

Chapter XI

POPULATION CENSUS AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

Population growth and educational development are closely interrelated; each is a determinant and consequence of the other. Demographic factors exert strong influence on the quantitative development of education. Rapid population growth as a consequence of high fertility and low mortality results in a corresponding increase in the school-age population for whom educational facilities have to be provided. The density of population in an area determines the distribution of educational facilities in that area. Migratory movements have a direct impact on the distribution of educated and technically qualified persons. Urban settlements tend to attract many well educated and trained persons, thus lowering the levels of educational attainment in the rural areas. In a large number of developing countries, the high rates of population growth have placed increasingly heavy burdens on the educational facilities and have rendered difficult the achievement of enrolment targets and other educational objectives.

Educational development affects population changes through its influence on mortality, fertility and migration. Studies conducted elsewhere have shown that a higher level of educational development is conducive to achieving a lowering in the levels of mortality and fertility. The availability of better educational facilities, particularly in the urban areas, is one of the motivating factors behind rural-urban migration. In recent years there has been a substantial emigration of highly educated manpower from developing to developed countries.

The purpose of the present chapter, however, is not to examine the interrelationship between population growth and educational development in Nepal. An attempt is being made merely to assess the growth in educational enrolments and literacy in relation to the growth in population of the country.

B. Education System

1. *History of Education*

Until the beginning of the Rana period in 1846, the education scene in Nepal was dominated by Buddhism and Brahmanic Hinduism with their emphasis on meditation and metaphysical speculation. In the early years, the Buddhist tradition exerted a very great influence and by the mid-seventh century, the Buddhist monasteries had produced a number of eminent scholars in the fields of medicine, geography, astronomy and literature. However, after the tenth century, the Buddhist monasteries were being gradually supplanted by Hindu temples as the principal centers of higher learning.

The education imparted by the monasteries and temples was confined to very few students and very little was available in the way of formal education to the mass of the people. A few schools were operated by Christian missionaries until their expulsion in 1768 and private tutors were sometimes employed. In early days, the training imparted to most Nepalese children consisted of an informal apprenticeship in work performed by adult members of the community.

Public schooling of any form for the people was not provided to any significant extent during the Rana regime which lasted 104 years. However, formal instruction was provided to the children of the ruling caucus to prepared them for

various positions in the government structure. In 1854, Jang Bahadur Rana engaged an English tutor who held classes for his children in the palace, and Jang Bahadur's successor opened these classes to all Rana children and organized the Durbar High School. In 1901, Prime Minister Shamsher Rana proposed the establishment of a system of universal public primary education with Nepali as the language of instruction and to open Durbar High School to children who were not members of the Rana Clan. Although he was deposed within a few months, a few Nepali language primary schools in the valley, hill and Terai regions remained open and the practice of admitting a few children from the middle and low castes to Durbar High School was continued.

During the first half of the twentieth century, several new English middle and high schools were set up in Patan, Biratnagar and other places and a girls' high school was opened in Kathmandu. However, facilities for higher education were not available within the country, and a very few persons obtained such education abroad particularly from Patna University or Banares Hindu University in India. After the Second World War, the Ranas made a modest attempt to provide more schools, and just before their overthrow in 1951, there were 310 primary and middle schools, 11 high schools, 2 clooeges, 1 normal school and 1 technical school in the country.

The period since 1951 has witnessed far-reaching changes in the education scene. The Ministry of Education was established in 1951. In 1954, this Ministry appointed a National Education Planning Commission with a view to improving standards and developing a uniform programme. In 1955, the Commission provided a master plan for educational development aimed at making primary education universal within the next 25 years and providing secondary, academic or technical education to about 20 per cent of all youth and some type of

higher education to about 5 per cent of all young persons within 10 years. These objectives were to be achieved through private initiative, increased in education budget and foreign aid.

During the first plan period of 1956-1961, a multipurpose vocational education programme was put into operation following the recommendation of the Commission. By 1970, 29 major high schools of the country were offering vocational programmes in the fields of agriculture, secretarial science, home science and industrial arts. A college of education was established in 1956 for training teachers. In 1959, Tribhuvan University was established to provide higher education in arts and sciences.

During the third plan period (1965-1970), experimental free and compulsory primary education programme was initiated in two districts (Jhapa and Chitwan) and 107 panchayats in other districts. A local-level education tax was levied for meeting the costs of primary education. Substantial increments in enrolment of both boys and girls were recorded in the districts and panchayats implementing free and compulsory primary education. However, this experimental programme had to be abandoned because of serious financial difficulties. A National Vocational Training Centre was established for training middle-level manpower in the fields of agriculture, secretarial science, home science and various industrial arts.

The recommendations of the National Education Planning Commission had guided educational policies in Nepal until 1971 when the National Education System Plan came into operation. The implementation of this Plan, which was the culmination of a process of educational reform started as early as 1954, marks an important landmark in the development of education in Nepal. The Plan was aimed primarily at counteracting the elitist bias of the inherited system of education by linking it more

effectively to productive enterprises and egalitarian principles. It called for unification of education into one productive system that would serve the country's needs and aspirations.

