Urban	54.90	74.86	31.48	40.76	59.44	20.34	52.2	65.5	38.0
Rural	65.85	83.77	47.19	58.76	69.78	48.10	65.4	72.8	58.3

Source : CBS, National Report on Census 2001, Vol. II, Table 25

Further, in the previous Censuses, people were asked to declare their occupation and place of work only if they had already declared themselves performing activities falling in the economic category. For example if women or full time students declared themselves as house wives or students, then they were automatically excluded from the economically active category. In 2001 Census, irrespective of the responses to the preliminary question as to the kind of work they did, all people above 10 years of age were asked to describe the kind of work they performed.

In Table 25 in Volume II of the National Census Report (2001) all those who performed any of the economic activities for at least one hour a day or looked for work in a similar period are defined as economically active, irrespective of whether they had declared themselves as students, housewives, sick or old etc. Because of this, people describing themselves as full time students or house wives could also fall in the category of economically active, if they performed any one of the economic activities for at least one hour a day or more for any time during the reference year. Their responses to the previous question as to what they did most of the time during the year preceding the Census has no relationship to tabulations in this table. In the 1991 Census also it was enough to declare that they performed activities defined as economic any time in the preceding year. But in 1991 Census, the definition of economic active and not active, did not allow for a

person to be a student/ housewife and also economically active at the same time. Those looking for work were not included as economically active either. In 1981 Census a person had to have performed economic activities at least eight months in the year to fall in the category of economically active.

Due to all above factors there could be a large difference between the economic activity rates obtained by applying 1991 and 2001 definitions. The difference could be much larger for women than for men. For such a comparative analysis further reprocessing of the 2001 Census data is required.

The reform in all three directions, capturing extended economic activities mostly performed by women and children, which were not captured before, taking account of multiple economic activities which is a better reflection of reality of subsistence economies, and more rigorous and clearer definitions are positive from a gender perspective, because with these reforms the statistics on economic and non-economic activity rates reflect women's realities much better. They contribute to making women's work visible. This fact can be illustrated partially by a comparison of Tables 18.19 and 18.20.

Table 18.20 below, constructed on the basis of Table 23 in the Volume II of the 2001 National Population Report, records responses to the question on what a person did most of the time during the year preceding the Census. This tabulation is based on the principal of exclusivity, either one is performing economic activity or other activity most of the time. They are economically active (performing usually home-based agricultural or non-agricultural activities, wage work or seeking employment), home-makers or students or other inactive. As discussed above, in Tables 18.18-18.19 all those, who performed any of the economic activity at least for one hour for any time in the reference year, were classified as economically active.

Asking people to say what they did most of the time seems to lead to underestimation of economic activity rates for all age groups of men and women. But such underestimation seems to be much larger for 10-19 age children (about 20 percentage points) and women in general. While the difference in the case of men is of about 8 percentage points, in the case of women it is 17.6 percentage points. Therefore for a realistic evaluation of women's work in general it is necessary to ask more detailed questions and to look at their total work and not only their perceived economic work.

A substantial proportion of women are confined to household work due to social and reproductive reasons. Even if the home-making activities, such as household maintenance and child-care, do

not fall within the production boundary defined by the SNA currently, such activities nevertheless are necessary for human reproduction and no economy can survive without them. Therefore a comparison of working and not-working population is also useful for an analysis of livelihood patterns, which is presented in table 18.20 below. .

Table 18.20 : Male/female proportion of workers, 2001.

