

CHAPTER 7

NUPTIALITY TRENDS AND DIFFERENTIALS IN NEPAL

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7.1 Introduction

The paper examines the nuptiality trends and differentials in Nepal based on five decennial census data (1961-2001). The paper in essence duplicates and updates the chapter on nuptiality in the 1987 Population Monograph of Nepal based on new information and analysis. Marital status is an important determinant of fertility behaviour particularly in a non-contracepting society and where most of the births take place within marital union as in Nepal. Keeping in view the importance of the variable all the six censuses held since 1952/54 have collected information on the marital status of the population above a minimum age. For example, in 1952/54 the particulars in regard to marital status were obtained for the population aged 5 years and above. In the subsequent two censuses (1961 and 1971) the age limit was raised to 6 years and above. And this was once again raised to 10 years and above in the subsequent three censuses (1981, 1991 and 2001). Each census before 1991 obtained information on marital status under four categories, viz: (i) never married; (ii) married; (iii) widowed; and (iv) divorced/separated.

The 1991 census added one more category by treating divorced and separated as two independent categories unlike the preceding censuses which lumped them together. The 2001 census has further expanded marital status categories by elaborating the category of married. The married persons were further classified into three sub-categories: married persons living with single spouse, married persons living with more than one spouse, and re-married. The 2001 census collected information on marital status under five categories and three sub-categories viz: (1) single; (2) married; (2a) married living with single spouse; (2b) married living with more than one spouse; (2c) re-married; (3) widowed; (4) divorced; and (5) separated.

The 2001 population census also differs with other decennial censuses in respect of database on marital status. All the censuses prior to 2001 population census collected information on marital distribution for the total population above certain age. However the 2001 census collected

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information on marital status of the population based on probability sample of 858725 households, which accounted for nearly 21 percent of the enumerated households in the 2001 population census

There is little intercensal variation in operational definitions of marital status categories with the exception of the further clarification and elaboration that have been introduced since 1981. The operational definitions of marital status categories adopted by the censuses of 1952/54 and 1971 were as follows:

Never Married: A person who has not lived as husband and wife even once is known as a person who has never married.

Married: A person who has lived as husband and wife after being married religiously or socially is defined as married.

Widower/Widow: A man who has lost his wife due to death and has not remarried is defined as a widower. On the other hand if a woman has lost her husband on account of death and has not remarried she is known as a widow.

Divorced/Separated: A married person who has broken up the marital relationship is classified as divorced. Even if, the wife has chosen another husband but the husband has not yet remarried, he is considered to be divorced.

A person who has not broken the marital union but living separately from his/her husband or wife without any relationship to each other is classified as separated.

The definitions adopted by the 1981 census were as follows:

Never Married: A person who is not married in any way (legally, religiously or socially), or who has not lived as husband or wife even once at the time of the census is known as a person who has never married.

Married: No matter how one is married, one who has lived once as a husband or wife in the community at the time of census enumeration and has continued to do so is known as a married person, even though, living in separate place. This includes polygamy and re-marriage cases.

Widowed: If the wife is dead at the time of the census, the person is known as a widower. If the wife loses her husband on account of his death she is known as a widow. In the case of such persons, if they have not remarried at the time of census they are known as widower or widow. But if they are remarried they are considered to be married again.

Divorced/Separated: The married person who has broken the marital status legally or by any means is known as divorced. If the husband and wife continue to live separately for ever they are considered to be divorced. If the wife has chosen another husband but if the husband has not yet remarried at the time of the census, the husband is considered divorced. But once the husband and wife have divorced and lived separately and after sometime both remarry other people, they are considered to be married.

A person who has not broken the marital union legally or by any means but living separately from his/her husband or wife without any relationship to each other is considered separated.