The National Education System Plan sought to remedy the accumulated defects in Nepal's education system such as lack of clear policies and goals of education, proliferation of schools at all levels, qualitative deterioration of education, excessive drop-out, repeater and failure rates, shortage of trained teachers, etc. The Plan made firm proposals for investment in education as the basis of national development, curriculum reform, improvement of the professional status of teachers, provision of educational materials, promotion of vocational education and reorganization of higher education for ensuring the fulfillment of national manpower needs.

The Plan was enforced throughout the country in three phases: experiment, implementation and consolidation. It was introduced in two selected districts in the first year, in 13 districts in the second year and in 24 districts in the fifth and final year, 1976.

2. *Structure of Education*

The National Education System Plan arranges the educational system into three precisely defined, interrelated levels, namely, primary, secondary and higher education. The basic objective at the primary or first level is to make students proficient in the three R's. the second level covers both pre-vocational as well as vocational aspects, and the level of higher education aims to fulfill the requirements for trained manpower as determined by the National Planning Commission.

In Nepal, the school level education is of ten years duration. The first three comprise the primary level when the main objective is the achievement of literacy and numeracy of children of the age group 6 to 8 years. This

modest objective is achieved through a common curriculum. Lower secondary education forms the first stage of secondary education, a four-year cycle. This, with the introduction of a prevocational curriculum, lays stress on character building and the formation of appropriate attitudes towards the dignity of labour. Prevocational studies are introduced in the final two grades and involve practical work in simple local craft.

The upper-secondary stage spans three years and branches out in three different streams – general, Sanskrit and vocational. Of the three streams, the general and the Sanskrit streams seek to give vocational orientation to the students by devoting 20 per cent of the total instructional hours to vocational studies. The vocational stream offers more intensive vocational courses, comprising 40 per cent of the total time for instruction. The aim of this course is to provide vocational training to the students with a view to preparing them for various development activities at the national and sub-national levels. The students graduating from these vocational schools have the added advantage of competing on an equal footing with those from other streams for admission to higher educational establishments.

The implementation of the higher education programmes within the framework of the new national education policy is the responsibility of Tribhuvan University. The University is currently running its academic programmes through ten institutes and three centers. Of the ten institutes, five are technical and five are general¹. Three technical and two general institutes are located in Kathmandu valley while the remaining five are in other parts of the country. All three centres² are based in the Kathmandu valley.

Enrolments in various academic programmes of the institutes are restricted to those qualifying in the admission test designed and administered by

a body of specialists appointed by the University. The intake of technical institutes is determined on the basis of manpower estimates of the development plans. Thus, the manpower production programme of the technical institutes is tied up with job opportunities in the country. These institutes also undertake problem-oriented research work in their various disciplines.

One of the main features of the 1971 educational reform is the National Development Service programme at the higher education level. The main objectives of the programme are (a) to allow the students to experience the realities of rural life, thereby making their higher education broader in outlook and better attuned to the real development needs of Nepal, and (b) to offer students an opportunity to help to meet the country's development needs during their academic careers. The programme is being implemented initially as an integral part of the degree-level course. During this service, the students work as teachers in local schools and participate in other rural development activities such as afforestation, health and adult education, agricultural extension, family welfare and small construction works, including water supplies, roads and bridges.

C. Trends in Educational Enrolments

1. First and second level enrolments

The growth in the school enrolments at the first and second level of education is shown in table 86. what is remarkable in the field of education in Nepal is the speed at which school enrolments have increased during the last three decades. The total number of enrolments recorded almost a hundredfold increase from about 10,200 in 1950 to about 1.1 million in 1977. However, the growth was not continuous throughout the period, a decrease being noticed in the actual number of enrolments between 1971 and 1973. It will also be noted that while the enrolments at the second level have shown a continuous increase, the dip between 1970 and

1973 has been caused by a sharp fall in the number of enrolments at the primary or first level.

Table 86. Growth in school enrolments, 1950-1977

Year	Primary level	Secondary level education			Total school enrolments
		Lower	Upper	Total	
1950 ^a	8505	-	-	1680	10815
1954 ^b	26186	-	-	17740	43926
1961 ^a	182533	-	-	21115	203648
1965 ^a	386100	-	-	57440	443540
1970 ^a	449141	-	-	102704	551845
1973 ^c	301439	301439	58484	215993	517432
1974 ^c	401034	160258	61325	221583	622617
1975 ^c	458516	174143	67214	241357	699873
1976 ^c	643835	188688	74060	262748	906583
1977 ^c	769049	226639	82158	308797	1077846

Sources: a *Bulletin of the UNESCO Regional Office for Educational in Asia*, vol. VI, No. 2, March 1972, pp. 140-141.

b Quoted in George L. Harris, et. Al., *Area Handbook for Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim* (Washington, DC, United States Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 94-95.

c Ministry of Education, "Educational statistics of Nepal at a glance", Kathmandu.