Age Group	Male				Female			
	Usually Performing		Home Maker	Total	Usually Performing		Home Maker	Total
	Eco. Activity	Ext. Eco.			Eco. Activity	Ext. Eco.		
10-14	8.6	1.3	2.2	12.1	9.8	3.0	9.6	22.4
15-19	35.4	1.5	1.7	38.6	28.9	5.3	20.1	54.3
20-24	70.0	1.4	1.4	72.8	44.2	7.0	34.6	85.8
25-29	88.1	1.3	1.2	90.6	48.9	7.4	39.1	95.4
30-34	93.8	1.2	1.0	96.0	51.5	7.3	38.0	96.8
35-39	94.8	1.2	0.9	96.9	53.1	7.4	36.7	97.2
40-44	94.7	1.2	0.9	96.8	53.7	7.4	35.8	96.9
45-49	94.4	1.2	0.9	96.5	52.9	7.6	35.8	96.3
50-54	91.8	1.4	1.1	94.3	49.9	7.7	35.1	92.7
55-59	88.2	1.6	1.5	91.3	45.1	7.4	35.5	88.0
60-64	77.3	1.9	2.3	81.5	35.9	6.6	30.5	73.0
65+	52.9	2.1	3.0	58.0	20.3	4.5	21.7	46.5
Nepal	63.5	1.4	1.6	66.5	37.7	6.1	28.6	72.4
Development Regions								
EDR	64.3	1.3	1.1	66.7	37.1	6.3	27.9	71.3
CDR	64.9	1.2	1.8	67.9	31.0	5.2	36.9	73.1
WDR	60.0	1.4	1.3	62.7	43.2	5.5	21.6	70.3
MWDR	64.3	1.8	1.7	67.8	38.9	9.0	27.2	75.1
FWDR	61.8	2.0	2.0	65.8	50.5	7.4	17.1	75.0

Table 18.20 presents a picture of working population, irrespective of the kind of work they do. Any person engaged solely in home-making is also considered working. Work is defined as an activity, which a second person can do for you, for example cooking, taking care of children, cleaning, washing, for example all activities in the household maintenance and child-care. Only activities, which a second person can not do for you, for example sleeping, taking care of your own person, watching TV, study etc are excluded from the definition of work. . By this definition of work, more than 90 percent of men and women in the 25-54 age group are working, the difference is only in the kind of work they do. Overall and among most age-cohorts larger proportions of women are working than men.

In the 10-24 age group larger proportion of women are working than men. While 22 percent of girls of 10-14 ages are working, only 12 percent of boys in the similar age group work. In the 15-24 age cohort, larger proportion of girls are working than boys, and more than half of them are engaged in economic activity. Among all age cohorts, larger proportion of women perform economic plus extended economic activities than just home-making.

In all development regions, larger proportion of women than men works. The Central Development Region has the largest proportion of women performing only household activities

18.6.1 Industrial and Occupational Distribution of the Labor Force

Nepal's labor force is still concentrated in agriculture. Slightly more than 60 percent of the economically active men and nearly 73 percent of economically active women are still engaged in agriculture. This proportion is much lower in 2001 than in 1991 both for men and women. The increase in non-agricultural employment has been slightly higher for women than for men. While men's engagement in the non-agricultural sector has increased by about 16 percentage points, women's engagement in this sector has increased by about 18 percentage points (Table 18.21).

Proportion of women in the non-agricultural work force has increased to 34 percent from 20 percent in 1991 (Table 18.22). Women workers proportion has increased in all sectors. Nevertheless, women's concentration in agriculture is still more than that of men. Women constitute 48 percent of the labor force in agriculture. In the non-agricultural sector, the largest proportionate increases have been in electricity, gas and water, manufacturing and trade and related services. The large increase in the proportion of women in the electricity, gas and water sector from 6.4 percent to almost 78 percent, however, is because household level collectors of water and fuel have been counted as economically active in 2001 Census and included in this category. To make it comparable to earlier censuses, some data reprocessing is required.

Development of major export industries, such as carpet, garments, and woolen goods, has opened new avenues of formal employment for women. Increased tourism and hotels have increased women's engagement in trade and related services. However, one should be aware that this increase once again in sectors like services could be due to better definitions of economic activity to include road side tea stalls, village level guest houses, pubs etc and taking account of the multiple activities people have to perform for survival in developing countries. Women in Nepal have always minded the shops, but previously they could have declared themselves as housewives.

Table 18.21 : Distribution of economically active population by industry,(1981- 2001).

Industry	1981			1991			2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture and Forestry	91.2	88.7	95.8	81.2	74.9	90.5	65.7	60.2	72.8
Non-Agriculture	7.0	9.2	2.9	17.8	23.8	8.9	34.1	39.5	27.0
Of Which:									
Mining and Quarrying	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1
Manufacturing and recycling	5.0	0.6	0.2	2.0	2.6	1.2	8.8	8.1	9.7
Electricity, gas and Water supply	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.0	1.5	0.6	2.7
Construction	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.1	2.9	4.2	1.2
Trade and Services	1.6	2.1	0.7	3.5	4.5	2.0	9.9	10.7	9.0
<i>Of which:</i>									
Wholesale and retail trade							8.7	9.3	8.0
Hotels and restaurants							1.2	1.4	1.0
Transport, storage & communications	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.7	1.1	0.1	1.6	2.8	0.1
Finance & Business services	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.8	1.2	0.3
<i>Of which:</i>									
Financial intermediation							0.5	0.7	0.2
Real state, renting and business							0.3	0.5	0.1
Community, social & personal services	4.6	6.0	1.9	10.3	13.6	5.3	8.3	11.7	3.9
<i>Of Which:</i>									
Public administration and social security							3.0	4.7	0.8
Education							2.3	3.0	1.4
Health and social work							0.6	0.8	0.4
Other comm., social & personal service							0.7	1.1	0.2
Private households							1.1	1.1	1.0
Extra-territorial Organ. & bodies							0.6	1.0	0.1
Not Stated (+others for 1981& 1991)	1.6	1.4		2.2	0.6		0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 18.22 : Female proportion (male + female =100) in labor force by industry (1981-2001).

Industry	1981	1991	2001
	Female	Female	Female
Agriculture and Forestry	36.4	45.0	48.1
Non-Agriculture	14.3	20.2	34.3
Of Which:			
Mining and Quarrying	26.7	20.6	35.6
Manufacturing and recycling	14.9	22.9	47.6
Electricity, gas and Water supply	4.9	6.4	77.6
Construction	5.9	10.9	17.8
Trade and Services	15	23.7	39.0
<i>Of which:</i>			
Wholesale and retail trade			39.6
Hotels and restaurants			34.5
Transport, storage & communications	4.6	3.9	3.6
Finance & Business services	10.2	13.4	14.2
Financial intermediation			14.6
<i>Of which:</i>			
Real state, renting and business			13.6
Community, social & personal services	14.5	21	20.5
<i>Of Which:</i>			
Public administration and social security			11.8
Education			26.0
Health and social work			29.4
Other comm., social & personal service			14.6
Private households			40.2
Extra-territorial Organ. & bodies			6.3
Total	34.6	40.4	43.4

Table 18.23 : Female proportion in labor force by development regions and by major industry 2001

Regions	Agriculture & Related	Non- Agriculture		
		Total	Manufacturing	Other
Eastern	46.2	36.4	46.1	33.3
Central	42.6	29.5	42.5	24.6
Western	54.5	38.4	50.7	34.2
Mid Western	47.9	39.9	56.4	34.0
Far Western	53.8	34.7	57.7	27.3
Nepal	48.1	34.4	47.4	29.7
Urban	5.8	19.4	15.9	21.3
Rural	94.2	80.6	84.1	78.7

Women constitute only 5.8 percent in agricultural labor force in urban areas, while they constitute 94 percent in rural areas. This is probably because urban agriculture is more commercialized. In all development regions women are concentrated in the agriculture and manufacturing among the non-agricultural sectors.

For an evaluation of women's comparative status, the occupational distribution is more relevant than industrial distribution. Because the industrial distribution captures only where people are working, not the positions in which they are working. The occupational distribution, on the other hand, tells the story as to in what positions people are working. However, one difficulty in this evaluation is presented by the fact that 2001 Census uses new definition of occupational classification, than what was used in the earlier censuses. An attempt has been made in Tables 25 and 26 to match the old and new classifications to certain extent. But this exercise is still far from complete and the following discussions take that into account.

Figures in Table 18.24 on the occupational distribution of labor force, show that the pattern of women's employment is changing only slowly. In the 2001 occupational classification agricultural labor force has been divided in two categories- skilled and semi-skilled and elementary workers. The group includes most of the farmers farming their own or rented land, while the casual wage workers are classified as elementary workers. In terms of proportionate distribution the largest gains in the non-agricultural sector have been in the category of production workers, both for the men and women. Among the production workers, women constitute 44 percent (Table 18.25). Even among the production workers, they are relatively concentrated more among the elementary workers. Smaller surveys also confirm that in the manufacturing sector, women are concentrated at low paying and low capital intensive jobs (For example, GDS/FES, 1997). Here also, it should be noted that manual workers and even street vendors have been included in the category of elementary workers, while earlier they were included largely in the shop keeper and trader category. Also water collectors at the household level are included in the category of elementary workers. Therefore, for a proper evaluation of occupational progress of women all these issues need to be investigated in more detail, which involves data reprocessing.

Women still constitute miniscule proportion among administrative, technical and professional, and clerical worker categories. They constitute only about 14 percent among the administrative workers, i.e., among the senior officers, legislators and managers and 19 percent among the professionals and technicians, which comprises, teachers, trained nurses, doctors, engineers, professors etc. The increase in women's proportion in this group by 4 percentage point indicates a positive trend, reversing the decreasing trend observed in 1991 compared to 1981.

Table 18.24 : Distribution of economically active population by broad occupational groups (in percent).

Occupations	1981			1991			2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Administrative Workers (Legislators, Senior Off. & Managers)	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.9	0.2
Technicians and Associate Professionals	0.9	1.2	0.5	1.8	2.5	0.7	4.2	5.9	1.9
<i>Of Which:</i>									
Professionals							2.5	3.3	1.3
Technician & Associate Professionals							1.7	2.6	0.6
Clerks or Office Assistants	0.7	1.0	0.1	1.1	1.6	0.3	2.0	3.1	0.6
Service, Shop and Market Sales Workers	1.5	1.9	0.6	9.2	11.7	5.5	7.9	10.5	4.5
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Workers	91.4	88.9	96.1	81.1	74.7	90.5	65.7	60.2	72.8
<i>Of Which:</i>									
Skilled and Semi-Skilled							59.6	53.4	67.7
Elementary Occupations							6.1	6.8	5.1
Production Workers	3.1	3.9	1.7	4.2	5.8	2.0	19.5	19.3	19.8
<i>Of Which:</i>									
Craft and Related Workers							9.3	9.1	9.5
Plant and Machine Operator & Assemblers							1.4	2.2	0.4
Elementary Occupations (Other than agriculture)							8.8	8.0	9.9
Not Stated+ others for 1981 & 1991)	4.7	3.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

But one should also note that among the professionals women constitute 23 percent, which is accounted for largely by inclusion of village health workers in this category. Among the clerical workers women's proportion is 12 percent.

Table 18.25 : Female proportion in labor force by occupation (1981- 2001).

Occupations	1981	1991	2001
Administrative Workers (Legislators, Senior Off. & Managers)	6.6	9.3	13.8
Technicians and Associate Professionals	16.6	15.1	19.0
<i>Of Which:</i>			
Professionals			23.3
Technician & Associate Professionals			14.4
Clerks or Office Assistants	5.8	10.0	12.8
Service, Shop and Market Sales Workers	14.6	23.9	24.7
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Workers	36.4	45.1	48.1
<i>Of Which:</i>			
Skilled and Semi-Skilled			49.3
Elementary Occupations			36.4
Production Workers	19.2	15.8	44.1
<i>Of Which:</i>			
Craft and Related Workers			44.6
Plant and Machine Operator & Assemblers			13.0
Elementary Occupations (Other than agriculture)			48.6
Not Stated / Others	15.1	35.9	50.9
Total	34.6	40.4	43.2

18.6.2 Employment Status

As to the kind of employment, an overwhelming majority of economically active population, both men and women, is still self-employed (Table 18.26), including family labor. Sixty-two percent of men and nearly 84 percent of women are in self-employment and family labor. This shows low proportion of commercialization of the labor market and low employment opportunities in the organized sector. As per these figures, wage employment opportunities had expanded much faster for both women and men during the eighties than during the nineties. This figure however must have also been affected by inclusion of extended economic activities, which includes water and fuel collection and food processing for household use in self-employment. The proportion of employees (wage workers) has remained almost constant for women since, 1991, in spite of the expansion of carpet and garment exports. For men it has increased by about 6 percentage points.

Women's proportion in the wage labor is lowest compared to other categories in employment status. Even among the employers women constitute 41 percent

Table 18.26 : Employment status, Nepal (1981--2001) .

Employment Status	Male			Female			F % in Total
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	2001
Employer	0.9	0.7	3.9	0.4	0.4	3.7	40.8
Employee	11.8	27.8	33.7	3.8	12.0	12.8	25.7
Self Employment	83.2	69.5	56.7	90.0	83.7	70.6	47.1
Unpaid Family Labor	1.7	1.5	5.7	4.0	3.5	12.9	62.1
Not Stated	2.4	0.4	-	1.8	0.5	-	--
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

F = female.