An important difference, one finds, between the definitions employed by the censuses of 1952/54, 1961 and 1971 on the one hand and the definition employed by the 1981 census on the other, is that the latter lays more emphasis on the legal aspect of marriage while the former place more emphasis on religious and social aspects. The definitions employed by the 1981 census were also followed by the subsequent censuses with the exception of the following elaboration of married persons in the 2001 census:

Living with One Spouse: Those persons that are living with only single spouse at the time of census enumeration are kept in this category. Even though wife and husband are living separately with consensus and have only single spouse, they are categorized as "living with one spouse". Even if a person is used to have more than single spouses in the past, but she/he is currently living with only single spouse due to divorce or separation or death of other spouses, then the person is included in this category of marital status. However, a person married again after divorce or separation or death of previous spouse/s is not included in this category though s/he is currently living with single spouse at the time of enumeration. Such person is to be included in remarriage category. For example, a widowed person marries with a never married person and is living with single spouse at the time of enumeration, they will not be kept in the same category. The married widowed person is categorized as "remarriage" and the other in "living with one spouse" categories.

Living with more than One Spouse: Any person living with more than one spouse at the time of census enumeration is categorized in this group of marital status. Those spouses may live in different places with consensus and all spouses are not bound to live in the same place and eating in the same kitchen. In this way, this category includes all polyandry (a woman has currently more than one husband) and polygamy (a man has currently several wives) cases at the time of census enumeration.

Remarried: It refers to currently married person who is married more than once and currently living with only single spouse. If divorced or separated or widowed person marries again with other person of any marital status, then the person is included in this "remarried" category.

The other intercensal changes, one comes across, is the practice of coding information on the marital status. In the censuses of 1952/54 and 1961 eligible people from whom information on their marital status could not be obtained, were classified as "unstated". But in 1971 and 1981 censuses there was no "unstated" category, even though there were eligible people from whom information on marital status could not be obtained. When coding the data of 1971 and 1981 censuses, if the information on marital status of an eligible person was missing, he/she was assigned to any of the four categories (never married, married, widowed and divorced) on the basis of some *a priori* internally consistent assumption. The "unstated category" is restored in the subsequent two censuses (1991 and 2001).

The quality of data on "marital status" obtained by the census is considered to be fairly reliable. The marital status picture one obtains employing the census data closely corresponds to the picture one gets by employing nationally representative data

Table 7.1: Percentage distribution of ever married and never married women in the reproductive age (15-49 years), Nepal census year 2001 and Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2001

Age of Women	2001 NDHS*		2001 Census	
	Never Married	Ever Married	Never Married	Ever Married
15-19	59.7	40.3	66.1	33.9
20-24	17.1	82.9	21.0	79.0
25-29	4.5	95.5	5.6	94.4
30-34	2.5	97.5	2.6	97.4
35-39	1.9	98.1	1.8	98.2
40-44	1.1	98.9	1.5	98.5
45-49	1.4	98.6	1.2	98.8

* His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health, New Era and ORC Macro, Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2001.

collected independently by Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2001 (see Table 7.1), except for younger ages below 25. At these ages, 2001 census reported relatively a higher

proportion of single women compared to DHS. Conversely, DHS has reported relatively a higher proportion of married women at younger ages below 25 compared to the 2001 census. This could be due to sampling errors resulting from differential sample size used by NDHS and 2001 census. DHS sample consisted of 8,602 households compared to 858,725 sampled households in the 2001 census. Therefore data collected by the 2001 census may be considered more robust and reliable compared to NDHS data.

7.2 Some Special Features

7.2.1 Sex Ratio

Predominance of females among currently married persons continues and also shows an increase over the years.

One interesting feature of marital pattern in Nepal is that among currently married persons the number of female exceeds that of males in every census since 1952/54 (see Table 7.2). The 1952/54 census enumerates 1091 females currently married for every 1000 currently married males. And this pattern not only continues through 2001 but also shows a marked increase in number of currently married females per 1000 currently married males over the years, particularly in the last decade. An explanation for this excess of females over males among the *currently married* persons may be found in husbands working abroad leaving behind their spouses and/or limited practice of polygamy¹. The rise in ratio of females over males among

Table 7.2: Sex ratio among the currently married persons, Nepal, Census Years 1952-54 – 2001

Census Years	Currently Married Males	Currently Married Females	Sex Ratio (per 1,000 Males)
1952/54	1,905,571	2,078,957	1,091
1961	2,149,756	2,373,199	1,104
1971	2,655,329	2,837,798	1,069
1981	3,347,744	3,634,205	1,086
1991	3,887,062	4,309,626	1,109
2001	4,386,881	5,363,431	1,223

Source : CBS 1995; CBS 2002.

currently married persons during the last decade may also be attributed to recent boost in emigration of young adult males to East Asia, particularly Malaysia and the Middle Eastern countries. A good proportion of the emigrants, who are predominantly males, are likely to be married and leave behind their spouses as they are not permitted to bring along their spouses.