As was noted in the preceding section, it was after the overthrow of the Ranas in 1951 that meaningful measures were adopted to develop and expand education in the country. The expansion of education begun in the final years before the overthrow of the Ranas swiftly picked up momentum. By 1954, nearly 930 new primary and middle schools had been opened, increasing capacity at this level more than sevenfold. Secondary and higher education facilities also multiplied rapidly. By the early 1960s, educational facilities had increased and schools were being established even in such remote places as Salyana in the western portion of the lower Himalayas and Kanchanpur in the western Terai. Primary enrolments increased from 26,186 in 1954 to 182,533 in 1961 and it was unofficially estimated that about 15.8 per

cent of children aged 6 to 10 were in school. In the same period, enrolments at the secondary level increased from 17,740 to 21,115.

During the 1970, with the implementation of the National Education System Plan, there was a significant development in school enrolments, particularly after 1975. the growth at the primary level has been especially significant and is due to a number of factors. First, the Royal proclamation on the eve of the coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in 1975, making primary education free, has contributed substantially to the overwhelming growth in enrolment since 1975. Secondly, free text book distribution³ is another contributory factor in raising the enrolment level. The policy of opening primary schools even for small numbers of children in remote areas has also contributed significantly to this rise.

Although there has been an extremely high increase in the number of students in the primary schools, the percentage of girls enrolled is very low – less than one-quarter of the total primary enrolments, as will be seen from table 87. the major constraint is apparently apathy on the part of the great majority of the illiterate parents to girls' education. The traditional parental attitude has been that girls are destined for marriage and therefore need no schooling. Besides, parents are reluctant to part with the labour contributed by the daughters in family work. The economic condition of the family is also an important factor; poor families are less motivated and can hardly afford to send their daughters to school.

Since about 50 per cent of the children of school-going age are girls, the proportion of girls enrolled will significantly affect the level of overall enrolment ratio. A large enrolment of girls is thus a critical factor in the attainment of significant increases in the enrolment ratio.

"A serious problem which was facing the country in promoting primary education in the

last decade was the dearth o trained teachers especially female teachers. While *b* Ministry of Education, "Educational statistics of Nepal at a glance", Kathmandu.

Table 87. Percentage distribution of enrolments at first and second level schooling by sex, 1965-1977

Years	First level		Second level	
	Boys percent	Girls percent	Boys percent	Girls percent
1965 ^a	85.8	14.2	85.4	14.6
1970 ^a	85.2	14.8	84.8	15.2
1973 ^b	83.7	16.3	83.9	16.1
1974 ^b	82.7	17.3	83.4	16.6
1975 ^b	81.7	18.3	83.2	16.8
1976 ^b	79.9	20.1	78.8	21.2
1977 ^b	87.9	22.1	82.1	17.9

Source: *a Bulletin of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia*, vol. IV, No. 2.

proportion of female enrolment amounted to 14 per cent of total enrolled students at all levels, the percentage of female teachers did not exceed 4 per cent. Moreover, it was extremely difficult for the authorities to find a female teacher who was willing to work in the remote areas. Although mixed education in the primary stage which is applied in Nepal, is probably helping to some extent in solving the problem of teacher scarcity, still it is not completely accepted in all regions. A large sector of the population would accordingly abstain from sending their girls to a mixed school.⁴

Efforts are being made to increase female enrolments by bringing about an attitudinal change in the parents. These include the implementation of a special teacher training programme for women and preferential treatment for them in the appointment of primary school teachers. In 18 remote regions, girls have free tuition in both primary and secondary schools. These measures should help to increase the proportion of female enrolment.

Table 88. Growth in third level enrolments, 1961-1977

Year	Enrolments
1961 ^a	5220
1962 ^a	5710
1963 ^a	6200
1964 ^a	6372
1965 ^a	8100
1966 ^a	10230
1967 ^a	11802
1968 ^a	15000
1969 ^a	17200
1973 ^b	19094
1974 ^b	22340
1975 ^b	22504
1976 ^b	21438
1977 ^b	24297

Sources: a "Report of educational statistics, 1969", Ministry of Education.

b "Educational statistics of Nepal at a glance", Ministry of Education.

gained in Tribhuvan University which today consists of five technical institutes, five general institutes and three centres. These institutes,

which together have 67 campuses, are distributed throughout the country. The growth in enrolments from 1961 to 1971 is shown in table 88. It will be noticed that there has been a steady growth in enrolments at the third level of education over the years; within a period of sixteen years these enrolments have increased more than fourfold. This increase has been due to two important factors. In the first instance, the input for higher education is the output of secondary education. As noted earlier, in recent years there has been a tremendous increase in the number of pupils enrolled at the secondary level in Nepal and this development has had its effect on the trend in enrolments at the higher level. Secondly, there has also been an increase in the number of institutions providing higher education in Nepal over the years. Prior to the implementation of the National Education System Plan, there were 49 colleges in Nepal. But since the introduction of the Plan in 1972 all colleges have been converted into campuses, additional ones were set up and today higher education is provided in 79 campuses distributed throughout the country.

Table 89. Distribution of third level enrolments by courses of study, 1973-1977

Courses of study	1973		1974		1975		1976		1977	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Humanities and social sciences	7306	38.3	8656	38.7	8947	38.1	6922	32.3	8578	35
General and applied sciences	2524	13.2	2881	12.9	3010	12.8	2105	9.8	2238	9
Law	126	0.7	325	1.5	479	2.0	669	3.1	1216	5
Business Administration and commerce	2980	15.6	3612	16.2	3435	14.6	3207	14.9	4117	16
Sanskrit	265	1.4	275	1.2	269	1.1	313	1.5	325	1
Engineering	578	3.0	712	3.2	729	3.1	1285	6.0	1108	4
Agriculture and forestry	581	3.0	613	2.7	556	2.4	679	3.2	812	3
Medical science	481	2.5	1255	5.6	901	3.8	1647	7.7	1684	6
Education	4253	22.3	4011	18.0	5178	22.0	4611	21.5	4219	17
Total	19094	100.0	22340	100.0	23504	100.0	21438	100.0	24297	100

Source: "Educational statistics of Nepal at a glance", Ministry of Education.

The distribution of students enrolled in higher education by course of study is shown in table 89. The largest number of students are enrolled

in humanities and social science courses. In recent years, however, there have been slight changes in the proportions enrolled in various

courses of study. In 1973, enrolment in science based courses (general and applied sciences, agriculture and forestry, engineering and medicine) constituted 21.7 per cent of all third level enrolments; the corresponding proportion in 1977 was 24.4 per cent. It may, however, be noted that while proportions enrolled in applied and general sciences have shown a decline, proportions enrolled in medical science courses have increased considerably. There have also been substantial increases in the proportion enrolled in law courses.

4. *Regional differences in school enrolment*

The proportion of the population aged 6-24 years attending school by development region and zones and by urban rural residence in 1971 is shown in table 90. It will be noted that for the country as a whole, while one out of every five boys aged 6-24 years goes to school, the corresponding ratio for girls is one in twenty. At

ages 6-14 years, nearly 24 per cent of the males were attending school as against about 7 per cent of females.

It will also be noted from the table that the proportion of males aged 6-24 years attending school was highest (27.1 per cent) in the western development region and the lowest (14.3 per cent) in far-western development region. The corresponding ratio for females was highest (5.8 per cent) in central development region and lowest (1.8 per cent) in far-western development region. Within each region, inter-zonal differences do not indicate extraordinary fluctuations around the average enrolment for the region. The lowest rate recorded for the age group 6-24 in the western development region was in Dhaulagiri zone: 22.2 per cent for males and 4.1 per cent for females. Yet these rates are still comparatively close to the total enrolment rates for the region.

Table 90. Proportion of population aged 6-24 years attending school by development region, zone and urban area, 1971

Regions/zones/areas	Males				Females			
	6-14	15-19	20-24	6-24	6-14	15-19	20-24	6-24
<i>Eastern development region</i>	25.3	23.6	8.1	21.6	7.9	4.4	0.8	5.6
Mechi	26.2	23.2	6.9	21.6	10.3	4.6	0.8	7.0
Kosi	28.0	25.5	9.0	23.8	11.2	6.7	1.6	8.2
Sagarmatha	23.0	22.3	8.0	20.0	4.4	2.5	0.4	3.1
<i>Central development region</i>	21.2	20.7	9.1	18.6	7.5	5.9	1.6	5.8
Janakpur	18.0	16.2	6.1	15.3	4.0	1.8	0.2	2.7
Bagmati	23.8	25.0	13.2	21.9	11.2	10.4	3.6	9.3
Narayini	21.4	18.8	6.2	17.7	6.3	3.1	0.4	4.1
<i>Western development region</i>	32.9	28.0	8.0	27.1	7.2	3.3	0.6	4.9
Gandaki	34.7	31.0	10.2	29.3	6.8	3.2	0.6	4.6
Lumbini	32.6	26.5	6.8	26.2	7.9	3.6	0.5	5.3
Dhaulagiri	27.5	22.8	5.2	22.2	6.2	2.9	0.5	4.1
<i>Far-western development region</i>	17.3	16.2	4.0	14.3	2.7	1.3	0.2	1.8
Rapti	17.4	15.4	3.4	14.2	2.8	1.3	0.1	1.9
Karnali	11.2	12.8	4.1	9.9	1.1	0.6	0.1	0.7
Bheri	15.9	15.8	3.5	13.5	3.5	1.9	0.3	2.4
Seti	14.0	13.9	4.2	12.0	1.7	0.9	0.2	1.1
Mahakali	27.4	23.8	5.1	21.8	3.5	1.1	0.1	2.1
<i>Nepal</i>	23.9	22.0	7.5	20.2	6.6	3.9	0.9	4.7
Urban areas	59.7	54.4	27.2	49.9	36.4	38.5	12.6	31.4
Rural areas	22.5	20.3	6.3	18.8	5.4	2.4	0.4	3.6

Source: 1971 population census, vol. I, table 17 and vol. II, table 43.

However, the Bagmati zone in the central development region presents an interesting case. It would normally be expected that this zone, which contains the three largest cities and a concentration of technical and vocational institutes, would have a much higher enrolment rate for males aged 6-24 years than the other zones. But this rate is only 21.9 per cent and is lower than those for all three zones in the western development region. However, the enrolment rates for females was the highest for all age groups in Bagmati zone.

"Employment opportunities in the growing industrial sector in the urban area, and intensive agriculture in Kathmandu Valley presumably have participated in keeping the enrolment rates in Bagmati at the present low levels".⁵

It is also clear from table 90 that the enrolment rates for both males and females were substantially higher in urban than in rural areas, the differences being more marked in the case of females than males. For instance, in the age group 6-14 years, the enrolment rate for urban males was about 170 per cent higher than the rate for rural males; but the corresponding rate for urban females was about 600 per cent higher than that for the rural females. It has, however, to be noted that though the urban rates are much higher than the rural rates, the population residing in urban areas constitutes only about 3 per cent of the total population and hence urban enrolments would not seriously influence the level of enrolments for the country as a whole. Nevertheless,

"the rural-urban difference in education would clearly denote the strenuous efforts that should be made in acquiring broader educational attendance in the rural area. The exclusion of children from their fundamental right of a proper education would ultimately tend to impede social and economic advancement in a sector where the majority of people live".⁶

The percentage distribution of enrolment by level of education for different development regions and zones is given in table 91. It will be observed that in 1971 for Nepal as a whole, 66.7 per cent of all students were in primary grades (1 to 5 grades), 28.8 per cent in the secondary grades (6-10 grades), and 4.5 per cent in higher education. The highest proportions in the second level and third level were observed in the central development region and the lowest proportion for these levels was recorded in the far-western development region. Of all zones, Bagmati recorded the highest proportions in the second and third levels. In the far-western development region, the proportions in the first level constituted over three-quarters of the total enrolments for all levels. The proportionate share of the third level enrolments in total enrolments was lower than the national average in eastern, western and far-western development regions.

D. Retention Rates

The problem of educational wastage resulting from student drop-outs is very serious in Nepal. It is one of the important causes of the slow increase in enrolment ratio. The incidence of drop-out is particularly marked between grades I and II as will be seen from the following data for 1974, 1975 and 1976.

Grade	Class of 1974	Class of 1975		Class of 1976	
		Number	%	Number	%
I	233521	258836	-	-	-
II	89788	112552	47.8	139698	52.0
III	75725	87128	97.0	109196	97.0
IV	-	60495	79.9	69357	79.6

It will be noted that of the total number of students enrolled in grade I in a particular year, only about 43 per cent reach grade II in the successive year. An idea of successive loss of students when passing through grades may be obtained from table 92 which gives the grade distribution of total enrolment in 1975. It has, one single year, and hence the percentages

shown in the last column do not represent the exact retention rates; but they do give an idea of what normally happens to the original cohort of students entering grade I. It is clear that the

number of students enrolled in grade I is substantially greater than at the succeeding levels

Table 91. Percentage distribution of enrolment by level of education in various development regions and zones, 1971

Regions/ zones	Both sexes			Males			Females		
	First level	Second level	Third level	First level	Second level	Third level	First level	Second level	Third level
<i>Eastern development region</i>	68.7	27.9	3.4	67.4	28.9	3.7	73.9	23.7	2.4
Mechi	75.6	22.3	2.1	74.1	23.6	2.3	81.0	17.9	1.1
Kosi	65.1	30.3	4.6	64.3	30.9	4.8	67.8	28.4	3.8
Sagarmatha	67.6	29.1	3.3	66.3	30.1	3.6	67.7	21.7	1.6
<i>Central development region</i>	56.6	34.7	8.7	56.8	35.2	8.0	57.6	33.7	8.7
Janakpur	65.0	30.5	4.5	63.4	31.7	8.0	75.6	22.7	1.7
Bagmati	48.3	38.8	12.9	59.2	30.4	4.9	48.7	39.2	12.1
Narayini	66.4	29.9	3.7	64.8	31.3	10.4	74.4	23.4	2.2
<i>Western development region</i>	72.7	25.3	2.0	71.5	26.4	3.9	79.5	19.2	1.3
Gandaki	71.6	26.4	2.0	70.1	27.8	2.1	81.4	17.7	0.9
Lumbini	72.5	25.4	2.1	71.6	26.2	2.1	70.1	21.3	1.6
Dhaulagiri	79.1	19.7	1.2	78.2	20.6	2.2	79.5	19.2	1.3
<i>Far-western development region</i>	76.0	22.8	1.2	75.7	23.1	1.2	78.7	20.0	1.3
Rapti	75.1	23.6	1.3	74.6	24.1	1.3	79.2	20.2	0.6
Karnali	87.1	12.5	0.4	86.8	12.8	0.4	91.9	7.3	0.8
Bheri	74.3	24.2	1.5	74.7	23.9	1.4	72.0	25.6	2.4
Seti	78.0	20.9	1.1	77.9	21.0	1.1	79.8	19.4	0.8
Mahakali	74.6	24.4	1.0	73.5	25.5	1.0	86.0	12.8	1.2
<i>Nepal</i>	66.7	28.8	4.5	66.4	29.2	4.4	68.4	27.1	4.5

Source: 1971 population census, vol. I, table 17.

and registration progressively diminishes in the higher grades. The number enrolled in grade X constitutes only about 8 per cent of the number enrolled in grade I.

The high incidence of wastage in school education, especially at the primary level, is due to several factors such as poor health conditions of students, parental apathy as well as inability to meet the educational expenses of their children, employment of children in domestic activities, particularly on the farms during peak agricultural seasons, general inadequacy of school facilities and equipment, lack of trained teachers, shortage of text books particularly in

Nepali, incongruence of curriculum in relation to what is expected of the student in examination, and the multiplicity of language in the country. However, attempts are being made to remedy these shortcomings. The scarcity of text books is being gradually alleviated; the Bureau of Publications in the Ministry of Education has been established to produce text books and other literature for primary and secondary schools. The Government has adopted a programme for increasing the number of trained teachers and is persuading the parents to admit and keep their children in schools at least until they complete primary education.

Table 92. Enrolments in successive grades compared with first grade enrolments, 1975

Grade	Total enrolment	Proportion of students in successive grades compared to students in grade I
I	258836	100.0
II	112552	43.5
III	87128	33.7
IV	60495	23.4
V	45688	17.7
VI	36140	14.0
VII	31820	12.3
VIII	27000	10.4
IX	20610	8.0
X	19604	7.6

Source: Ministry of Education (Statistics Division).

E. Literacy and Educational Attainments

1. Introduction

At the censuses held in 1952/54, 1961 and 1971, two types of information relating to the education of the people were collected: literacy of the population by sex, geographic region and district; and level of education completed by sex, geographic region and district. These two types of information were collected in respect of all persons aged 5 years and over at the 1952/54 census and in respect of all persons aged 10 years and over at the other two censuses. Since a breakdown of these data for 1952/54 is not available by age group, it is not possible to adjust the 1952/54 information to make it comparable with those for 1961 and 1971.

Information regarding urban literacy was provided for all urban areas in the 1961 census, but only for principal cities in 1952/54 and for 16 town panchayats in the 1971 census with no further analysis on the level of education attained in these towns.

For purposes of the censuses, a literate person was considered to be one who could read and write the Nepali language.

2. Literacy

The percentage of literacy by sex for the period 1952/54 to 1975 is shown in table 93. It will be observed that, at the 1952/54 census, only about 4 per cent of all persons of school age and over reported themselves as being able to read and write. There was also a marked difference in the degree of literacy between men and women. For the country as a whole, 8 per cent of the men and less than 1 per cent of the women aged 5 years and over claimed to be able to read and also to write.

In 1961, for the country as a whole, 16.4 per cent of the males and 1.8 per cent of the females aged 10 years and over were reported to be literate, the corresponding proportions in 1971 being 24.7 and 3.7 per cent respectively. The proportion literate for both sexes showed an increase from 8.9 per cent in 1961 to 14.3 per cent in 1971. Thus literacy increased by over 60 per cent during the decade 1961-1971 largely because of the expansion in education during this decade. "Both sexes have benefited from nationwide programmes aiming at accelerating the development in education. Percentage wise, literacy among females increased even faster than among males."⁷ Despite the substantial improvement in the literacy level recorded during the period of one decade, females are still lagging behind males in their literacy status. Also, the number of persons who are in need of schooling facilities is still very large, and the number of illiterate has grown by 14 per cent during this decade.⁸

The proportions literate by age groups and sex in 1961 and 1971 are shown in table 94. It will be noted that in 1961 the proportions literate among males showed an increase from 14.6 per cent at ages 10-14 to 20.2 per cent at ages 20-24, then a decrease in the age group 25-29 and 30-34, a rise at ages 35-39 and thereafter a gradual decline with advancing age. In the case of the female, the proportion literate has shown

a consistent decline with advancing age. The unevenness in the male literate proportions has been due to skewness

Table 93. Percentage of literate persons, 1952/54 to 1975

Year	Percentage of literates		
	Both sexes	Males	Females
1952/54 ^a	4.3	7.8	0.7
1961 ^b	8.9	16.4	1.8
1971 ^b	14.3	24.7	3.7
1975 ^c	19.2	33.4	5.0

Source: National Education Committee and Central Bureau of Statistics.

- a. In respect of population aged 5 years and over.
- b. In respect of population aged 10 years and over.
- c. In respect of population aged 6 years and over.

in age reporting and also caused by emigration, which, as noted elsewhere, occurs largely among males aged 25-34 years. It will also be noticed from the table that in 1961 the proportions literate both among males and females between ages 15-19 and 35-39 do not differ widely, suggesting that during "the preceding two or three decades, there had been no substantial increase in proportions literate, particularly among the young generations."¹⁰ The age-specific literacy levels reported in the 1971 census show a wider range in the level of literacy between the younger and older generations. For example, in 1971 the proportion literate among those aged 10-14 years in the total population was about four times higher than the proportion for those aged 65 years and over, while in 1961 it was only twice as high.

The data from the 1961 and 1971 censuses also indicate that there are wide differences in the proportion literate between urban and rural populations. It will be seen from table 95 that in 1961 the literacy rate for the population aged 10 years and over in urban areas was 40.0 per cent (57.5 per cent for males and 19.6 per cent for females), the corresponding proportion for rural areas was only 7.7 per cent (14.6 per cent for

males and 1.1 per cent for females). Similarly in 1971, the literacy rate for all persons aged 10 years and over in urban areas was 47.0 (62.4 per cent for males and 28.0 per cent for females), while in rural areas the rate was 12.9 per cent

Table 94. Proportion literate by age and sex, 1961 and 1971

Age group	1961 Census.			1971 Census		
	Both sexes	Males	Females	Both sexes	Males	Female
10-14	9.2	19.5	3.1	23.8	35.8	9.
15-19	11.4	20.2	3.1	23.8	35.4	7.
20-24	10.6	17.4	2.4	21.9	30.9	4.
25-29	9.1	16.4	1.6	17.0	24.4	2.
30-34	8.4	19.8	1.3	13.3	20.3	1.
35-39	10.7	15.4	1.2	10.5	17.6	1.
40-44	7.8	15.3	0.9	8.7	16.4	1.
45-49	8.2	15.2	0.9	8.7	15.7	1.
50-54	6.7	13.2	0.8			
55-59	7.5	14.3	0.7	6.8 ^a	13.2 ^a	0.7
60 and over	5.9	12.3	0.6	6.0 ^b	11.7 ^b	0.6
Total	8.9	16.4	1.8	14.3	24.7	3.

Source: 1961 population census, vol. 3, part 4, table 5; 1971 population census, vol. 1, table 16.

- a. Refers to age group 55-64 years.
- b. Refers to age group 65 years and over.

(22.9 per cent for males and 2.7 per cent for females). There are two important reasons for this disparity in literacy level between urban and rural areas. First, educational facilities are more accessible in the urban than in the rural areas due to economic and administrative factors. The villages, which are widely dispersed and economically poor, cannot in most cases provide even the minimum funds required for the construction of a school. In fact, the opening of a school is often dependent on the number of pupils in the villages. Secondly, the migration of the literate persons from the rural to the urban areas tends to reduce the level of rural literacy and increase the urban one.

The literacy rates of the population aged 10 years and over in 1971 by development regions and zones are shown in table 96. the highest

literacy rate, 17.0 per cent, has been recorded for western development region which is known in Nepalese history as the birthplace of the leading elite Brahmin scholars, writers and politicians. The far-western development region, which is

Table 95. Literacy rates by sex and urban and rural sector, 1961 and 1971

Years and sectors	Both sexes	Males	Females
1961			
Urban	40.0	57.5	19.6
Rural	7.7	14.6	1.1
Both sectors	8.9	16.4	1.8
1971			
Urban	47.0	62.4	28.0
Rural	12.9	22.9	2.7
Both sectors	14.3	24.7	3.7

Source: Same as table 94.

economically the least developed, has the lowest literacy rate, 9.5 per cent. On the whole, the rates for the various zones within a development region do not vary much from the average for the region with a few exceptions. For instance, the literacy rate for Mahakali zone in the far-western development region is about 5 percentage points higher than the regional average. This is due to the longstanding cultural relationship this zone has had with the neighbouring Indian province of Uttar Pradesh.

It will also be noticed that the over-all literacy rates are almost equal in three zones: Kosi in eastern development region, Bagmati in central development region. While the highest male literacy rate, 34.1 per cent, has been recorded for Gandaki zone, the highest female literacy rate was noted in respect of Bagmati zone.

3. Educational attainments

The proportion of persons in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 who reported having completed five years of formal education at the 1961 and 1971 censuses is shown in table 97. it will be

noted that the proportion of persons who reported having completed five years or more of formal education in 1961 was 4.0 per cent among those aged 15-19 years and 2.9 per cent among those aged 20-24 years. The corresponding proportions in 1971 were 10.6 and 7.7 per cent respectively. There has thus been a remarkable increase in the proportion of those completing five years or more of formal education between 1961 and 1971 reflecting the vigorous efforts made to expand educational facilities over the years.

In the age group 15-19 years, the proportion of males who had completed five years or more of formal education was about five times higher than the corresponding proportion for females in 1961, and a little over four times in 1971. the difference between males and females was more marked in the age group 20-24 years, the rate for males in 1961 being about eight times higher than the rate for females and about seven times higher in 1971. The higher proportions for both males and females in the younger age group 15-19 years

"indicate that the younger persons who attended school approximately five years later than the older group enjoyed much better opportunities of education. Since almost all the persons in the age group 15-19 and 20-24 in 1961 have completed schooling after 1951, and all persons in the same age groups in 1971 have finished schooling after 1961, the relative difference between literacy rates in the two periods of the older and younger generations can be used as an indicator of the improvements in the educational facilities of the country as a whole since 1951".¹⁰

The regional and zonal differences in the proportions of those who had completed five years or more of formal education among those aged 15-19 years and 20-24 years in 1971 are shown in table 98. The regional and zonal differences in the proportions completing five years or more of formal education conform

more or less to the corresponding differentials in literacy rates. For all persons aged 15-19 and 20-24 years, the highest proportions are recorded in the central development region. The highest rate for males aged 15-19 years is noted in western development region, while for females in the same age group the highest rate prevails in central development region. For those aged 20-24, the highest rate for males as well as females is in the central development region.

Bagmati in the central development region had the highest proportion of males and females

Table 96. Proportion literate 10 years and over by sex, region and zone, 1971

Region and zones	Both sexes	Males	Females
<i>Eastern development region</i>	15.8	26.8	4.3
Mechi	17.8	29.0	5.6
Kosi	18.6	30.1	6.3
Sagarmatha	13.0	23.5	2.5
<i>Central development region</i>	14.6	24.1	4.5
Janakpur	10.9	19.5	2.3
Bagmati	18.7	29.6	7.2
Narayini	12.9	21.6	3.5
<i>Western development region</i>	17.0	30.7	3.7
Gandaki	18.3	34.1	3.6
Lumbini	16.5	29.0	3.9
Dhaulagiri	14.0	25.7	3.0
<i>Far-western development region</i>	9.5	17.3	1.5
Rapti	10.0	18.6	1.5
Karnali	6.4	11.6	0.8
Bheri	9.1	15.7	2.0
Seti	7.5	13.8	1.1
Mahakali	14.3	26.0	1.9
Nepal	14.3	24.7	3.7

Source: 1971 population census, vol. 1, table 16.

Table 97. Proportion of persons aged 15-19 and 20-24 years with five years and more of formal education, 1961 and 1971

Year and sex	15-19 years	20-24 years
1961		
Males	6.7	5.4
Females	1.3	0.7
Both sexes	4.0	2.9
1971		
Males	16.8	13.9
Females	3.7	1.9
Both sexes	10.6	7.7

Sources: 1961 population census, vol. 3, part 4, table 4; 1971 population census, vol. 1, table 16.

in the ages 15-24 years who had completed five or more years of formal education, while the least educationally developed zone was Karnali in the far-western development region. For both sexes, the proportion in the age group 15-19 years in Bagmati was over eight times the corresponding proportion for Karnali zone, while in the age group 20-24 years the differences was over seven times.

Table 98. Proportion of persons in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 years who had completed five years or more of formal education by development region and zone, 1971

Regions and zone	Males		Females		Both sexes	
	15-19	20-24	15-19	20-24	15-19	20-24
<i>Eastern development region</i>	17.6	15.0	4.1	2.1	11.2	8.3
Mechi	15.3	13.5	4.0	2.1	10.0	7.9
Kosi	21.5	17.5	6.8	3.6	14.4	10.5
Sagarmatha	16.3	2.0	2.0	1.1	9.6	7.1
<i>Central development region</i>	18.3	15.7	6.0	3.4	12.6	9.4
Janakpur	13.6	12.4	1.9	1.0	8.1	6.3
Bagmati	23.2	20.4	10.6	6.1	17.3	13.9
Narayini	15.8	12.4	3.0	1.1	10.0	6.5
<i>Western development region</i>	20.8	14.9	2.8	2.1	11.9	8.1
Gandaki	22.6	15.0	2.4	3.0	12.5	8.5
Lumbini	21.0	15.8	3.4	1.7	12.4	8.3
Dhaulagiri	13.9	10.9	2.0	1.1	8.0	5.7
<i>Far-western development region</i>	9.7	7.1	0.9	0.5	5.4	3.7
Rapti	10.0	6.7	0.5	0.4	5.2	3.3
Karnali	3.1	3.7	0.2	0.2	2.0	1.9
Bheri	9.4	7.8	1.8	0.8	5.9	4.2
Seti	6.7	5.0	0.6	0.3	3.8	2.5
Mahakali	17.2	12.0	0.9	0.6	9.1	6.2
<i>Nepal</i>	16.8	13.9	3.7	1.9	10.6	7.7

Source: 1971 population census, vol. I, tables 16, 17 and 18.