Looking at the proportion of wage and non-wage labor by major industry groups, women constitute much lower proportion of wage-workers in the non-agricultural sector generally (Table 18.27). While they constituted 33 percent of the agricultural wage labor in 2001, their share in the non-agricultural wage labor was only 17.7 percent, a decline of 1% percentage point from 18.9 percent in 1991.

Table 18.27 : Female - proportion by wage/non-wage and by major occupation, Nepal (1981- 2001)

Occupation	Wage			Non-Wage(Self-Employment Family Labor+ Employer)		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Agriculture	16.8	29.8	33.0	37.3	46.6	50.0
Non-Agriculture	14.5	18.9	17.7	18.0	25.0	50.6
Nepal	14.7	22.6	22.4	36.8	45.3	50.2

As to the development regions, the proportion of wage labor is higher for both men and women in the Central and Eastern Development Regions compared to other regions, as non-agricultural sector manufacturing, trade and services and construction activities have been concentrated in these two regions., The proportion of wage labor declines progressively as one moves from the Center to the West (Table 18.28), indicating declining wage earning opportunities in the western part of the country.

Table 18.28 : Employment status by sex and development regions.

Employment Status	Male					Female				
	EDR	CDR	WDR	MWDR	FW DR	EDR	CDR	WDR	MWDR	FWDR
Wage (Employee)	32.8	42.1	29.0	25.8	22.8	15.0	18.5	9.6	8.1	6.0
Self Employment	67.1	57.9	71.0	74.2	77.1	85.0	81.5	90.4	92.0	94.0
<i>Employer</i>	3.0	4.5	3.3	3.3	5.2	2.8	4.2	3.5	3.3	5.4
<i>Self Employment</i>	57.5	49.9	60.3	63.6	65.2	67.8	65.4	73.7	73.2	79.7
<i>Family Labor</i>	6.6	3.5	7.4	7.3	6.7	14.4	11.9	13.2	15.5	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

18.6.3 Migration for Employment

Migration for employment is another important feature of the Nepalese economy. There are both historical and poverty reasons because of which, Nepalese men have moved beyond the country for employment (See Acharya, 2002, for a more detailed discussion on this issue). This process started with Gorkha recruitment after the Treaty of Sugauli concluded after the 1814-1816 War with the British and has expanded and diversified since. In recent years, generally lack of well paying employment opportunities at home and opening of the more lucrative international labor market has pushed even the youth from middle class to look for work outside the country. More than 85 percent of nearly 680 thousand men, who have gone out, have gone in search of employment (Table 18.29). For nearly 83 thousand women migrants this percentage is 35 percent. Both men and women emigrants are concentrated on private jobs, but proportionately more men have access to institutional jobs than women, both in India and overseas.

Table 18.29 : Distribution of population-absent by reasons for absence by destination.

Reasons of Absence	Male			Female		
	All Countries	India	Other	All Countries	India	Other
Employment	85.2	84.6	87.0	35.6	31.5	55.5
<i>Of which:</i>						
<i>Agriculture</i>	1.0	1.3	0.0	1.4	1.7	0.0
<i>Private Job</i>	70.8	70.4	72.1	30.2	26.9	46.1
<i>Institutional Job</i>	13.4	12.9	15.0	4.0	2.9	9.4
Business	1.6	1.9	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.2
Study	3.7	2.9	6.1	8.2	6.1	18.8
Marriage	0.3	0.4	0.2	14.4	15.9	7.2
Others	9.2	10.2	5.9	40.6	45.5	17.3
All Reasons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The traditional labor outflow to British and Indian Gorkha armies and in search of manual jobs in neighboring towns of India has diversified to some extent to other markets. Nevertheless India still predominates as destination for migrant workers as also for other purposes, such as study and marriage (Table 18.30).

Table 18.30 : Distribution of migrant population by country of destination, 2001.

Countries	Male	Female	Total
India	76.6	82.9	77.3
Arab Countries	16.0	2.5	14.5
Europe	2.7	5.7	3.0
Other Countries	4.7	8.9	5.1
All Countries	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Migrants	679,469	82712	762181

18.6.4 Women's Property

All above discussions illustrate that women play very important role in the economy of the country. Nevertheless, the ideology of male domination, which pervades our lives, is changing only slowly and it is hampering development in all sectors. It is well recognized by now that there is a large difference between the Indo-Aryan and the Tibeto-Burman groups and even within each of these groups in terms of social relations governing gender relations (Acharya and Bennette, 1981, Gurung, 1999) In spite of this diversity, land is inherited universally in all communities from the father to the son and women lag far behind men in access to economic resources, knowledge and modern avenues of employment.

Table 18.31 lists selected information from the Census 2001 on ownership of property by women. As per this table about 11 percent households reported some land in female legal ownership. Similarly only 5.5 percent households had some house in women's name.

Table 18.31 : Percent of households with some female ownership in total number of households.

Region	Land/House/Livestock Only or Combined			House, Land and Livestock	None
	Some House	Some Land	Some Livestock		
Ecological Zones					
Mountain	4.5	9.2	11.8	1.2	80.9
Hill	5.5	9.9	7.2	0.8	83.6
Tarai	5.7	12.0	6.6	0.7	82.4
Development Region					
Eastern	6.7	15.1	9.3	1.2	78.0
Central	5.8	10.7	6.6	0.7	83.1
Western	5.9	11.0	6.5	0.8	83.3
Mid Western	4.1	7.6	5.4	0.5	87.4
Far Western	2.3	3.6	8.0	0.2	88.4
Nepal	5.5	10.8	7.2	0.8	82.9

Only 7.2 percent households reported female livestock ownership, despite multiple credit-institutions targeting and funding this activity for women. This indicates that notwithstanding various credit programs, women's access to institutional credit is still marginal. Acharya (2002), from an examination of more detailed data also concluded that women's access to credit is still marginal, both at individual and household enterprise levels irrespective of ecological regions, urban/rural areas and ethnicity/caste.

Overall, only 0.8 percent of the households had all three, house, land and livestock in women's names. These figures speak for themselves to believe the argument that women have equal access to property in the households. They do have use of property but no ownership.

There is no ground to believe that women's access to land and other economic resources has increased in last 20-25 years as their legal rights over property and inheritance has not changed much in this period. Various arguments are made against granting full inheritance rights to daughters. One of them being that a large number of Nepali girls are married to Indians and property given to them will go to the Indians. But the figures cited in Table 18.29 above show only about 12 thousand Nepali girls married outside the country. Of these, slightly less than 11 thousand were married to Indians. Therefore arguments so often cited against full citizenship rights to mothers or inheritance rights to daughters seems to be without much ground. Nevertheless, the resistance to any change in the inheritance system is strong. Even the recently

promulgated amendments to the law on property rights of women, does not change her access to parental property substantially, although it does provide easier access to property if a girl is unmarried and in her afinal household. Therefore women won very little property.

18.7 Women Headed Households

In Nepal, female headed household were perceived to be under reported by the women activists. Therefore, specific efforts were made in 2001 Census to explain more fully the concept of the household headship as that person who usually managed the household affairs. But the figures obtained on distribution of households by male or female headship does not show much difference with 1991 pattern (Table 18.32). About 15 percent households have been reported to be women headed in the country as a whole in 2001 compared to about 13 percent in 1991. Largest proportion of women headed households are concentrated in Western and Central regions among the five development regions and in Hill and Tarai areas among the ecological regions. Proportionately, more urban households are women headed than rural ones.

Information from other parts of the world show, that women headed households generally face more survival difficulties than male headed households. In Nepal also a cross classification of households by household headship and selected characteristics (Table 18.33 - 18.34) shows some difference in education status, living arrangements, operational land holdings and dependency ratio of the male headed and female headed households.

Table 18.32 : Distribution of households by male\female headship.

Area	Male	Female
Ecological Zones		
Mountain	6.9	6.5
Hill	44.4	60.2
Tarai	48.7	33.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Development Regions		
Eastern	24.3	21.7
Central	36.5	26.9
Western	18.6	32.4
Mid Western	11.6	10.8
Far Western	8.9	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Nepal (male +female = 100)	85.1	14.9
Urban	83.0	17.0
Rural	85.5	14.5

The male headed households are much better off in terms of literacy and educational status. While 64 percent of the female headed household heads are illiterate, only 36 percent of the male headed household heads are illiterate. While 9.2 percent of the male household heads have graduate and above education only 4.5 percent female households have similar level of education.

There is not much difference in the distribution of female or male heads as per various age groups. Slightly larger proportion of female heads is older, above 60 years of age than men.

Women headed households have smaller average land holdings than male headed ones (Table 18.34). But larger proportion of female headed households own *pakki* houses than male headed ones. About 88.5 percent of the male headed and nearly 87 percent of the female headed households live in their own house.

Table 18.33 : Selected characteristics of the household heads, 2001.

Characteristics	Male	Female
Education Status of the Household Head		
Illiterate	36.2	64.0
Literate	35.5	20.3
Primary	9.9	6.6
SLC	6.5	3.8
SLC and Above	2.7	0.7
Graduate and Above	9.2	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Age Group		
14-15	0.0	0.1
15-19	1.0	1.5
20-59	82.2	77.8
60-69	11.1	13.2
70 +	5.7	7.4
Total	100.0	100.0

In terms of household amenities, female headed households seem to have a slight advantage. Nevertheless in the case of households, having all four facilities (piped water, electricity, Modern Flush toilets, radio, TV, fridge & car), male headed households have a slight advantage, as only 0.3 percent of the male-headed and 0.2 percent of the female headed households have all of them (CBS, 2003). Also, there is only slight difference in the pattern of media exposure between these two kinds of households.

Figures on living arrangements also show that some women are acting as household heads even when her spouse is present in the household. About 77 percent of the male headed households and only 13 percent of the female headed households are complete families with spouse and children living together, overwhelming majority of female heads live either with children or with others.

Ratio of below 15 and above 59 age population to 15-59 working age group population is much higher in female headed households.

While about 53 percent of the children, who have not finished school, are currently going to school in the male headed household, only about 47 percent of the children in similar category are going to school in the female headed households.

Table 18.34 : Selected characteristics of the households by male/female headship, 2001.

Characteristics	Male Headed	Female Headed
Average Operational Land (Hectares)	0.78	0.50
House Ownership		
Own Pakki (Cement, Concrete and Brick the Walls & Roofs)	28.6	34.1
Pakki (Rented)	6.2	6.8
Own Other (Other than <i>Pakki</i> Own)	59.9	52.7
Other (Rented Other than <i>Pakki</i> and Other Arrangements)	5.2	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0
Amenities		
High (With Piped Water, Electricity, Modern\Flush Toilets, Radio, TV, Fridge & Car or at Least two Categories of such Facilities)	13.7	16.0
Low (Having One of the Above or Inferior of the Four Facilities Above or None of the Above)	68.8	63.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Media Exposure		
TV	5.7	5.1
Radio	36.5	34.3
TV and Radio	17.1	15.8
No TV/No Radio	40.6	44.9
Total	100.0	100.0
Living Arrangements		
Head Alone	2.5	13.1
Head and Spouse	5.0	1.1
Head, Spouse and Children (Includes Adult and Minor Children)	77.1	13.4
Head and Children	0.7	26.6
Others	14.7	45.7
Total	100.0	100.0
School Going Children, Ages 10-25	52.6	47.4
Below 15 and Above 59 Per 100 15-59 Age Persons in the Household	107	139

References

- Acharya, M. (2000). *Labor Market Developments and Poverty* : with Focus on Economic Opportunities for Women, TPAMF/FES, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Acharya, M. and Bennett, L. (1981). An Aggregate Analysis and Summary of 8 Village Studies. *The Status of Women in Nepal*. Vole II, Part 9. CEDA, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (1995). *Population Monograph of Nepal*. National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (1996). *Nepal Living Standards Survey, 1995/96*. Main Findings Vol. I. & II. National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (2002). *Population Census, 2001*, National Report. National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (2002). *Population Census Results in Gender Perspective* (Population Census, 2001), Volumes I, II, III. National Planning Commission Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- GDS\FES (1997). *Women in Garment Industries*, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Gurung, Jeannette, D. (1999) (Edt). *Searching for Women's Voices in the Hindu Kush Himalayas*, ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- United Nations (2003). *Human Development Report*, New York.