¹ Over three percent of men reported to have had more than one wife in 2001 population census.

7.2.2 Polygamy

The 2001 population census for the first time has collected data on polygamy and re-marriage and these are presented in Table 7.3. An examination of the table confirms

A large section of males practice polygamy. This is higher in rural than in urban areas and rises with age.

monogamy as the most dominant marital system in Nepal. However, polygamy is also practiced by a large section of the population, particularly males. About 6 percent of ever married males reported to have had more than one spouse at a time. The incidence of polygamy is very uncommon among women. Only a handful of ever married women reported to have had more than one spouse. And this conclusion holds good for all ecological zones, development regions, urban and rural areas and all age-groups. This is mostly practiced among some ethnic groups in the Mountain zone. The incidence of polygamy among ever married males varies by rural/urban residence, ecological zone, development region and age.

Rural/Urban Differences in Polygamy: The incidence of polygamy is higher in rural than in urban areas. The proportion of ever married males who have had more than one spouse at a time in urban areas (4 percent) is only about 67 percent of rural areas (6 percent).

Regional Differences (Ecological Zones) in Polygamy: Among the ecological zones, the proportion of ever married males who were living with more than one spouse is lowest in the Terai (4 percent) compared to the Mountain (6.6) and Hill (6.8). The Mountain and Hill occupy the intermediary position.

Regional Differences (Development Regions) in Polygamy: The incidence of polygamy (i.e., proportion of ever married males who were living with more than one spouse) ranges from highest 7 percent in the Western development region to lowest 5 percent in the Central and Far Western Development regions. The Eastern Development region occupies the second highest position in terms of the proportion of ever married males who had married more than one spouse. The Mid Western Development region occupies the intermediary position.

Age Differences in Polygamy: Data show a positive relationship between age and the incidence of polygamy in which the proportion of ever married males who were living with more than one spouse increases with age, reaching its highest 11 percent at age 65 and above.

Table 7.3 : Percentage of ever married population aged 10 years and above who married more than one spouse and those who re-married by gender, rural/urban residence, ecological zones, development region and age, Nepal 2001.

Variables	Married more than One Spouse		Re-marriage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	5.54	0.04	4.20	2.69
Rural	5.74	0.04	4.52	2.98
Urban	4.40	0.01	2.36	1.10
Zone				
Mountain	6.59	0.37	5.85	4.29
Hill	6.79	0.03	5.38	3.70
Terai	4.37	0.00	2.99	1.57
Development Regions				
Eastern	5.97	0.05	3.95	2.31
Central	4.73	0.01	3.01	1.57
Western	7.05	0.06	4.80	3.14
Mid-Western	5.45	0.04	7.30	5.84
Far-Western	4.79	0.03	4.42	2.95
Age				
10-14	2.29	0.02	1.74	0.71
15-19	1.52	0.00	0.96	0.85
20-24	1.06	0.01	1.12	1.17
25-29	1.90	0.03	1.85	1.78
30-34	3.15	0.06	2.57	2.49
35-39	4.45	0.06	3.51	3.20
40-44	6.06	0.09	4.84	3.80
45-49	7.26	0.11	5.61	4.24
50-54	8.66	0.00	6.34	4.32
55-59	9.79	0.00	7.11	4.01
60-64	10.32	0.00	7.20	3.86
65+	11.12	0.00	7.40	2.98

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

7.3 Re-marriage

The data on re-marriage were also collected in the 2001 census. Four percent of ever married males compared to about 3 percent of ever married females reported to have

A small proportion of both ever married males and females re-marry. Ever married males are more likely to re-marry than are ever married females.

remarried. Ever married males are more likely to be re-married than are ever married females. And this overall conclusion holds good for rural and urban areas, ecological zones, development regions and almost at every age-group. The incidence of re-marriage varies by gender, rural-urban residence, ecological zones, development regions and age-groups (see Table 7.3).

Rural-Urban Differences in Re-marriage:

Both ever married males and females in rural areas are more likely to be re-married than are their counterparts in urban areas. These rates in 2001 for males were 4.5 and 2.4 for the rural and urban areas respectively. The

The chances of re-marriage among both ever married males and females is highest in the rural areas, Mountain, Mid-Western Development region and at age group 65 and above for males and 50-54 for females.

corresponding figures for females were 2.9 and 1.1 respectively.

Regional (Ecological Zones) Differences in Re-marriage: Among the ecological zones, the propensity to re-marry among both ever-married males and females is highest in the Mountain and lowest in the Terai. Hill occupies the intermediary position. These rates in 2001 for males were 5.9, 5.4 and 3.0 for the Mountain, Hill and Terai respectively. The corresponding rates for females were 4.3, 3.7 and 1.6 respectively.

Regional (Development) Differences in Re-marriage: Re-marriage for both ever married males and females is found to be the highest in the Mid-Western Development region followed by the Western Development region, while this is found to be the lowest in the Central Development region followed by the Eastern Development region. The Far-Western Development region occupies the intermediary position. These rates in 2001 for males were 4.0, 3.0, 4.8, 7.3 and 4.4 for the Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western and Far-Western Development regions respectively. The corresponding figures for females were 2.3, 1.6, 3.1, 5.8 and 3.0 respectively.

Age Differences in Re-marriage: The propensity to re-marriage increases with each successive age for ever married males, reaching its highest (7 percent) at age-group 65 and above. A similar pattern of increasing rate of re-marriage with each successive age is also noted among ever married females upto age 54 and thereafter it decreases with age, indicating diminishing chance of re-marriage among ever married older women.

The chances of re-marriage among both ever-married males and females is highest in the Mid-Western Development region and at age-group 65 and above for males and 50-54 for females. Seven percent ever married males re-married in the Mid-Western Development region and at age-group 65 and above. The corresponding figures for females were 6 percent and 4.3 percent for Mid Western Development region and age-group 50-54 respectively.

7.4 Intercensal Changes

Table 7.4 presents data on the marital distribution of the population aged 10 years and above for the four censuses since 1961. An examination of the table shows some modest changes in the composition of population by marital status during the last four decades, particularly between 1961-71,

Data show a modest change in the composition of the population by marital status in which proportion of singles increased and widowed decreased. However, increase in the proportion singles was not accompanied by the expected decline in the proportion married. This is due to decline in proportion widowed.

1971-81 and 1991-2001. A very little change was recorded between 1981 and 1991. For example, one finds a modest but steady increase in the proportion of singles during the census periods 1961 and 1981, and 1991 and 2001, from 29 percent in 1961 to 35 percent in 1981 and 39 percent in 2001 for males and 15 percent to 23 percent and 30 percent for females respectively. A very little change in the composition of population by marital status was noticed between 1981 and 1991. The proportion single increased by 0.30 percent per annum for males and 0.40 – 0.46 percent per annum for females during the decades of 1961-1971, 1971-1981 and 1991-2001. The corresponding change was only 0.10 percent and 0.24 percent for males and females respectively during the decade of 1981-1991. The slow change reported during 1981 and 1991 could be considered an exception rather than the rule.

Table 7.4: Marital status of population aged 10 years and over by sex, Nepal, census years 1961-2001.

Marital Status and Sex	1961 Census		1971 Census		1981 Census		1991 Census		2001 Census	
	%	Standardized*	%	Standardized*	%	Standardized*	%	Standardized*	%	Standardized*
Males	3288362		4140804		5387614		6418531		8330576	
All statuses	100		100		100		100		100	100
Never married	28.47	30.51	31.93	33.82	35.12	36.79	35.65	35.65	39.23	39.23
Married	65.37	63.24	64.13	62.05	62.14	60.45	60.56	60.43	58.57	58.57
Widowed	4.36	5.01	3.66	3.86	2.36	2.38	2.95	3.01	1.34	1.58
Divorced/Separated	0.4	0.38	0.028	0.28	0.38	0.38	0.45	0.46	0.79	0.24
Females	3431695		4037816		5130274		6556558		8439703	
All statuses	100		100		100		100		100	100
Never married	15.12	17.74	19.35	22.15	23.3	25.59	25.71	25.92	30.26	30.26
Married	69.16	67.02	70.27	67.6	70.84	68.42	65.73	65.24	65.45	65.45
Widowed	14.26	14.05	10.1	9.98	5.45	5.58	7.18	7.47	3.65	3.65
Divorced/Separated	0.34	0.33	0.28	0.26	0.42	0.41	0.69	0.69	0.31	0.31

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above.

** Standardized on the basis of 2001 age distribution for the population of Nepal aged 10 years and above.

Source : CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1975 Vol. II, Part II, Table 15

CBS, 1984 Vol. II, Part Table 15

CBS, 1993 Vol. I, Part XI, Table 34

CBS, 2002 National Report Vol. II, Table 17

It is to be also noted that the increase in the proportion singles was not accompanied by the expected decline in the proportion married. At least 65 percent of female and 60 percent of male remain married in all the census year, the proportion being higher among females than among males. During the period 1961 and 2001, the proportion of married males declined very modestly from 65 to 59 percent at the rate of 0.15 percent per annum during last four decades but for females this increased from 69 to 71 percent during the period 1961 and 1981 and thereafter declined from 71 percent in 1981 to 65 percent in 2001.

The failure to find the proportion who were married declining in comparison with the increasing proportion remaining single may be attributed to the considerable decline in widowhood. During the intercensal period 1961 to 2001, the proportion widowed declined by 74 percent, from 14.3 to

3.7 percent for females and 70 percent, from 4.4 to 1.3 percent for males. Consequently, more and more persons are remaining within the marital union. The proportion of males who were divorced or separated fluctuated between 0.3 to 0.5 during 1961 and 1991 and thereafter declined to 0.2 percent in 2001. The corresponding figure for females remained unchanged at 0.3 percent between 1961 and 1971 and thereafter increased to 0.4 and 0.7 in 1981 and 1991 respectively, and thereafter declined to 0.3 percent in 2001. The intercensal marriage pattern as noted above remains unchanged even when allowance is made for the effect of variation in age distribution over the years (see the standardized rates in Table 7.4).

We have so far presented the overall picture of marital composition of the population. This, however, conceals the changes in marital status particularly those which took place in recent years. To get an idea of this change, we need to look at marital distribution by age groups.

7.4.1 Proportion Married by Age and Sex

Table 7.5 provides data on the percentage distribution of the married population aged 10 years and above by age and sex.

Table 7.5 : Age-sex specific proportions of currently married by age and sex, Nepal, census years 1961-2001 and percentage change in proportions married between 1961-71, 1971-81, 1981-91, 1991-2001 and 1961-2001.

Age Group and Sex	% Currently Married					Percentage Change				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	1961-2001
Males										
All ages*	65.37	64.13	62.14	60.56	58.52	-1.9	-3.1	-2.5	-3.4	-10.5
6-9	2.97	1.2					-59.6			
10-14	10.59	6.23	14.03	4.06	0.76	-41.2	125.2	-71.1	-81.3	-92.8
15-19	35.86	26.62	25.09	19.13	11.70	-25.8	-5.7	-23.8	-38.8	-67.4
20-24	69.63	65.59	57.82	60.29	47.82	-5.8	-11.8	4.3	-20.7	-31.3
25-29	85.27	85.65	78.8	85.51	81.05	0.4	-8.0	8.5	-5.2	-5.0
30-34	90.42	91.5	85.76	92.8	93.36	1.2	-6.3	8.2	0.6	3.2
35-39	91.83	93.31	88.98	94.75	96.02	1.6	-4.6	6.5	1.3	4.6
40-44	91.05	92.94	89.07	94.35	96.22	2.1	-4.2	5.9	2.0	5.7
45-49	89.5	92.44	89.16	93.49	96.20	3.3	-3.5	4.9	2.9	7.5
50-54	86.96	90.51	88.36	91.15	95.22	4.1	-2.4	3.2	4.5	9.5
55-59	84.13	88.54	87.18	89.18	94.12	5.2	-1.5	2.3	5.5	11.9
60+	73.17	78.95	80.82	79.32	88.33	7.9	2.4	-1.9	11.4	20.7

Age Group and Sex	% Currently Married					Percentage Change				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	1961-2001
Females										
All ages*	69.16	70.27	70.8	65.73	65.45	1.6	0.8	-7.2	-0.4	-5.4
6-9	5.29	2.33								
10-14	24.64	13.36	13.36	7.21	1.73	-45.8	0.0	-46.0	-76.0	-93.0
15-19	71.42	60.19	50.05	45.5	33.26	-15.7	-16.8	-9.1	-26.9	-53.4
20-24	91.57	91.07	85.93	85.09	78.17	-0.5	-5.6	-1.0	-8.1	-14.6
25-29	93.71	95.42	93.21	94.13	93.64	1.8	-2.3	1.0	-0.5	-0.1
30-34	91.83	94.99	94.78	95.13	96.10	3.4	-0.2	0.4	1.0	4.7
35-39	86.65	91.95	93.81	93.89	96.07	6.1	2.0	0.1	2.3	10.9
40-44	78.32	86.64	91.12	90.85	95.00	10.6	5.2	-0.3	4.6	21.3
45-49	68.59	80.57	87.8	86.33	93.23	17.5	9.0	-1.7	8.0	35.9
50-54	59.15	70.82	81.74	78.23	89.46	19.7	15.4	-4.3	14.4	51.3
55-59	50.78	66.62	79.06	72.26	86.35	31.2	18.7	-8.6	19.5	70.0
60+	32.13	44.38	61.04	49.17	71.75	38.1	37.5	-19.4	45.9	123.3

Source : Same as in Table 7.4.

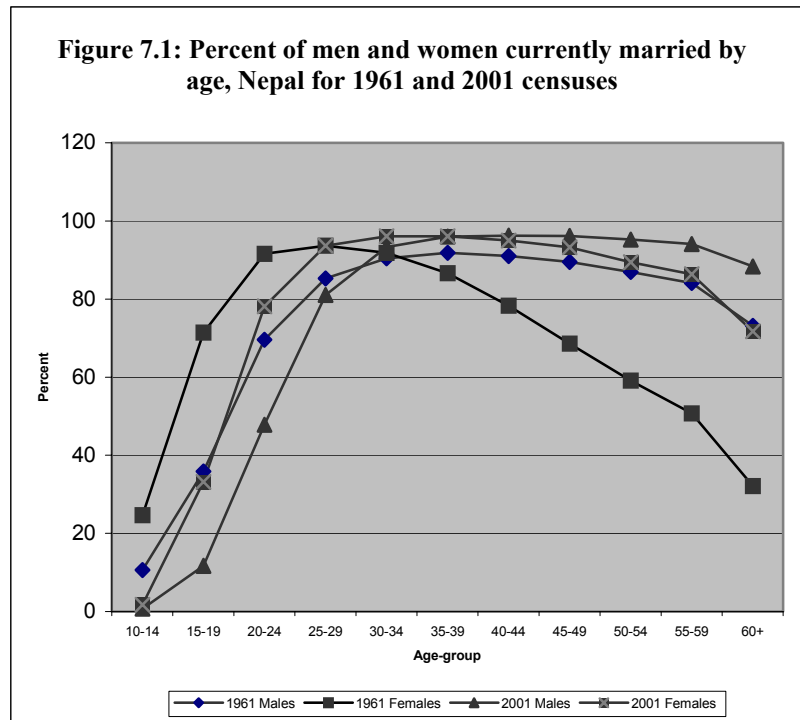
* In respect of population aged 10 years and above

The propensity to marry tends to rise with age up to a peak at middle age and tapers off thereafter. Women tend to marry earlier than men and the absolute majority of men and women are married in the age-groups 30-39 and 20-29 respectively. Early years marriage is found to be almost universal in Nepal. However, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of population currently married in the age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24.

Examination of the table shows the following major features of marital patterns and the changes during the intercensal period: (i) there shows a curvilinear relationship

between age and proportion married. The propensity to marry tends to rise with age up to a peak at middle age and tapers off thereafter (see Figure 7.1); (ii) women tend to marry earlier than men; (iii) the absolute majority of men and women are married in the age-groups 30-39 and 20-29 respectively; (iv) there has been a marked shift in age at which the highest proportion of women are married since 1981. In 1961 and 1971, the proportion of women married reached its peak in the age-group 25-29. This has been shifted to immediate later age-group 30-34 since 1981, indicating a shift towards later age at marriage. No similar shift is clearly noticed among males.

The proportion of men married reaching its highest remained almost unchanged at age-group 35-39; (v) early years marriage was considered to be almost universal in Nepal, although there has been some change from this tradition. In 2001, 2 percent of females in the age group 10-14 were reported to be currently married but by the age of



25-29, 94 percent of females were married and this increases to 96 percent by the age of 30-34. However, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of population currently married in the age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24.

The proportion of currently married females in the age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 was reported to be 24.6, 71.4 and 91.6 percent respectively in 1961. The corresponding figures in 2001 were 1.7, 33.3 and 78.2 respectively experiencing about 93, 53 and 15 percent decline between 1961-2001. The pace

A sharp reduction in the proportion of married persons in the younger age-groups during the last four decades may be interpreted as a deliberate attempt on the part of young men and women to postpone marriage.

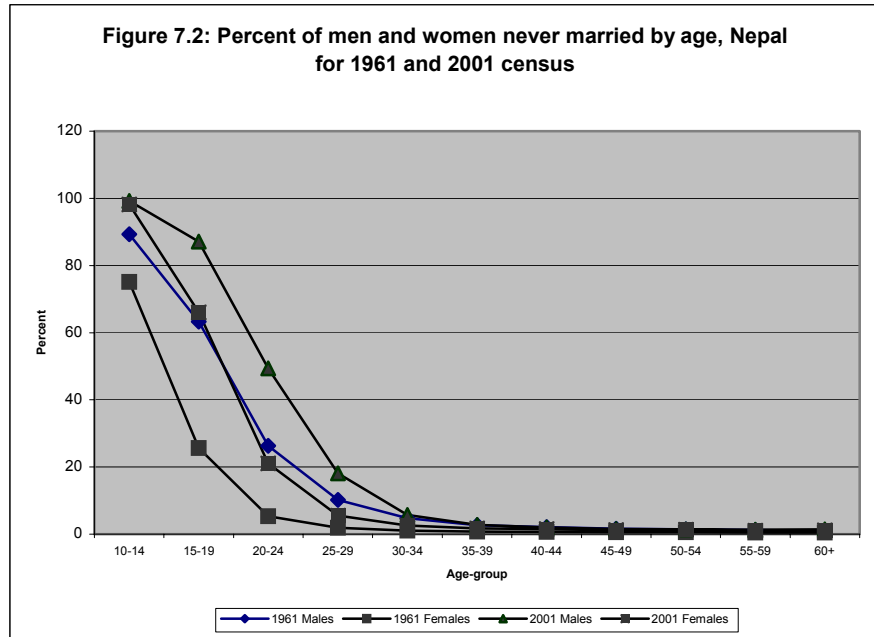
of decline is almost the same among males. For example, in the 1961 census the proportion of currently married males in age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 was reported to be 11, 36 and 70 percent respectively. The corresponding figures in the 2001 census were less than 1, 12 and 48 percent, giving 93 percent, 53 percent and 15 percent decline. A sharp reduction in the proportion married in the younger age-groups during the last four decades may be interpreted as a deliberate attempt on the part of young men and women to postpone marriage. This may be attributed to increasing opportunities for education and desire to continue schooling to meet the needs of the modern globalized economy, increasing poverty and unemployment, lack of family support, among other factors.

Data show a steady increase in the proportion of single women in all age-groups over the period 1961 and 2001.

A combined effect of all these factors is also reflected in the increasing proportion of single people at younger ages, 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 years.

For instance, in the 1961 census the proportion of women who were never married in age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 were reported to be 75, 26 and 5 percent respectively. In 2001, the corresponding figures were 98, 66 and 21 percent respectively. A similar trend in increase in the proportion of single

is also noticed among younger males. In 1961 census, the proportions of men who had never married in age-groups 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 were reported to be 89, 63 and 26 percent respectively. In the 2001 census the



corresponding figures were 99, 87 and 49 percent respectively. Data show a steady increase in the proportion of single women in all age-groups over the period 1961 and 2001 (see Figure 7.2). A similar trend in increase in the proportion of single is also noticed among men in the majority of age-groups, particularly younger age-groups (10-29) (see Annex 7.1).

Permanent "celibacy", measured in terms of population who remained single in the age-group 45-49 may be considered virtually absent in Nepal. The proportion of single men and women in the age-group 45-49 were less than two and one percent respectively in 1961, 1971, 1991 and 2001. Only in 1981, these figures increased to 7 and 3 percent for males and females respectively. This may be considered an exception rather than the rule.

Permanent "celibacy", measured in terms of population who remained single in the age-group 45-49 may be considered virtually absent in Nepal.

7.4.2 Singulate Mean Age at Marriage

The reduction in the proportion of married people on the one hand and rise in the proportion of single people on the other, particularly in the younger age-groups, resulted in increasing the mean age at marriage. In the absence of a direct question on the age at marriage in the censuses, except for the

Data show a steady increase in singulate mean age at marriage over the last four decades and this conclusion holds for males and females, ecological zones and most of the development regions. The singulate mean age at marriage has been and continues to remain higher for males than females although the difference is somewhat attenuated over the 40 years period (1961-2001).

last decennial census in 2001, we have made an indirect estimate of mean age at marriage by the Hajnal Technique known as Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM). This is computed from the proportion who are single, that is never married, in each age-group. The data are presented in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 : Singulate mean age at marriage (in years) by sex, Nepal, census years 1961-2001.

Sex	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage					
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2001-1961 Difference in SMAM
Males	19.5	20.8	20.7	21.4	22.9	3.4
Females	15.4	16.8	17.2	18.1	19.5	4.1
Male-Female Difference in SMAM	4.1	4	3.5	3.3	3.4	-0.7

Source: Same as in Table 7.4.

There shows a steady increase in the singulate mean age at marriage from 1961 to 2001. The values of SMAM have increased by 3 years for males and 4 years for females since 1961 and these are in 2001 about 23 years for males and 20 years for females. Data show a definite decline in male-female differences in SMAM from 4 years during the early three decades (1961-1991) to 3 years during the immediate last two decades (1991-2001).

The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) varies by rural/urban residence, ecological zone and development region (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.7: Singulate mean age at marriage (in years) by rural/urban residence and regions for Nepal, 1991 and 2001

Residence	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage							
	1991			2001		2001-1991		
	Male	Female	Male-Female Difference	Male	Female	Male-Female Difference	Male	Female
Urban	23.5	19.6	3.9	24.5	20.7	3.8	1.0	1.1
Rural	21.1	17.9	3.2	22.5	19.3	3.2	1.4	1.4
Urban-Rural difference in SMAM	2.4	1.7		2	1.4			
Ecological Zones								
Mountain	21.9	18.6	3.3	22.1	19.6	2.5	0.2	1
Hill	22.2	18.9	3.3	23.4	20.2	3.2	1.2	1.3
Terai	20.6	17.0	3.6	22.5	18.9	3.6	1.9	1.9
Development Regions								
Eastern	22.5	19.2	3.3	23.7	20.3	3.4	1.2	1.1
Central	21.3	17.7	3.6	23.1	19.5	3.6	1.8	1.8
Western	21.2	18.0	3.2	22.7	19.5	3.2	1.5	1.5
Mid-Western	20.7	17.6	3.1	21.8	18.9	2.9	1.1	1.3
Far-Western	20.4	16.9	3.5	21.8	18.5	3.3	1.4	1.6

Source : CBS 1995, CBS 2002 National Report.

7.4.3 Rural/Urban Differences in Singulate Mean Age at Marriage

The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage is higher in urban than in rural areas and remains unchanged during the last two decades. However, both rural and urban areas registered an increase in singulate mean age at marriage by at least one year during the last two decades (1991-2001) and this holds good for both males and females. