

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION: CASTE/ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN NEPAL

*- Dr.Dilli Ram Dahal**

3.1 Introduction

In Nepal, though the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) already conducted ten decennial censuses since 1911, the taking of census considering the social components of population such as language, religion and ethnic/ caste groups is relatively a recent phenomenon. The inclusion of these social components in the Nepali census gradually started along with the advent of democratic revolutions in Nepal. The democratic revolution in Nepal in 1950(which threw the autocratic Rana regime) motivated to include two important social components in the census taking; the 1952/54 census provided information on language (on the basis of mother tongue) and religion. The other important social component such as caste/ethnicity was included only in the 1991 census after the onset of democracy in Nepal in 1990 (the king became the constitutional monarch). There could be several reasons why the CBS has remained little skeptical throughout its history in providing such important data on language, religion and caste/ethnicity.

- **Sensitive Nature of the Data:** The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is a government organization. Before 1950, the Rana government wanted to show Nepal as a homogenous country in terms of language, religion and ethnic/caste structure. The government advocated the single language and religion policy within the framework of larger Hindu nationalism and ideals. Considering the sensitive nature of the data, which could harm the larger Hindu nationalist sentiments, the government did not encourage the CBS to publish such sensitive data, though the CBS started collecting such data since the 1911 census in different formats. The CBS continued collecting the caste/ethnicity data up to the 1952/54 census but they never published them officially. Not only that the CBS simply deleted the question column on caste/ethnicity in the 1961, 1971 and 1981 censuses, considering such data are not very useful for planning purposes.
- **Politically Unstable Government:** After 1950, the frequent changes in the government structure and the short- life of the elected democratic government in 1959-60 could not provide enough space for the people. The Panchayat regime (1960-1990) absolutely maintained Hindu supremacy and values and did not provide space for the participatory

* Dr. Dahal is Professor of Anthropology at Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CENAS), Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

political culture of people considering their language, religion and culture. So it is natural that the democratic government formed after 1990 encouraged the CBS to provide information on caste / ethnicity in Nepal.

- **Macro policy and lack of vision in understanding Nepali society and culture:** Even today, many politicians, planners and academics think that the development of Nepal is possible only from the macro perspective. Many of them believe that detailed information on various groups of people could lead towards disintegration than integration of Nepal. Because of this kind of pungent feeling of national integration and vision of development, there is still a strong tendency in Nepal to provide information on macro framework, particularly about the Nepali society and culture or present development model as if all cultural groups are the same.

In Nepal, every census is considered an improvement of the previous census in terms of providing scientific information to the people. But the census of 2001 has to face some serious problem in collecting the household- level individual data in many areas of Nepal. The CBS could not collect the household- level individual data in 80 villages of eight Maoist insurgency affected districts: Salyan, Kalikot, Jhapa, Surkhet, Mugu, Humla, Jumla , Dolpa and Sindhupalchok. The most affected district was Salyan where the CBS could provide the detailed household-level information only on 28 Village Development Committees (VDCs) (out of total 47 VDCs). In, brief, though 4,253,220 households and 23,151,423 populations were recorded in the 2001-census, detailed household-level individual characteristics (such as religion, caste/ethnicity, literacy, language and so on) are available only for 4,174,374 households and 22,736,934 populations.

Keeping such background information in mind, this chapter attempts to provide a systematic overview of the social composition of population of Nepal. Three sets of data are discussed for this purpose: ethnic/caste composition, language and religion. As language has been covered in another chapter, this chapter brings language only for reference or cross-tabulation.

3.2 Ethnic /Caste Composition of Nepal

Historically, it is difficult to provide the reliable information on ethnic /caste groups of Nepal for two reasons: i) History of unified Nepal begins only after 1768, and ii) No anthropological/ linguistic survey has been carried out in Nepal to date to note the various ethnic/caste groups and their mother tongues.

Before the conquest of Kathmandu Valley by King Prthivinarayan Shah in 1768, the history of Nepal was the history of small kingdoms and principalities ruled by different kings and chiefs. In

the east, there were three major kingdoms- Bijaypur, Chaudandi and Makwanpur. In the kingdom like Bijayapur, there were various groups of peoples such as the Rai, Limbu, Sunuwar, Lepcha and others. To the west of Kathmandu, there were the Chaubise (twenty-four) kingdoms and in the far west across the Kanali river, there were the Baise (twenty two) kingdoms(see *Acharya* 1968). If the Khas and other groups were living in the far- western Hills, Magar, Gurung and others were living in the western Hill regions. Tharus, Dhimals, Rajbansi and others were living in the Tarai. Similarly, the Kathmandu Valley, which included three small kingdoms, was inhabited mostly by the Newars. In brief, Nepal became a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual state only after the unification of Nepal in 1768 and subsequent consolidation of the state thereafter.

As no anthropological/linguistic survey has been carried out in Nepal to date to note the various ethnic/caste groups, their distribution and population size, the exact number of ethnic/caste groups and their population size is somewhat imprecise in Nepal even today. In this kind of uncertain situation, the CBS has remained the single most important reliable source in providing the national- level information on caste/ethnicity and their various socioeconomic characteristics. The CBS provided data on 59 ethnic/caste groups in the 1991 census, whereas it provided data on 100 ethnic /caste groups in the 2001 census (see Annex 3.1 for details regarding the ethnic/caste composition of Nepal in the 1991 and 2001 censuses). Despite these available information, many agencies provide their own information on ethnic/caste groups and thus the number of ethnic/caste groups and their population size differ from one source to another. For example, the National Committee of Nationalities (2002) listed 59 distinct cultural groups within Janajati and Dalit Commission (Ayog) (2002) noted 28 cultural groups within Dalits¹.

The focus of this paper, however, is to provide information on caste/ ethnicity and religion on the basis of the 2001 census and to assess its quality of the data, scope and limitation. Before discussing the basic features of ethnic/ caste composition of population on the basis of 2001 census, let me briefly discuss the distinct cultural characteristics of various groups of people living in Nepal, so that these census data on ethnic/caste groups could be discussed in a proper anthropological/sociological perspective.

In Nepal, though there are more than 100 ethnic/caste groups with distinct language and culture, these diverse ethnic/caste groups can be arranged into five broad cultural groups: i) the caste-origin Hindu groups; ii) the Newar, iii) the Janajati or nationalities, iv) Muslim or Musalman and v) Other (see *Dahal* 1995).

3.2.1 Caste Origin Hindu Groups

The caste-origin Hindu groups have some distinct cultural features: i) hierarchical structure (one group is placed at the top and the other is placed at the bottom; ii) hereditary basis of the membership; iii) endogamy (marrying within one's own cultural group) and, iv) purity and pollution, which govern the day- to- day life of people. There are three distinct caste-origin Hindu groups in Nepal: i) Caste origin Hill Hindus, ii) Caste origin Tarai Hindus, and, iii) Caste-origin Hindu Newar.

3.2.1.1 Caste - Origin Hill Hindu groups

The social structure of caste-origin Hill Hindu groups is simple, reflecting only three groups in hierarchy and there is no four Varna (color) within this category.

- i) High caste Hindu groups: Brahmin, Thakuri and Chhetri
- ii) Middle caste Hindu group: Sanyasi
- iii) Low caste Hindu groups or Dalits: Kami , Sarki, Damai, Badi and Gaine

The mother tongue of these groups is the Nepali language. The CBS, 2001 recorded only 9 groups in the caste-origin Hill Hindu groups.

3.2.1.2 Caste - Origin Tarai Hindu Groups

The social structure of the caste-origin Tarai Hindu groups is complex, reflecting four Varna groups with distinct hierarchical structure within them: Brahmin (Maithil Brahmin, Bhumihar), Chhetri(Rajput), Vaisya (Yadav, Kayastha, , Halwani, Hajam, Sonar, Lohar, Rajbhar and others) and Sudra or untouchable(Tatma, Bantar, Mushahar,Chamar, Dom and others). These various cultural groups belong to four distinct language groups: Maithili, Bajika, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi. The CBS, 2001 recorded 43 caste- origin Hindu groups in the Tarai.

3.2.2 Newar

The case of Newar is exceptional. This group not only presents the complicated social structure among all groups in Nepal, truly reflecting the model of four Hindu Varna categories and is clearly divided into two distinct religious groups: the Hindu and the Buddhist. Newars are divided internally into more than 40 distinct cultural groups with different occupational categories, though they share a common language (mother-tongue) Newari. The CBS recorded Newar only as one cultural group.

3.2.3 Janajati (Ethnic Groups /Nationalities)

A Janajati group or nationality as defined by the National Committee for Development of Nationalities (1996) is as follows:

“Nationality (Janajati) is that community which has its own mother tongue and traditional culture and yet do not fall under the conventional four fold Varna of Hindu or Hindu hierarchical caste structure. A Janajati group has the following characteristics:

- A distinct collective identity
- Own language, religion, tradition, culture and civilization; own traditional egalitarian social structure
- Traditional homeland or geographical area
- Written or oral history
- Having “ we-feeling”;
- Have had no decisive role in politics and government in modern Nepal;
- Who declare themselves as Janajati

Historically, many of these Janajati groups used to occupy a particular habitat or territory, and thus many of them claim that they are the true “ First Settlers” (Adivasi) of Nepal. Like the caste Hindus, the Janajati can also be divided into two distinct regional groups: Hill Janajati and Tarai Janajati.

Some of the Hill Janajati groups are: Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Sunuwar, Bhote, Raji, Raute and others.

Some of the Tarai Janajati groups are: Tharu, Dhimal, Gangain, Satar/Santhal, Dahngar/Jhangar, Koche, Meche and others.

The National Committee of Nationalities which noted 59 distinct cultural groups as Janajati (published in Nepal Rajpatra, February 2,2002) also identified them in different ecological regions: 18 groups from the Mountain, 23 groups from the Hill and 7 groups from the Inner Tarai and 11 groups from the Tarai. Of them, the CBS could record only 42 Janajati groups with their population size and the population size of other 17 groups (13 from the Mountain, 3 from the Hills and 1 from the Tarai) is not available. According to Grurung (2002: 12), of the total 18 Janajati groups listed in the Mountain (or Himal), the CBS recorded only five groups (Bhote, Byanshi, Sherpa, Thakali and Walung) and the rest other groups are labeled as Bhote or they are simply the identification of the group through Tibetan language. Likewise, Gurung (2002: 13) claims that “Free” is the group related with Pahari, Surel with Jirel and Bankariya with Chepang. The Newar group, whose Hindu population is more than 84% according to the 2001 census (see

Annex 3.4), and who are strictly hierarchical in their structure, is also labeled as Janajati. Similarly, 97.6 percent of the Tharu populations follow Hindu religion, according to the 2001 census.

The above list of Janajati suggests that identity of Janajati is extremely elusive and often arbitrary in the context of Nepal.

3.2.4 Musalman

The CBS recorded two cultural groups within Musalman: i) Musalman and ii) Churoute. If the big Musalman populations live in the Tarai, the small Hill Musalman group, popularly known as Churoute, lives in the Western hill districts.

3.2.5 Other

In addition, a small number of religious and social groups such as Sikh/Punjabi, Bangali, Marwari, and Jain (reported as Jaine by the CBS) live mostly in the urban areas of Nepal. Only four such groups are recorded by the CBS.

Table 3.1 below shows the number of ethnic/ caste groups with their percentage of total population based on five broad cultural categories as mentioned above.

Table 3.1 : Five broad cultural groups, and number of ethnic/caste groups included in each cultural category with their percentage of total population, 2001 census.

Broad Cultural Groups	Total Ethnic/Caste Groups *	% of Total Population, 2001 Census
Caste-origin Hill Hindu groups (including Hill Dalit)	9	38.00
Caste-origin Tarai Hindu groups (including Tarai Dalit)	43	20.97
Newar	1	5.48
Janajati (both the Hill and Tarai Janajati)	41	31.01
Musalman (including Churoute)	2	4.29
Other	4	0.25
Total	100	100.00

Source : CBS 2001 census; also see Dahal (1995)

**As there is some confusion in identifying the cultural groups within Janajati (for example, the group Munda has appeared only in the 2001 census and not in the list of Nationalities of Nepal) and Tarai origin Hindu groups (such as Dhanuk), the percentage of total population in each of the broad cultural category could increase/decrease by 0.01 percent*

Table 3.1 clearly indicates that that the Hindu- origin caste groups (excluding Newar and other category) account for close to 59% of the total population.

3.3 Some Distinct Ethnic/Caste Features Reported in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses

3.3.1 Ethnic/Caste Features Included/Excluded in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses

Table 3.2 below presents some distinct ethnic/caste features included/excluded in the 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Table 3.2 : Some ethnic/caste features included/excluded in the 1991 and 2001 censuses .

Census and Region	1991 Census	2001 Census
Total ethnic/caste groups recorded	59	100
Mountain	3	5
Hill	27	45
Tarai	29	50
Addition of ethnic/caste groups	Not applicable	41
Omission of groups included in the 1991 census	Not applicable	1
Ethnic/caste groups' population counted in other category (in %)	4.44	1.80
Number of ethnic/caste groups whose population size has declined in the 2001 census	Not applicable	9

Source : Population Census 1991 and Population Census2001, National Report, CBS, 2002.

Though the 2001 census listed 103 groups, technically only 100 groups are identified (see Annex 3.1). The three unidentified groups listed are: i) Adibasi/Janajati, ii) Dalit/Unidentified Dalit, and iii) Unidentified caste/ethnic. The increased number of ethnic/caste groups in the 2001 census is not only due to the efforts of the CBS but also the rising ethnic awareness and identity among various groups of people in Nepal after 1990. Forty-one ethnic/caste groups added in different ecological regions in the 2001 census are: 2 from the Mountain, 10 from the Hills and 29 from the Tarai. The name of these various cultural groups added in the 2001 census by ecological regions is as follows:

Mountain: Byanshi, Walung.

Hill: Gharti/Bhujel, Yakha, Pahari, Chantel, Dura, Hayu, Kusunda(?), Nurang(?), Brahm/Baramu, Yehlmo.

Tarai: Koiri, Sonar, Kalwar, Hajam/Thakur, Lohar, Tatma, Nuniya, Badahi, Santhal/Satar, Dahnger/Jhanger, Bantar, Barae, Kahar, Lodha, Bind/Binda, Bhediya/Gaderi, Tajpuriya, Chidimar, Mali, Dom, Kamar, Meche, Halkhor, Kisan, Koche, Dhuniya, Munda, Patharkatha/Kushwadia and Jaine (Jain) (?).

As usual, the CBS put the same four distinct cultural groups in both the 1991 and 2001 censuses, without understanding their own internal complexity within the structure. These groups are: Churoute (A hill Muslim group who sells bangles, beads, etc), Bangali (a group originally came from West Bengal and within them there is a caste hierarchy), Marwari (Originally from Marwar, India and within them there is a strict caste hierarchy) and Punjabi/Sikh (a religious group). The Jain (written as Jaine), a religious group, has been added as an ethnic/caste category in the 2001 census.

The only caste group whose population figure was given in the 1991 census but not included in the 2001 census was Kushwaha. The population size of Kushwaha was 205,797 in the 1991 census and this group has been recorded under the name of Koiri (Kushwaha is, in fact, a clan name of the Koiri) and thus not included in the 2001 census. The population figure of Kalwar was not given separately in the 1991 census as the Kalwar and Sudhi were treated as one cultural group and thus their population size was lumped together in the 1991 census. In the 2001 census, this was corrected and they were put in two separate cultural groups with their population size.

In a normal situation, the population size of an ethnic/caste group does not decline over a period of time, unless some natural calamities, war or deadly diseases occur during the period. In Nepal, without any such event, the population size of some groups has substantially declined between the 1991 and the 2001 census periods. The ethnic/caste group whose population size has declined between 1991 to 2001 censuses is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 : Ethnic/caste groups whose population size has declined in the 2001 census.

Ethnic/caste group	Population 1991	Population 2001	Number and % Declined
Kami	963655	895594	68061(7.1)
BrahminTarai	162886	134496	28390(17.4)
Sudhi(Kalwar)	162046	89846	72200(45.6)
Rajbhar	33433	24263	9170(27.4)
Thakali	13731	12973	758(5.5)
Badi	7082	4442	2640(37.3)
Lepcha	4826	3660	1166(24.2)
Punjabi/Sikh	9292	3054	6238(67.1)
Raute	2878	658	2220(77.1)
Kumhar	72008	54413	17595(24.4)
Total	1431837	1223399	208438(14.6%)

Source : Population Census, 1991 and Population Census 2001, National Report, CBS, 2002.

In total, the population size of ten ethnic/caste groups has declined 14.6 % between the 1991-2001 censuses. The substantial decline of the population is noted among Raute, Punjabi/Sikh and Sudi/Kalwar. Except four cultural groups (Kami, Sudhi/Kalwar, Badi and Raute) where some specific reasons could be given for the decline of populations, the decline of population of other groups is little known. In the case of Kami, many of them hid their own caste identity, either putting the surname of the high caste Hindu groups or simply reported themselves as Dalit without identifying one's own caste. The case of the Badi is also the same. Many of them simply put their family name "Nepali", which later the CBS labeled them as Dalit or unidentified Dalit. As Sudhi and Kalwar are separated into two distinct cultural groups in the 2001 census, it is natural that the population size of Sudi has declined in the 2001 census. The Chhetri group whose clan name is Raut may have been labeled as Raute in the 1991 census and thus the population size of Raute was simply inflated during the 1991 census. Kumhar is popularly known as potters in the Nepal Tarai (like Kumhals in the Hills). It is possible that many Kumhars are converted into Kumhal category by the enumerators in the field itself (without understanding the basic differences between Kumhal and Kumhar) or they are simply written as Kumhal by the computer experts in Kathmandu (while converting Devanagari into English language).

Ethnic/caste groups whose ethnic identity is given but not known fully in the sociological term in the 2001 census are: Nurang, Jaine and Lodha. Jaine could be the typological error of the religious group known as Jain in Nepal and India. As Jains are a trading - prosperous community of Nepal, their literacy rate is highest among all ethnic/caste groups in the 2001 census (Literacy rate of Jain: 93.94%). According to Schwartzberg (1965,p.481), Lodhs are found in good numbers in the northern Indian Plain, and their traditional occupation is cultivators with medium social status. The same Lodh group could have been addressed as Lodha in the Nepal Tarai. They are farmers, and a Hindu caste- origin Vaisya group. The social status of Nurang is still unknown.

On the other hand, the improvement in the data quality on ethnic/caste groups is also reflected in the 2001 census. In the 1991 census, 821,280 populations or 4.44% of the total populations were recorded as “others” (Tarai others: 627,514, Hill others: 184,216, Mountain others: 1,741, no caste or foreigners: 2,951 and not stated: 4,858). In other words, readers do not know a large chunk of people labeled in these various “other categories”. There is “ no other category” in the 2001 census per se and only 410,301 populations (1.80% of the total populations) are unidentified in the particular ethnic/caste category and thus they are noted as Adibasi/Janajati(population: 5,259), Dalit/Unidentified Dalit(population: 173,401) and unidentified caste/ethnic(population: 231,641).In fact, the 2001 census attempted to identify all groups but the recorded data were so imprecise that it was difficult to put them on a particular ethnic/caste category. For example, in the 2001 census, a large number of Dalit populations simply recorded themselves as “Dalit” without identifying their ethnic identity. Similarly, many Jannajati and caste group populations identified themselves as / Janajati/ Adibasi or caste group without identifying their own specific cultural group or caste/ethnic name and so on. If the CBS supervisors would have been little careful at the time of census taking (simply checking the filled in form properly by the enumerators), such problems would have been easily minimized.

3.3.2 Major/Minor Groups by Number

The term, major or minor, is little tricky as it connotes different meanings in different contexts. Myron Weiner (1989) writes, “ What is a majority from one perspective is minority from another”. So, while discussing the number of various cultural groups of people in terms of major or minor category, it becomes meaningful only when the population size of a particular cultural group is discussed with special reference to the national, district or village-level data. For

example, though Thakali is a minority group in Nepal by number, they are the second largest group in Mustang district by number. Table 3.4 shows ten major groups by number based on the 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Table 3.4 : Ten major groups by number based on the 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Ethnic /Caste Groups	1991 Census	% of Total Population	2001 Census	% of Total Population
Chhetri	2,968,082	16.1	3,593,496	15.8
Hill Brahmin	2,388,456	12.9	2896477	12.7
Magar	1,339,308	7.2	1622421	7.1
Tharu	1,194,224	6.5	1533879	6.8
Tamang	1081,252	5.8	1282304	5.6
Newar	1041,090	5.6	1245232	5.6
Kami	963656	5.2	895954	4.0
Yadav	765,137	4.1	895,423	4.0
Musalman	653,055	3.5	971056	4.3
Rai Kiranti	525,557	2.8	635151	2.8
Total	12,919,815	69.7	14,675,439	68.7

Source : CBS, 1991 Census and Population Census 2001 National Report, CBS, 2002.

The above table clearly indicates that despite its diversity in ethnic/caste composition, 10 major groups represent close to 70 percent of the total population in both censuses. In other words, there is little change in the overall share of these groups in the total population size of the country. The rest 90 ethnic/caste groups represent only about 30% of the total population. Only the ranking of Kami has changed in the 2001 census. The Kami ranked 7th in population size in the 1991 census but fell to 8th in the 2001 census. On the other hand, Musalman upgraded them from 8th to 7th position in the 2001 census.

Ten minor groups by number according to the 1991 and 2001 censuses are given in Table 3.5

Table 3. 5 : Ten minor groups by number 1991 and 2001 censuses .

5 Minor Groups in the 1991 Census*	Population (1991 Census)	% of Total Population	10 Minor Group, 2001 Census	Population (2001 Census)	%of Total Population
Gaine	4484	0.02	Kusunda	164	0.0
Lepcha	4826	0.02	Patharkath/kushwadia	552	0.0
Raji	3274	0.01	Yehlmo	579	0.01
Raute	2878	0.01	Raute	658	0.01
Churoute	1778		Munda	660	0.01
			Jain	1015	0.01
			Walung	1148	0.01
			Dhuniya	1231	0.01
			Koche	1429	0.01
			Hayu	1821	0.01

Source : Population Census, 2001 National Report, CBS, 2002.

* Only five groups are included here because of the relatively large size of population of a particular group.

On the other hand, ten minor groups in the 2001 census represent only 0.08 percent of the total population. The above data further suggest that there is an improvement in the 2001 census. Even the smallest group by number is recorded. The population size of five distinct cultural groups is really low; they number between 164-660 and the rest other five groups number between 661-1821. But this was not the case in the 1991 census. This census did not provide figures of the ethnic/caste group whose number was lower than 1778 and such groups were lumped in “other” category. Only the Raute group appears common in both censuses.

The above data further suggest that the ethnic/caste diversity is the basic feature of Nepali society. Even the smallest group by number find the space in the 2001 census to reflect one’s own separate and distinct cultural identity.

3.3.3 Four Major Ethnic/Caste Groups in the District by Number

Based on the 2001 census, Annex 3.2 provides the population figure of four major ethnic/caste groups whose number is highest in the respective district. Table 3.6 below lists only the single ethnic /caste group whose number is highest in the respective district.

Table 3.6 : Ethnic/caste group highest in number by district.

Ethnic/Caste Group	Number of districts where the population size of the particular ethnic/caste group is highest	Name of the respective districts
Hill Brahmin	10	Jhapa, Morang, Chitwan, Syanza, Kaski, Parbat, Gulmi, Rupendehi, Arghkhanchi and Kalikot
Chhetri	21	Okhaldhunga, Udaypur, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Rukum, Salyan, Surkhet, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Jumla, Mugu, Humla, Dolpa, Bajura, Bajhyang, Acham, Doti, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Biatadi and Darchula
Newar	3	Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur
Limbu	3	Taplejung, Panchthar and Terathum
Rai	6	Ilam, Dhankuta, Sankhuwasabha, Bhojpur, Solukhumbu and Khotang
Gurung	4	Gorkha, Lamjung Manang and Mustang
Magar	7	Tanahu, Myagdi, Baglung, Palpa, Nawalparasi, Pyuthan and Rolpa
Tamang	7	Sindhuli, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Dhading, Makwanpur, Sindhupalchok and Kavrepalanchok
Tharu	4	Sunsari, Dang, Bardia and Kailali
Yadav	5	Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusa, Mahottari and Sarlahi
Musalman	5	Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Kapilbastu and Banke

Source : Population Census 2001, National Report, CBS, 2002.

Numerically, only 11 groups are dominant in certain districts of Nepal. The Bahuns and Chhetris are not only the largest group numerically, but also highest in number in 10 and 21 districts, respectively. In other words, Brahmin and Chhetri alone comprising the largest single cluster in 31 districts (41.3%) of Nepal. Except three districts such as Manang (Pop. 239), Dolpa (Pop.579) and Mustang (Pop. 597), where the population of Brahmin group is relatively low, Brahmins are found in good numbers in all other districts of Nepal. The Newars stand numerically highest in three districts of the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur). Bhaktapur district has the highest percentage of Newar population (55.9%) throughout the kingdom. As usual, Rais are numerically highest in the Manjh Kirat and the Wallo Kirant Region(Ilam, Dhankuta, Sankhuwasabha, Khotang, Bhojpur and Solukhumbu). Though Tharus rank 4th numerically in Nepal, their number is highest only in 4 districts of the Nepal Tarai (mostly in the far- western Tarai). This suggests that Tharus are spread over in good numbers from the west to the east of the Nepal Tarai districts. The numerically dominant Hindu origin caste group of the Tarai is Yadav; they rank 9th in Nepal by number, but are highest in number

in five districts of the Eastern and Central Tarai regions. The Muslim population is found highest in number in five districts in the 2001 census though their number was highest only in 4 districts in the 1991 census (Rautahat district is added in the 2001 census). Though Kami ranked 8th in population size in the 2001 census, they do not stand on number 1 position in population size in any district of Nepal; they numbered second in Jajarkot and Bajura districts. This further suggests that Kamis are distributed in good numbers in most of the districts of Nepal.

The other interesting finding of Annex 3.2 is the nature of homogeneity/heterogeneity of the population in terms of ethnic/caste groups in various districts of Nepal. Most of the Hill and Mountain districts are relatively homogenous composition in their group representation compared to the Tarai districts. In other words, there is not much diversity in ethnicity in the districts of the Hills and Mountain regions. Looking at the four most represented groups within a given district, the population of four represented groups fluctuates between 57.9 percent (lowest in Sankhuwasabha district) to 91.0 Percent (highest in Bhaktapur district). Similarly, there are a number of Mountain and Hill districts whose population size of four most represented ethnic/caste groups exceeds more than 88% of the total population. Such districts are: Rolpa (90.9%), Sindhupalchok (90.8%), Rukum (90.6%), Darchula (89.6%), Rasuwa (89.6%), and Bajhyang (88.2%).

The Nepal Tarai is more heterogeneous in terms of ethnic/caste composition. Except the far western two Tarai districts such as Kailali (78.0 %) and Kanchanpur (70.8%) and the eastern Tarai district such as Jhapa (55.6%), rest other districts of the Tarai have hardly 44% of the total population if the population size of four most representative ethnic /caste groups is combined. The three Tarai districts where more homogenous nature of the ethnic/caste composition of population is observed because of the large number of Tharu populations in the far west(Kailali and Kanchanpur) and mostly the Hill populations in Jhapa district.

Considering the four most represented groups within a given district, the most heterogeneous districts in Tarai are: Sarlahi (36.0%), Dhanusa (37.3), Morang (37.2%), Parsa (38.2%), and Bara (40.15%). Based on the 1991 census data, Subedi (2002) also lists 14 districts of the Tarai, which have the most heterogeneous population in terms of ethnic/ caste structure.

There are several reasons why the Tarai is relatively heterogeneous in terms of ethnic/caste composition: i) the Tarai caste- groups as a whole are more stratified in social structure than the Hill caste groups; ii) the heavy migration of population in the Tarai from the Hill districts and India over the last 40 years further increased the ethnic/caste diversity in the Tarai. The malaria eradication program and development of markets and roads in the Tarai after the 1960s motivated a large number of the hill and Indian populations to settle in the Tarai.

3.3.4 Rural/Urban Population by Ethnic/Caste Groups

According to the 2001 census, only 13.9% of the total populations are urban in Nepal. While considering the urban/ rural population by ethnic/ caste groups, it is interesting to note that some number of every ethnic/caste group is found in almost all the urban areas of Nepal. This is simply because of the amalgamation of many rural areas to declare an urban area in Nepal (see *Sharma 1989, Bastola 1995*). Ten most urban ethnic/caste groups in Nepal are as follows (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Some most urban population by ethnic/caste groups, 2001 census.

Ethnic/Caste Groups	% of Population in Urban Areas
Jain or Jaine	88.2
Marwari	72.5
Halkhor	69.0
Munda	56.5
Bangali	56.3
Newar	46.5
Kayastha	41.0
Thakali	39.6
Chidimar	38.3
Baniya	29.6
Tarai Brahmin	24.4
Gaine	22.0
Hill Brahmin	20.2

Source: Population Census 2001 National Report, CBS, 2002.

It is obvious that cultural groups such as Jain, Marwari, Newar, Bangali and Thakali are the established business communities in Nepal. They live mostly in the urban centers and thus their percentage in urban is higher. But the other interesting fact is that certain ethnic/caste groups whose social, economic and political situations are lower compared to other groups (such as Brahmin and Chhetri), their percentage of being urban people is higher than them. Such urban groups reported by the census are: Halkhor (a sweeper community of the Tarai), Munda (a Janajati group recently migrated from India; they are farmers and make a living by farming and doing wage labor), Chidimar (make a living by killing/selling birds) and Gaine (a low caste Hindu group who makes a living by playing musical instruments and singing songs). Some plausible explanation for this could be as follows. As many hinter- lands between the urban and rural area are converted into the urban area by the government in recent years, people living in such areas automatically became urban. The economically marginal groups such as Chidimar, Gaine,

Halkhor and Munda live in such hinterlands as they build relationships with people in both the rural and the urban area. The higher percentage of urban population in the Chidimar and Gaine groups could be due to their profession as well. As Chidimar, by profession, trap or kill birds and sell them in the market area (urban area) they stay mostly in the market area for livelihood. Many Munda people also confine themselves in the market areas as laborers to make a living. Similarly, the Gaine sing songs with their traditional musical instruments (known as Sarangi) and confine themselves in the urban area to make a living. Halkhor, a low caste untouchable community of the Nepal Tarai, do the sweeping and cleaning jobs in the urban and city areas of the Nepal Tarai and live there as well. The other reason could be their number itself. As their number is relatively low, their low number in the city area could inflate the percentage.

Likewise, the least urban ethnic/caste groups in Nepal are: Gangain (1.1%), Chepang (1.5%), Tajpuria (1.6%), Yelhmo (1.6%) and Koche (1.8%). All of them belong to the Janajati groups and do farming confining themselves mostly in the rural area.

3.3.5 Literacy by Ethnic/Caste groups

According to the 2001 census, the literacy rate of Nepal is 53.8 percent; the male and female literacy rate is 65 percent and 42.5 percent, respectively. No doubt, the literacy rate of Nepal is improving gradually over the years by sex. At the same time, the literacy rate as a whole differs significantly by ethnic/ caste groups and sex. As the literacy and other related components are covered in other chapter, this chapter briefly highlights the level of literacy of people by ethnic/caste groups only (see Annex 3.3). Tables 3.8 and 3.9 below provide the ten highest literate groups in Nepal by ethnic/caste groups.

Table 3.8 : Highest literacy rate of ten ethnic/caste groups, 2001 Census.

Ethnic/Caste Groups	Literacy Rate, 2001(%)
Jaine (Jain)	93.94
Marwadi	89.31
Kayastha	82.05
Thakali	75.66
Hill Brahmin	74.90
Bangali	72.51
Newar	71.22
Maithil Brahmin	71.21
Yehlmo	70.70
Rajput	70.33

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 census.

Table 3. 9 : Lowest literacy rate of ten ethnic/caste groups, 2001 Census.

Ethnic/Caste Groups	Literacy Rate, 2001 (%)
Mushahar	7.28
Dom	9.39
Patharkata/Kushwadia	13.22
Binga/Binda	14.80
Kamar	15.15
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	19.24
Dushad/Pasi/Paswan	19.59
Dhuniya	21.86
Tatma	23.12
Nuniya	23.20

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census

As usual, the literacy rate is highest among the Indian origin migrant Nepali populations such as Jain, Marwari and Bangali. As in the 1991 census, the Thakali and Hill Brahmin rank fourth and fifth, respectively in the 2001 census as well. All three highest caste ranking Hindu groups of the Tarai such as the Maithil Brahmin, Kayastha and Rajput have the highest literacy rate. But the so called politically dominant high caste Hill Hindu groups such as Thakuri (63.39%) and Chhetri (60.11%) rank 13 and 15 in terms of literacy rate, respectively.

The most deprived groups in terms of education are the Tarai Dalits or untouchables. Of them, the lowest literacy rate is that of Mushahar, followed by Dom. Following them are groups such as Patharkata/Kushwadia (Janajati) and Bing/Binda (Hindu group, water acceptable community of the Tarai). This is again followed by the Tarai untouchable groups such as Chamar, Paswan and Tatma.

The highest literate groups among the Janajatis are: Thakali (75.66%), Newar (71.22%), Yehlmo(70.70%), and Dura (63.26%). The literacy rate of some of the numerically and politically dominant Hill and Tarai Janajatis groups is as follows: Limbu (59.79%), Gurung (59.79%), Rai (58.19%), Magar(55.90%), Tharu(47.12%). and Tamang (45.04%) . Despite living close to the Kathmandu Valley throughout centuries, Tamangs' social, economic and political conditions in Nepal are relatively poor compared to similar other cultural groups. Their literacy rate is one of the lowest among the numerically dominant janajati groups of Nepal.

3.4 Religion: The Nepali Context

In recent years, particularly after the onset of multi-party democracy in Nepal in 1990, religion has become a sensitive topic in ethnically diverse Nepali society. A lot of people of different ethnic/caste backgrounds claim that they are simply written as “Hindu” by the census enumerators without even asking them about their religion? But this seems to be only partially true while looking at the quality of data on religion collected by the CBS during the 2001 census. Table 3.10 below provides the distribution of population of Nepal by religion over the last 50 years.

Table 3.10 : Distribution of population by religion, 1952/54-2001 censuses.

Religion	1952/54	%	1961	%	1971	%	1981	%	1991	%	2001	%
Hindu	7318392	88.87	8254403	87.69	10330009	89.39	13445787	89.50	15996653	86.51	18330121	80.62
Buddhist	707104	8.59	870991	9.25	866411	7.50	799081	5.32	1439142	7.78	2442520	10.74
Islam	208899	2.54	280597	2.98	351186	3.04	399197	2.66	653218	3.53	954023	4.20
Kirat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	318389	1.72	818106	3.60
Jain	-	-	831	0.01	5836	0.05	9438	0.06	7561	0.04	4108	0.02
Christian	-	-	458	-	2541	0.02	3891	0.03	31280	0.17	101976	0.45
Sikh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5890	0.02
Bahai	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1211	0.01
Other	684	0.01	-	-	-	-	365446	2.43	26416	0.14	78994	0.34
Unstated	-	-	5716	0.06	-	-	-	-	18138	0.10	-	-
Total	8235079	100.00	9412996	100.00	1155983	100.00	15022839	100.00	18491097	100.00	22736934	100.00

Sources : DOS, 1958 Population Census 1952/54, Pat II, Table 5
CBS, 1968 Population Census 1961, Vol. II, Table 7.
CBS, 1975 Population Census 1971, Vol. II, Table 13.
CBS, 1984 Population Census 1981, Vol I, Part III 13
CBS, 1993 Population Census 1991.
CBS, 2002, Population Census ,2001(National Report), Table 18.p.80

The above table clearly suggests that the absolute number of people has increased in all religions over the last 50 years. But the fact is that the percentage of Hindu population is gradually declining after the 1981 census. If the percentage points decline of Hindu population was 2.99 between the 1981-1991 censuses, this decreased further by 5.89 percentage points between the 1991-2001 censuses. On the other hand, the Buddhist populations have been increasing substantially after 1981; almost 100 per cent increase between the 1981 to 1991 censuses and close to 70% increase between the 1991 –2001 censuses. Likewise, the Kirat religion has been included since the 1991 census and the followers of Kirat religion have increased 157% over the period of one decade, i.e. between the 1991-2001 censuses. Buddhism and Kirat religions appear to be increasingly invoked in the ethnic identity politics in Nepal after 1990.

On the other hand, Christianity is becoming popular in Nepal, particularly after democracy in Nepal in 1990. The number of Christian Church and Christian population is increasing every year. The Christian populations, who were not even reported in the 1952/54 census, numbered only 458 in the 1961 census, and reached at 101,976 in the 2001 census. Between the 1991- 2001 censuses, the followers of Christianity have increased more than 226 percent. Conversion of religion is not an easy task in Nepal. One could be jailed for converting to Christianity and more certainly for proselytizing. But the fact is that Christian populations are increasing dramatically in Nepal and not only Hindus (particularly the low caste Hindus) but also Buddhist populations (such as Tamang) are converting themselves into Christianity over the years.

By simply considering the data on religion of the 2001 census, Table 3.10 above shows that out of the total 22,736,934 enumerated populations in the 2001 census, 18,330,121 (80.6%) are Hindu, 2,442,520 are Buddhist (10.74%), 954,023 (4.2%) are Islam and 818,106 (3.60) are Kirat. Only 78,994 (0.34%) populations reported that they practice “other” religions. The number of people following different kind of religion by ethnic/caste category is given in Annex 3.4.

3.4.1 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Hinduism

Almost all ethnic/caste groups in Nepal follow Hinduism to an extent, though the number differs from one group to another. Table 3.11 below lists major ethnic/caste groups following Hinduism by number and percentage.

Table 3.11 : Ten major ethnic/caste groups following Hinduism by number and percentage, 2001 census.

Ethnic/Caste Group	Total Population	Population Following Hinduism (with %)
Chhetri	3,593,496	3,574,976 (99.5%)
Hill Brahmin	2,896,477	2,887,317 (99.7%)
Tharu	1,533,879	1,497,516 (97.6%)
Magar	1,622,421	1,210,276 (74.6%)
Newar	1,245,232	1,047,561 (84.1%)
Yadav	895,423	893,427 (99.8%)
Kami	895,954	866,296 (96.7%)
Damai/Dholi	390,305	381,739 (97.8%)
Thakuri	334,120	332,107 (99.4%)
Sarki	318,989	312,277 (97.9%)
Total	13,726,296	13,003,492 (94.7%)
Total followers of Hindu religion	183,301,201	13,003,492 (70.94%)

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census, Nepal.

The above table clearly shows that of the total 100 ethnic/caste groups, ten groups combined represent 70.94 percent of the total Hindu populations. Most of the high caste Hill Hindu groups represent more than 99.5% of Hindu populations in their respective group (for example, Brahmin and Chhetri). Similarly, the Hindu origin caste groups of the Tarai have more than 99% Hindu population in their respective group (see Annex 3.4).

3.4.2 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Buddhism

After multiparty democratic government in Nepal in 1990, the populations following Buddhism have increased substantially. Between the 1991 to 2001 censuses, the number has increased by 1,003,378 or 69.7% increase over the period of one decade. According to the 2001 census, the following groups have the highest number following Buddhism (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12 : Ten major ethnic/caste groups following Buddhism by number and percentage, 2001 census.

Ethnic Group	Total Population	Population (with %) Following Buddhism
Tamang	1,282,304	1,157,461 (90.3 %)
Magar	1,622,421	397,036 (24.5%)
Gurung	543,571	375,252 (69.0%)
Newar	1,242,232	190,629 (15.3%)
Sherpa	154,622	143,528 (92.8%)
Bhote	19,621	11,655 (60.5%)
Thakali	12,973	8,434 (65%)
Chantel	9,814	6,301 (64.2%)
Jirel	5,316	4,625 (87.0%)
Lepcha	3,660	3,250 (88.8%)
Yehlmo	579	570 (98.4%)
Total	4,896,753	2,298,741 (46.9%)
Total followers of Buddhism	2,442,520	2,298,741 (94.1%)

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census

Table 3.12 shows that these eleven groups combined represent 94.1% of the total population following Buddhism. But while considering the total population size of these eleven groups, the Buddhist populations account only 46.9%. This is simply because a large number of Magar and

Newar populations are not Buddhist by their religion. The traditionally Buddhist groups in Nepal are Yehmo, Sherpa, Tamang, Lepcha, Jirel, Gurung, Thakali, Bhote and Newar (only selected cultural groups within Newar are Buddhist). Within the Newar group, Bajracharya, Shakya, Tuladhar, Manandhar and some others are traditionally Buddhist. In recent years, a few groups such as Magar, Tharu, Chepang and Dalit groups (such as Kami, Damai and Chamar) are gradually switching over themselves to Buddhism. They find that the Hindu social structure and values are more rigid in day- to- day life than the Buddhist values per se.

3.4.3 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Kirat Religion.

The major dominant groups following the Kirat religion are as follows (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13 : Major ethnic groups following Kirat religion by number and percentage, 2001 census.

Ethnic Group	Total Population	Kirat Religion Followers
Rai	635,157	450,283 (70.9%)
Limbu	359,379	310,108 (86.3%)
Sunuwar	95,254	16,553 (17.4%)
Yakha	17,003	13,846 (81.4%)
Total	1,106,793	790,790 (71.4%)
Total followers of Kirat religion	818,106	790,790 (96.7%)

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census.

Though Rais, Limbus, Sunuwars and Yakhas collectively call themselves as Kirati or declare their religion as Kirat, Table 3.13 shows that only 17.4% of Sunuwar populations follow Kirat religion. According to the 2001 census, 79.5% of Sunuwars are Hindus. Nevertheless, these four groups together represent 96.7% of the total Kirat religion followers. In addition, 29.10% of Hayu, 14.6% of Thami and 7.64% of Dhimal population stated that they follow Kirat religion. Kirat religion is some form of animistic tradition, a faith closely tied with supernaturals.

3.4.4 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Christianity

One of the interesting features in Hindu Nepal is the increasing number of Christians over the last one decade. In fact, 70,696 Christian populations have increased between 1991-2001, an increase of 226% over the period of one decade. Table 3.14 below lists the dominant groups in Nepal following Christianity by number.

Table 3.14 : Major ethnic/caste groups following Christianity by number and percentage, 2001 census.

Ethnic/Caste Group	Total Population	Followers of Christianity (number and %)
Tamang	1,282,304	24,235 (1.9%)
Rai	635,151	13,069 (2.1%)
Magar	1,622,421	8,314 (0.5%)
Chepang	52,237	4,589 (8.8%)
Limbu	359,379	4,228 (1.2%)
Sarki	318,989	3,229 (1.0%)
Damai/Dholi	390,305	2,483 (0.6%)
Santhal/Satar	42,698	2,466 (5.8%)
Total	4,703,484	62,613 (1.3%)
Total followers of Christianity	101,976	62,613 (61.4%)

Source : Population Census 2001, CBS, Nepal

Table 3.14 suggests that only eight ethnic/caste groups combined account 61.4% of the total Christian population. Though Tamangs follow Buddhism and Chepangs are animist by tradition (see *Rai 1985*), they are gradually converting themselves into Christianity as they find more "attraction" in Christianity than their respective religion. It is already mentioned above that lower Hindu caste groups such as Sarki, Damai and Kami find Christianity more congenial in their day-to-day life than the Hindu religion. In the British Raj in India, a large number of ethnic/tribal populations were converted into Christianity and Santhal/Satar was one of them. A large number of these Santhal/Satar populations entered into Nepal as Christians from the Santhal Parganna, India.

3.4.5 Islam as Religion

The only religion whose number and percentage is constantly increasing over the last 50 years is Islam. Only 2.54% of total people in Nepal were recorded as Islam during the 1952/54 census which increased to 4.20 percent in the 2001 census. In Nepal only the Musalman follows Islam as their religion. According to the 2001 census, the total Musalman population (including the Hill Muslim, Churoute) is 975,949 and the population of Islam religious followers is 954,023 or 97.8% of the total Musalman population. It is difficult to think a Muslim without having Islam as

their religious faith. It is not known why the other 2.2% of Musalman population did not mention Islam as their religion.

3.4.6 Population Size of the Respective Group vs. Number of Religious Followers

In addition, the 2001 census has identified more population in their respective religious group than their actual population size . Two such groups noted are: Jain and Punjabi/Sikh (see Table 3.15).

Table 3.15 : The population size of ethnic /caste group and the number of religious followers, 2001 census.

Ethnic/Caste Groups	Total Population (2001 census)	Number of Religious Followers
Jain	1,015	4,180
Punjabi/Sikh	3,054	5,890

Source : Population Census, 2001, CBS, Nepal.

Though one can understand that a person of particular ethnic/caste group can switch over to another religion, the case of Jain or Punjabi/Sikh is special. Only a real Punjabi or Sikh or Jain person could follow their particular religion. The people who follow Sikhism, they have their own priest (Granthi) and Gurudwara (the house of worship). A Khalsa Sikh (followers of Guru Gobinda Singh) will always have at least five "K" symbol with them such as Kanga (comb), Karna (the waistband), Kes (unshorn hair), Keski (turban) and Kirpan (sword). Likewise, a pure Jain person has many restrictions in his day- to- day life. The most important one is that a Jain person should be a pure vegetarian. It is likely that some members of these groups must have concealed their own ethnic identity or enumerators must have reported them in some other ethnic/caste category.

3.5 Ethnic/Caste Groups vs. Mother-Tongue Speakers

Technically, a member of particular ethnic/caste group can switch over to another language because of the continuous interaction with members of other language groups. Typical example is the increasing number of speakers in the Nepali language. A significant population of many

distinct cultural groups (such as Newar, Magar and others) reported Nepali language as their mother tongue because of their continuous interaction with the Hill Nepali language speakers. In addition, migration of a person to a new place always motivated him to speak the local language of people. Over the generations, some groups may not even speak their own mother tongue and it is likely that such language may die sooner or little latter. But the ethnicity of the group will not normally die while switching over to another language unless the number of the group is very small. One of the serious problems in the data collection and reporting is that the total population size of the particular ethnic/caste group is lower than that of the mother tongue speakers (see Table 3.16) . For example, a large number of Yehlmo population lives in the Helambu areas of Sindhupalchok district and these populations must have recorded as Sherpas. Two explanations can be forwarded. First, the CBS enumerators, without even asking the ethnic identity of people, simply labeled Yehlmo as Sherpa as they look physically and culturally similar with the Sherpa, and ii) Many of these Yehlmo populations simply wanted to record themselves as Sherpa instead of Yehlmo. The reason is obvious. A Sherpa name is more popular and prestigious in Nepal and outside world than the Yehlmo. But it is not known why the Yehlmo wanted to record their language as Yehlmo. Likewise, the ethnic Bangali population is quite large and many of them live in Jhapa, Morang and Parsa districts. It is likely that many of them wanted to identify themselves as Nepali (politically they do not want to label them as Bangali) but at the same time speak Bengali as their mother tongue at home.

Table 3.16 : Population size of the ethnic/caste group and the number of mother-tongue speakers.

Ethnic/ Caste Group	Total Population Size	Number of Mother-Tongue Speakers
Yehlmo	579	3,986
Bangali	9,860	23,602

Source: Population Census, 2001, CBS, Nepal

In Nepal, any Rai person knows that there are several distinct cultural groups within the Rai with different languages and cultural traditions. Normally, there are more than 20 distinct cultural groups within Rai. But ethnically, the Rai is treated as one cultural group in the 2001 census whereas they are treated differently in terms of their mother-tongue. For example, the CBS identified 8 separate mother-tongue groups within the Rai (Bantawa, Thulung, Sampang, Khaling, Nachring, Yamphu, Lhorung and Mewahang). Again, there is an ambiguity in terms of Ghale mother-tongue. Although often claiming separate status, Ghale also can appear as a clan name

associated with either the Gurung or Tamang. In these cases, their status as a cultural group is generally folded into the larger ethnic category. Among the Tamang, the Ghale clan is considered superior to others (see Fricke et al. 1991).

3.6 Conclusion

- Historically, Nepal is a multi-ethnic nation with diverse languages, religions and cultural traditions. The democratic movements of 1950 and 1990 motivated a change in the status quo of the CBS by encouraging them to document that diversity by collecting and publishing data on caste/ethnicity, language, and religion in Nepal. Here, the 1991 and 2001 censuses deserve special attention as the primary sources in providing basic figures on the population size and socioeconomic characteristics of the various ethnic/caste groups.
- In spite of the clear diversity in ethnic/caste composition of Nepal's population, the 1991 and 2001 census data demonstrate that nearly 70% of the population total belongs to just ten major groups. The Hill Brahmin, Chhetri and Thakuri by themselves account for 30% of the total population, with Chhetri and Brahmin alone comprising the largest single cluster in 31 districts (41.3%) of Nepal. Within the whole country, the Chhetri group is the largest in size while at the other extreme the Kusunda group ranks as the 100th in population. The 2001 census allows a count of these smallest groups. The thirty-two smallest ethnic/caste groups (from Kusunda to Chidimar, see Annex 3.1) altogether account for just 0.71% of Nepal's total population. There are ten distinct cultural groups whose population size is less than 0.1 percent of the whole population. Some of these smallest cultural groups by number include Kusunda, Patharkata/ Kushwadia, Munda, Raute, and Yehlmo.
- Most of the Hill and Mountain districts are relatively homogenous in their group representation compared to the Nepal Tarai districts as a whole. Looking at the four most represented groups within a given district, the hill district of Bhaktapur has the highest level of such homogeneity with 91% of its population restricted to four caste/ethnic groups while Sarlahi district on the Tarai has the least homogeneity with its four largest groups comprising just 36% of its total population. The diversity of population in terms of

ethnic/caste structure in the Nepal Tarai could be due to the heavy migration of hill people as well as an uncontrolled flow of Indian people over the last 40 years.

- The Hindu religion still represents more than 80% of the total population in the census reports, though other religions are carving a substantial place in Nepali society since 1990. Buddhism, Kirat, and Christianity have become increasingly reported religious affiliations among various caste/ethnic groups in Nepal. A special feature of the 2001 census is its provision of figures for religion by ethnic/caste category, allowing a much more detailed accounting of the relationship between caste/ethnic and religious identities in Nepal.
- Basic facts as represented in these figures are an essential foundation to our understanding of larger societal and compositional trends. In recent years, the CBS data on caste/ethnicity, language and religion have become extremely useful for planners, teachers, students and the people working in INGOs/NGOs for many reasons: i) they establish basic facts and figures (crucially including socioeconomic characteristics) about the various ethnic/caste groups living in different parts of Nepal; ii) these data draw attention to the specific development needs of particular social and cultural groups and aid the formulation of relevant programs; iii) basic data on caste/ethnicity aid the targetting of specific groups for development by placing them within the multi-ethnic context and suggesting groups who might profit through empowerment and changed structures; and iv) the recent availability of data for even the smallest groups allows policy-makers to discover those cultural entities who may require special state-sponsored protection for such things as language and culture. Far from being considered a detriment, these elements of Nepal's historic cultural diversity should be considered as an inherent source of cultural and social wealth.
- Finally, it must be recorded that there will always remain room for improved data quality on ethnic/caste groups and religion. Enumerators and supervisors who are responsible for collecting data in the field need extensive training programs in both Kathmandu and in the field sites themselves. In the ideal programs, trainers will have a sound background in the anthropology and sociology of Nepal, particularly in those critical areas such as caste/ethnicity, language, and religion which can become volatile when ignored, but are rightly celebrated when respected. Among the topics essential to such training might be

foundational topics such as the concept of caste/ethnicity and its changing role in national society and a familiarity with how particular groups use such devices as family and clan names or the titles put after names (such as Sharma, Choudhary, Mandal, Rai, Subba and so on) to indicate their identities and their position within Nepal's multi-ethnic mosaic. Because Nepal's Tarai captures a large part of the country's ethnic/caste diversity and its complex structuring, special attention should be given to the history and contemporary organization of that region. Similarly, the understanding of the extremely complex manner in which religious identity is claimed and how it relates to actual practice is crucial. Our received categories are likely far too simple and yet faith and belief seem our best window into the spirit of a people, certainly one which will enhance our appreciation of Nepal's true treasures.

Foot Notes

1. The Dalit groups as identified by the Dalit Ayog (May 2002) are as follows:

Hill Dalit:

Kami, Sarki, Damai, Lohar, Sunar, Gaine, Badi, Parki, Chunara, Kuche(?) and Kadara(?)

Newar Dalit:

Kusule, Kasai, Chyame, Pode, Dhaier (Dyahla).

Tarai Dalits:

Tatma, Paswan, Dushad, Batar, Mushahar, Khatway, Chamar, Dom, Halkhor, Badimar(?), Gothi(?), and Jhangar.

2. The groups listed as the Nationalities of Nepal by the National Committee (May 2002) based on ecological regions are as follows:

Mountain:

1.Baragaunle 2. Bhotia 3. Byanshi 4. Chairrotan, 5. Chimtan 6. Larke 7. Lhomi (Shingsawa) 8.Lhopa 9. Manange 10. Marphali 11. Mugali 12. Siya 13. Sherpa 14. Sayangtan 15. Tangbe 16. Thakali 17. Thintan 18 Walung.

Hill:

1. Bankaria, 2. Baramo 3. Bhujel/Gharti 4. Chepang, 5 Chhantyal, 6. Dura 7. Fri 8. Gurung 9. Hayu 10. Hyolmo 11. Jirel 12. Kushbadia/Patharkatta 13. Kusunda 14. Lepcha 15. Limbu 16. Magar 17. Newar 18. Pahari 19. Rai 20. Sunuwar 21. Surel 22. Tamang 23 Thami

Inner Tarai and Tarai:

1. Bote 2. Kumal 3. Raji 4. Danuwar 5. Majhi 6. Raute, 7. Darai 8. Dhanuk 9. Rajbanshi 10. Dhimal 11. Gangain 12. Jhangad 13. Kisan 14. Meche 15. Satar/Santhal 16. Tajpuria 17. Tharu.

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Annex 3.1 : Population by ethnic/caste groups, 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Ethnic/Caste Group	1991	%	2001	%
1. Chhetri	2,968,082	16.05	3,593,496	15.80
2. Brahmin-Hill	2,388,455	12.92	2,896,477	12.74
3. Magar	1,339,308	7.24	1,622,421	7.14
4. Tharu	1,194,224	6.46	1,533,879	6.75
5. Tamang	1,018,252	5.51	1,282,304	5.64
6. Newar	1,041,090	5.63	1,245,232	5.48
7. Muslim	653,055	3.53	971,056	4.27
8. Kami	963,655	5.21	895,954	3.94
9. Yadav	765,137	4.14	895,423	3.94
10. Rai	525,551	2.84	635,151	2.79
11. Gurung	449,189	2.43	543,571	2.39
12. Damai/Dholi	367,989	1.99	390,305	1.72
13. Limbu	297,186	1.63	359,379	1.58
14. Thakuri	299,473	1.62	334,120	1.47
15. Sarki	276,224	1.49	318,989	1.40
16. Teli	250,732	1.36	304,536	1.34
17. Chamar/Harijan/Ram	203,919	1.10	269,661	1.19
18. Koiri			251,274	1.11
19. Kurmi	166,718	0.90	212,842	0.94
20. Sanyasi	181,726	0.98	199,127	0.88
21. Dhanuk	136,944	0.74	188,150	0.83
22. Mushahar	141,980	0.77	172,434	0.76
23. Dushad/Paswan/Pasi	93,242	0.50	158,525	0.70
24. Sherpa	110,358	0.60	172,434	0.76
25. Sonar			145,088	0.64
26. Kewat	101,482	0.55	136,953	0.60
27. Brahmin Tarai	162,886	0.88	134,496	0.59
28. Baniya			126,971	0.
29. Gharti/Bhujel			117,568	0.52
30. Mallaha	110,413	0.60	115,968	0.51
31. Kalwar			115,606	0.51
32. Kumal	76,635	0.41	93,389	0.44
33. Hajam/Thakur			98,169	0.43
34. Kanu	70,634	0.38	95,826	0.42
35. Rajbansi	82,177	0.44	95,812	0.42
36. Sunuwar	40,943	0.22	95,524	0.42
37. Sudhi	162,046	0.88	89,846	0.40
38. Lohar			82,367	0.36

Ethnic/Caste Group	1991	%	2001	%
39. Tatma			76,512	0.34
40. Khatwe	66,612	0.36	74,972	0.33
41. Dhobi	76,594	0.41	73,413	0.32
42. Majhi	55,050	0.30	72,614	0.32
43. Nuniya			66,873	0.29
44. Kumhar	72,008	0.39	54,413	0.24
45. Danuwar	50,754	0.27	53,229	0.23
46. Chepang(Praja)	36,656	0.20	52,,237	0.23
47. Halwai	44,417	0.24	50,585	0.22
48. Rajput	55,712	0.30	48,,454	0.21
49. Kayastha	53,545	0.29	46,,701	0.20
50. Badahi			45,975	0.20
51. Marwadi	29,173	0.16	43,971	0.19
52. Santhal/Satar			42,698	0.19
53. Dhagar/Jhangar			41,764	0.18
54. Bantar			35,839	0.16
55. Barae			35,434	0.16
56. Kahar			34,531	0.15
57. Gangai	22,526	0.12	31,318	0.14
58. Lodha			24,738	0.11
59. Rajbhar	33,433	0.18	24,263	0.11
60. Thami	19,103	0.10	22,999	0.10
61. Dhimal	16,781	0.09	19,537	0.09
62. Bhote	12,463	0.07	19,261	0.08
63. Bind/Binda			18,720	0.08
64. Bhediya/Gaderi			17,729	0.08
65. Nurang			17,522	0.08
66. Yakha			17,003	0.07
67. Darai	10,759	0.06	14,589	0.07
68. Tajpuriya			13,250	0.06
69. Thakali	13,731	0.07	12,973	0.06
70. Chidimar			12,296	0.05
71. Pahari			11,505	0.05
72. Mali			11,390	0.05
73. Bangali	7,909	0.04	9,860	0.04
74. Chantel			9,814	0.04
75. Dom			8,931	0.04
76. Kamar			8,761	0.04

Ethnic/Caste Group	1991	%	2001	%
77. Bote.	6,718	0.04	7,969	0.04
78. Brahmu/Baramu			7,383	0.03
79. Gaine	4,484	0.04	5,887	0.03
80. Jirel	4,889	0.03	5,316	0.02
81. Adibasi/Janajati			5,259	0.02
82. Dura			5,169	0.02
83. Churaute	1,778	0.01	4,893	0.02
84. Badi	7,082	0.04	4,442	0.02
85. Meche			3,763	0.02
86. Lepcha	4,826	0.03	3,660	0.02
87. Halkhor			3,621	0.02
88. Punjabi/Sikh	9292	0.05	3,054	0.01
89. Kisan			2,876	0.01
90. Raji	3,274	0.02	2,399	0.01
91. Byansi			2,103	0.01
92. Hayu			1,821	0.01
93. Koche			1,429	0.01
94. Dhunia			1,231	0.01
95. Walung			1,148	0.01
96. Jaine			1,015	0.01
97. Munda			660	0.01
98. Raute	2,878	0.02	658	0.01
99. Yehlmo			579	0.01
100. Patharkata/Kushwadia			552	0.01
101. Kusunda			164	0.00
102. Dalit-Unidentified			173,401	0.76
103. Caste/ethnic-unidentified			231,641	1.02

Source : 1991 census, CBS 2002, Table 16, p.73

Annex 3.2 : Four major groups by district, 2001 census.

Mechi Zone

1. Taplejung : 1,34,698

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Limbu	56,324	41.8
Chetri	15,982	11.9
Brahmin (Hill)	13,974	10.4
Sherpa	12,585	9.3
		73.4

2. Panchthar : 2,02,056

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Limbu	81,408	40.3
Brahmin (Hill)	25,304	12.5
Rai	28,157	13.9
Chhetri	21,520	10.7
		77.4

3. Ilam : 2,82,806

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	68,901	24.4
Brahmin Hill	42,805	15.1
Limbu	40,524	14.3
Chhetri	38,320	13.5
		67.3

4. Jhapa : 6,33,042

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,58,699	25.1
Chhetri	96,640	15.3
Rajbanshi	58,024	9.2
Limbu	37,646	6.0
		55.6

Koshi Zone

5. Morang : 8,43,220

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,09,982	13.0
Chhetri	94,638	11.2
Tharu	63,673	7.6
Rai	44,269	5.2
		37.2

6. Sunsari : 6,25,633

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tharu	87,523	14.0
Chhetri	52,456	8.4
Brahmin Hill	49,650	7.9
Muslim	68,481	11.0
		41.3

7. Dhankuta : 1,66,479

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	38,257	23.0
Chhetri	33,921	20.4
Limbu	22,849	13.7
Magar	16,165	9.7
		66.8

8. Terhathum : 1,13,111

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Limbu		35.4
Chhetri	21,506	19.0
Brahmin Hill	17,771	15.7
Tamang	6,548	5.8
		75.9

9. Sankhuwasabha : 1,59,203

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	35,725	22.4
Chhetri	30,931	19.4
Brahmin Hill	10,476	6.6
Tamang	15,048	9.5
		57.9

10. Bhojpur : 2,03,018

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	69,244	34.1
Chhetri	41,535	20.5
Tamang	17,246	8.5
Newar	16,819	8.3
		71.4

Sagarmatha Zone**11. Solukhumbu : 1,07,686**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	33,905	31.5
Sherpa	19,706	10.3
Chhetri	16,366	15.2
Tamang	10,153	9.4
		66.4

12. Okhaldhunga : 1,56,702

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	38,488	24.6
Brahman Hill	18,623	11.9
Rai	18,701	11.9
Magar	16,252	10.4
		58.8

13. Khotang : 2,31,385

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Rai	89,633	38.7
Chhetri	51,295	22.2
Brahmin Hill	19,847	8.6
Newar	12,370	5.3
		74.8

14. Udayapur : 2,87,689

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	60,578	21.1
Rai	47,128	16.4
Magar	39,721	13.8
Tharu	22,323	7.8
		59.1

15. Saptari : 5,70,282

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Yadav	89,865	15.8
Tharu	73,161	12.8
Muslim	46,964	8.2
Teli	41,299	7.2
		44.0

16. Siraha : 5,69,880

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Yadav	1,37,622	24.2
Muslim	41,478	7.3
Mushahar	31,519	5.5
Koiri	31,453	5.5
		42.5

Janakpur Zone**17. Dhanusha : 6,71,364**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Yadav	1,17,938	17.6
Muslim	56,996	8.5
Kewat	41,570	6.2
Teli	33,851	5.0
		37.3

18. Mahottari : 5,53,481

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Yadav	84,836	15.3
Muslim	74,779	13.5
Brahmin Tarai	36,270	6.6
Dhanuk	34,660	6.3
		41.7

19. Sarlahi : 6,35,701

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Yadav	96,810	15.2
Muslim	48,780	7.7
Koiri	49,324	7.8
Tamang	33,740	5.3
		36.0

20. Sindhuli : 2,77,259

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	70,968	25.6
Chhetri	40,294	14.5
Magar	39,675	14.3
Brahmin Hill	25,509	9.2
		63.6

21. Ramechhap : 2,12,408

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	56,155	26.4
Tamang	43,669	20.6
Newar	29,931	14.1
Magar	23,205	10.9
		72.0

22. Dolakha : 1,75,912

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	58,183	33.1
Tamang	27,619	15.7
Brahmin Hill	18,791	10.7
Thami	13,936	7.9
		67.4

Bagmati Zone**23. Kathmandu : 10,81,845**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Newar	3,20,244	29.6
Brahmin Hill	2,21,855	20.5
Chhetri	2,03,000	18.8
Tamang	92,378	8.5
		77.4

24. Lalitpur : 3,37,785

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Newar	1,36,200	40.4
Chhetri	65,355	19.3
Brahmin Hill	40,264	11.9
Tamang	40,059	11.9
		83.5

25. Bhaktapur : 2,25,461

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Newar	1,25,926	55.9
Chhetri	41,777	18.5
Brahmin Hill	22,852	10.1
Tamang	14,728	6.5
		91.0

26. Sindhupalchok : 2,39,719

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	94,614	39.5
Chhetri	55,199	23.0
Newar	33,924	14.2
Brahmin Hill	33,724	14.1
		90.8

27. Kavrepalanchok : 3,85,672

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	1,30,261	33.8
Brahmin Hill	87,897	22.8
Chhetri	51,298	13.3
Newar	50,263	13.0
		82.9

28. Nuwakot : 2,88,478

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	1,11,112	38.5
Brahmin Hill	59,729	20.7
Chhetri	38,738	13.4
Newar	21,927	7.6
		80.2

29. Rasuwa : 44,731

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	28,515	63.7
Brahmin Hill	7,081	15.8
Gurung	3,008	6.7
Chhetri	1,513	3.4
		89.6

30. Dhading : 3,38,658

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	72,746	21.5
Brahmin Hill	57,449	17.0
Chhetri	52,552	15.5
Newar	32,449	9.6
		63.6

Narayani Zone**31. Makawanpur : 3,92,604**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tamang	1,85,874	47.3
Brahmin Hill	58,575	14.9
Chhetri	41,467	10.6
Newar	26,764	6.8
		79.6

32. Rautahat : 5,45,132

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Muslim	1,06,142	19.5
Yadav	68,082	12.5
Teli	30,135	5.5
Kurmi	30,957	5.7
		43.2

33. Bara : 5,59,135

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Muslim	75,096	13.4
Tharu	63,259	11.3
Yadav	58,312	10.4
Brahmin Hill	29,561	5.3
		40.1

35. Chitwan : 4,72,048

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,38,374	29.3
Chhetri	51,685	11.0
Tharu	60,121	12.7
Tamang	34,737	7.4
		60.4

37. Lamjung : 1,77,149

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Gurung	56,140	31.7
Chhetri	28,051	15.8
Brahmin Hill	26,355	14.9
Kami	13,159	7.4
		69.8

39. Syanga : 317,320

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,04,348	32.9
Magar	67,245	21.2
Chhetri	35,452	11.2
Gurung	31,687	10.0
		75.3

34. Parsa : 4,97,219

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Muslim	76,609	15.4
Tharu	40,970	8.2
Kurmi	40,797	8.2
Yadav	31,690	6.4
		38.2

Gandaki Zone**36. Gorkha : 2,88,134**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Gurung	64,240	22.3
Brahmin Hill	51,691	18.0
Chhetri	34,833	12.1
Magar	32,678	11.3
		63.7

38. Tanahu : 3,15,237

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	84,332	26.8
Brahmin Hill	41,463	13.2
Gurung	39,418	12.5
Chhetri	37,536	11.9
		64.4

40. Kaski : 380,527

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,14,899	30.2
Gurung	69,038	18.1
Chhetri	55,918	14.7
Kami	26,280	6.9
		69.9

41. Manang : 9,587

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Gurung	7,273	75.9
Sherpa	858	8.9
Tamang	343	3.6
Brahmin Hill	239	2.5
		90.9

Dhawalagiri Zone
42. Mustang : 14,981

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Gurung	6,770	45.2
Thakali	2,478	16.5
Magar	914	6.1
Chhetri	878	5.9
		73.3

43. Myagdi : 114,447

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	47,820	41.8
Chhetri	18,846	16.5
Kami	15,273	13.3
Brahmin Hill	8,945	7.8
		79.4

44. Parbat : 157,826

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	60,712	38.5
Chhetri	25,267	16.0
Magar	16,924	10.7
Kami	11,824	7.5
		72.7

45. Baglung : 268,937

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	74,550	27.7
Brahmin Hill	59,532	22.1
Chhetri	51,871	19.3
Kami	35,150	13.1
		82.2

Lumbini Zone**46. Gulmi : 296,654**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	84,455	28.5
Chhetri	68,653	23.1
Magar	59,123	19.9
Kami	28,065	9.5
		81.0

47. Palpa : 268,558

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	1,36,750	50.9
Brahmin Hill	51,703	19.3
Chhetri	51,871	19.3
Kami	35,150	13.1
		82.2

48. Nawalparasi : 562,870

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	96,881	17.2
Brahmin Hill	94,895	16.9
Tharu	92,779	16.5
Chhetri	32,000	5.7
		56.3

49. Rupandehi : 708,419

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	1,07,643	15.2
Tharu	70,888	10.6
Muslim	62,854	8.9
Magar	62,248	8.8
		43.5

51. Arghakhanchi : 208,309

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	76,983	36.9
Chhetri	38,155	18.3
Magar	34,078	16.4
Kami	18,245	8.3
		80.4

53. Rolpa : 210,004

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	91,936	43.8
Chhetri	70,099	33.4
Kami	22,049	10.5
Damai/Dholi	6,777	3.2
		90.9

55. Salyan : 60,643

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	30,435	50.2
Magar	10,445	17.2
Kami	4,520	7.5
Brahmin Hill	2,824	4.7
		79.6

50. Kapilvastu : 481,976

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Muslim	93,602	19.4
Tharu	60,574	12.6
Brahmin Hill	40,438	8.4
Yadav	46,587	9.2
		50.1

Rapti Zone**52. Pyuthan : 212,484**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Magar	65,123	30.6
Chhetri	57,495	27.1
Brahmin Hill	24,626	11.6
Kami	23,418	11.0
		80.3

54. Rukum : 188,438

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,10,075	58.4
Magar	43,621	23.1
Thakuri	9,574	5.1
Kami	7,505	4.0
		90.6

56. Dang Deokhari : 462,380

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tharu	1,47,328	31.9
Chhetri	1,05,146	22.7
Magar	55,711	12.0
Brahmin Hill	49,906	10.8
		77.4

Bheri Zone**57. Banke : 385,840**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Muslim	81,417	21.1
Tharu	63,344	16.4
Chhetri	47,466	12.3
Brahmin Hill	22,977	6.0
		55.8

59. Surkhet : 269,870

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	74,820	27.7
Magar	55,668	20.6
Kami	40,382	15.0
Brahmin Hill	33,285	12.3
		75.6

61. Jajarkot : 134,868

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	51,847	38.4
Kami	26,603	19.7
Thakuri	22,928	17.0
Magar	11,721	8.7
		83.8

63. Jumla : 69,226

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	43,697	63.1
Brahmin Hill	6,601	9.5
Sarki	4,470	6.5
Thakuri	3,924	5.7
		84.8

58. Bardiya : 382,649

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tharu	2,01,276	52.6
Chhetri	40,681	10.6
Brahmin Hill	36,163	9.4
Kami	12,875	3.4
		76.0

60. Dailekh : 225,201

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	78,306	34.8
Brahmin Hill	26,800	11.9
Kami	34,534	15.3
Thakuri	31,746	14.1
		76.1

Karnali Zone**62. Dolpa : 22,071**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	9,687	43.9
Gurung	4,993	22.6
Magar	2,902	13.1
Kami	1,288	5.8
		85.4

64. Kalikot : 11,510

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Brahmin Hill	3,164	27.5
Thakuri	2,500	21.7
Kami	2,485	21.6
Chhetri	1,743	15.1
		85.9

65. Mugu : 31,465

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	13,939	44.3
Thakuri	5,348	17.0
Sherpa	3,188	10.2
Brahmin Hill	1,367	4.3
		75.8

Seti Zone**67. Bajura : 100,626**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	55,887	55.5
Kami	9,498	9.4
Brahmin Hill	6,936	6.9
Thakuri	6,451	6.4
		78.2

69. Achham : 231,285

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,23,086	53.2
Brahmin Hill	24,770	10.7
Kami	31,109	13.4
Damai/Dholi	14,709	6.4
		83.7

71. Kailali : 616,697

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tharu	2,69,521	43.7
Chhetri	1,07,398	17.4
Brahmin Hill	66,197	10.7
Kami	38,301	6.2
		78.0

66. Humla : 40,595

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	17,781	43.8
Sherpa	5,666	14.0
Thakuri	7,955	19.6
Brahmin Hill	2,547	6.3
		83.7

68. Bajhyang : 167,026

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,06,775	63.9
Brahmin Hill	18,010	10.8
Kami	13,201	7.9
Thakuri	9,376	5.6
		88.2

70. Doti : 207,066

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,09,217	52.7
Brahmin Hill	19,013	9.2
Kami	16,644	8.0
Damai/Dholi	10,789	5.2
		75.1

Mahakali Zone**72. Kanchanpur : 377,899**

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,02,713	27.2
Tharu	88,155	23.3
Brahmin Hill	58,236	15.4
Kami	18,840	5.0
		70.8

73. Dadeldhura : 126,162

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	64,759	51.3
Brahmin Hill	22,560	17.9
Kami	9,646	7.6
Sarki	6,632	5.3
		82.1

74. Baitadi : 234,418

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	1,12,794	48.1
Brahmin Hill	47,350	20.2
Thakuri	19,284	8.2
Kami	14,360	6.1
		82.6

75. Darchula : 121,966

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Chhetri	72,254	59.2
Brahmin Hill	22,531	18.5
Thakuri	8,048	6.6
Kami	6,449	5.3
		89.6

Annex 3.3: Population 6 years of age and over by literacy status and by ethnic/caste groups.

Caste/Ethnicity	Total Population 6 Years and Above	Literacy Rate
Total	19,258,865	53.73
Chhetri	3,084,290	60.11
Brahman- Hill	2,575,341	74.90
Magar	1,375,556	55.90
Tharu	1,289,342	47.12
Tamang	1,067,495	45.04
Newar	1,123,138	71.22
Muslim	770,576	34.72
Yadav	740,480	40.83
Rai	545,208	58.19
Gurung	473,274	59.79
Limbu	308,798	58.12
Thakuri	286,052	63.39
Kami	734,140	41.27
Damai/Dholi	321,999	43.53
Sarki	262,301	38.33
Teli	256,315	51.42
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	213,442	19.24
Koiri	207,159	43.88
Kurmi	174,317	37.52
Sanyasi	170,428	58.96
Dhanuk	152,985	35.70
Musahar	132,389	7.28
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	125,571	19.59
Sherpa	133,053	50.43
Sonar	120,570	53.31
Kewat	109,800	36.35
Brahman- Tarai	118,532	71.21
Baniya	109,104	67.50
Gharti/Bhujel	99,956	51.62
Mallah	91,919	25.36
Kalwar	98,311	60.34
Kumal	81,632	43.26
Hajam/Thakur	80,508	42.09

Caste/Ethnicity	Total Population 6 Years and Above	Literacy Rate
Kanu	78,514	43.18
Rajbansi	80,911	49.98
Sunuwar	77,317	35.25
Sudhi	77,558	59.68
Lohar	67,010	37.71
Tatma	60,421	23.12
Khatwe	58,429	19.28
Dhobi	59,242	34.64
Majhi	59,685	35.29
Nuniya	53,410	23.20
Kumhar	44,398	36.96
Danuwar	44,056	41.20
Chepang (Praja)	38,996	29.20
Haluwai	43,078	58.03
Rajput	42,835	70.33
Kayastha	42,238	82.05
Badhae	37,792	41.52
Marwadi	40,324	89.31
Santhal/Sattar	34,704	25.84
Jhagar/Dhagar	32,735	25.91
Bantar	28,367	22.78
Barae	28,790	42.96
Kahar	27,855	32.71
Gangai	26,177	47.01
Lodha	18,513	30.77
Rajbhar	19,746	49.49
Thami	19,089	34.50
Dhimal	16,814	52.44
Bhote	16,021	42.36
Bing/Binda	15,047	14.80
Bhediyar/Gaderi	14,457	32.25
Nurang	15,396	68.48
Yakkha	14,549	57.86
Darai	12,495	55.44
Tajpuriya	11,137	46.66
Thakali	11,780	75.66

Caste/Ethnicity	Total Population 6 Years and Above	Literacy Rate
Chidimar	10,018	29.93
Pahari	9,171	29.93
Mali	9,117	36.14
Bangali	8,706	72.51
Chhantel	8,390	56.66
Dom	6,728	9.39
Kamar	6,838	15.15
Bote	6,298	34.90
Brahmu/Baramu	6,116	47.61
Gaine	4,456	46.86
Jirel	4,495	57.44
Adibasi/Janajati	4,058	48.72
Dura	4,325	63.26
Churaute	3,828	58.70
Badi	3,392	33.52
Meche	3,086	54.41
Lepcha	3,099	58.18
Halkhor	2,712	31.27
Punjabi/Sikh	2,449	47.82
Kisan	2,273	34.45
Raji	1,787	32.01
Byangsi	1,827	72.47
Hayu	1,479	39.08
Koche	1,080	32.13
Dhunia	883	21.86
Walung	911	27.22
Jaine	924	93.94
Munda	542	44.46
Raute	406	34.48
Yehlmo	488	70.70
Kuswadiya/Patharkatta	401	13.22
Kusunda	50	58.00

Source : CBS, 2001 Census, Kathmandu

Annex 3.4 : Population by caste/ethnic groups and religion.

Caste/ethnic Group	TOTAL	POPULATION FOLLOWING RELIGION								
		HINDU	BOUDDHA	ISLAM	KIRATI	JAIN	CHRISTIAN	SHIKHA	BAHAI	OTHERS
TOTAL	22736934	183301212	2442520	954023	818106	4108	101976	5890	1211	78979
CHHETRI	3593496	3574976	9389	0	771	92	5435	130	158	2545
BHAHMAN-HILL	2896477	2887317	3758	0	566	61	2436	159	83	2097
MAGAR	1622421	1210276	397036	0	2789	58	8314	253	31	3664
THARU	1533879	1497516	29893	0	241	65	3332	250	287	2295
TAMANG	1282304	98593	1157461	0	1000	101	24235	139	14	761
NEWAR	1245232	1047561	190629	0	828	90	5007	150	68	899
MUSLIM	971056	21265	101	949473	11	0	172	5	0	29
KAMI	895954	866296	19844	0	1302	21	6747	112	12	1620
YADAV	895423	893427	1250	0	44	19	116	64	46	457
RAI	635151	158803	10670	0	450288	52	13069	277	17	1975
GURUNG	543571	156263	375252	0	588	199	3575	646	13	7035
DAMAI/DHOLI	390305	381739	4914	0	626	4	2483	55	3	481
LIMBU	359379	40675	2948	0	310108	47	4228	73	157	1143
THAKURI	334120	332107	1185	0	100	53	501	27	40	107
SARKI	318989	312277	2668	0	469	8	3229	44	7	287
TELI	304536	302056	4148	0	38	5	84	3	12	190
CHAMAR HARIJAN/RAM	269661	266568	2898	0	6	15	42	42	9	81
KOIRI	251274	250705	231	0	32	21	36	21	18	210
KURMI	212842	212493	148	0	51	6	35	48	7	54
SANYASI	199127	197554	707	0	177	0	326	22	2	339
DHANUK	188150	187680	308	0	9	1	10	7	6	129
MUSAHAR	172434	169884	1462	0	28	1	61	28	3	967
DUSADH/PASW AN/PASI	158525	157682	549	0	5	3	47	7	4	228
SHERPA	154622	9683	143528	0	305	5	968	77	6	50
SONAR	145088	142482	1059	0	299	3	1107	24	29	85
KEWAT	136953	136371	117	0	14	3	11	7	3	427
BRAHMAN- TARAI	134496	133932	311	0	49	14	100	18	9	63
BANIYA	126971	126108	260	0	25	50	41	199	6	282
GHARTI/BHUJEL	117568	113458	2799	0	675	0	555	5	1	75
MALLAH	115986	114980	655	0	93	2	101	14	2	139
KALWAR	115606	115252	221	0	53	2	50	6	5	17
KUMAL	99389	97818	1038	0	58	0	269	10	0	196
HAJAM/THAKUR	98169	97768	233	0	31	4	32	8	2	91
KANU	95826	95718	48	0	3	1	10	0	3	43
RAJBANSI	95812	81580	95	0	118	11	247	490	8	13263

Caste/ethnic Group	TOTAL	POPULATION FOLLOWING RELIGION								
		HINDU	BOUDDHA	ISLAM	KIRATI	JAIN	CHRISTIAN	SHIKHA	BAHAI	OTHERS
SUNUWAR	95254	75726	970	0	16553	5	1816	64	4	116
SUDHI	89846	89554	79	0	54	31	30	3	4	91
LOHAR	82637	82454	58	0	2	3	38	0	1	81
TATMA	76512	76351	125	0	5	1	5	0	3	22
KHATWE	74972	74561	189	0	146	1	3	1	1	70
DHOBI	73413	73011	286	0	11	10	43	8	5	39
MAHJI	72614	59302	928	0	655	5	186	209	2	11327
NUNIYA	66873	66433	37	0	10	5	6	1	3	378
KUMHAR	54413	53972	237	0	34	4	40	4	34	88
DANUWAR	53229	52833	141	0	75	0	108	1	3	68
CHEPANG (PRAJA)	52237	36685	9796	0	100	2	4589	66	4	995
HALUWAI	50583	50268	233	0	14	0	4	0	3	61
RAJPUT	48454	48126	123	0	7	2	65	0	4	127
KAYASTHA	46071	45556	314	0	24	6	64	9	22	76
BADHAE	45975	45756	69	0	3	0	43	10	3	91
MARWADI	43971	41718	143	0	20	1977	34	24	3	52
SANTHAL/SATTAR	42698	35463	156	0	243	1	2466	144	4	4221
JHAGAR/DHAGAR	R1764	38752	2128	0	5	3	384	16	1	475
BANTAR	35839	35069	607	0	42	1	2	0	1	117
BARAE	35434	35398	23	0	0	1	3	0	4	5
KAHAR	34531	34491	35	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
GANGAI	31318	30830	357	0	2	3	2	3	1	120
LODHA	24738	24693	35	0	0	6	0	1	0	3
RAJBHAR	24263	24119	83	0	3	0	15	22	1	20
THAMI	22999	12819	2854	0	3357	0	106	5	0	3858
DHIMAL	19537	11216	270	0	1494	3	176	598	3	5777
BHOTE	19261	7300	11665	0	116	0	177	1	0	2
BING/BINDA	18720	18697	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	17
BHEDIYAR/GADERI	17729	17675	1	0	0	0	5	2	2	44
NURANG	17522	17267	216	0	4	5	1	7	4	18
YAKKHA	17003	2410	176	0	13846	3	538	11	1	18
DARAI	14859	14546	210	0	8	0	50	1	0	44
TAJPURIYA	13250	8500	39	0	10	5	46	166	1	4483
THAKALI	12973	4389	8434	0	96	0	50	3	0	1
CHIDIMAR	12296	12209	19	0	1	1	1	2	1	62
PAHARI	11505	9077	1523	0	278	0	219	0	0	408
MALI	11390	11365	18	0	2	0	1	0	1	2
BANGALI	9860	9566	146	0	1	5	57	5	1	79

Caste/ethnic Group	TOTAL	POPULATION FOLLOWING RELIGION								
		HINDU	BOUDDHA	ISLAM	KIRATI	JAIN	CHRISTIAN	SHIKHA	BAHAI	OTHERS
CHANTEL	9814	3021	6301	0	0	1	18	5	0	468
DOM	8931	8863	37	0	9	0	1	0	0	21
KAMAR	8761	8586	99	0	1	0	9	0	1	65
BOTE	7969	7855	48	0	0	0	51	0	0	15
BRAHMU/BARAMU	7383	5319	1928	0	4	0	130	0	0	2
GAINE	5887	5711	51	0	16	17	90	1	0	1
JIREL	5316	561	4625	0	5	1	106	0	0	18
ADIBASI/JANAJATI	5259	5056	138	0	43	0	21	0	1	0
DURA	5169	979	4164	0	12	0	1	3	0	10
CHURaute	4893	292	51	4550	0	0	0	0	0	0
BADI	4442	4390	22	0	1	0	21	0	0	8
MECHE	3763	3021	43	0	329	0	40	99	0	231
LEPCHA	3660	279	3250	0	5	1	122	0	0	3
HALKHOR	3621	3597	12	0	1	0	8	1	0	2
PUNJABI/SIKH	3054	2464	126	0	1	12	4	380	0	67
KISAN	2876	2750	53	0	29	0	6	17	0	21
RAJI	2399	2119	267	0	5	0	1	0	0	7
BYANGSI	2103	2062	8	0	4	25	3	0	0	1
YAYU	1821	1280	8	0	430	1	2	0	0	0
KOCHE	1429	1397	7	0	2	2	4	0	0	17
DHUNIA	1231	1146	70	0	4	1	3	1	0	6
WALUNG	1148	946	84	0	92	0	24	0	0	2
JAINE	1015	357	5	0	0	652	1	0	0	0
MUNDA	660	521	2	0	76	1	55	5	0	0
RAUTE	658	548	1	0	4	0	5	0	0	0
YEHLMO	579	9	570	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KU8SWADIYA/PATHARKATTA	552	551	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
KUSUNDA	164	160	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNIDENTIFIED DALIT	173401	169662	2206	0	380	14	724	138	3	274
UNIDENTIFIED CASTE	231641	209499	9801	0	7528	274	2142	429	9	1959

Source : CBS, 2001 Census, Kathmandu.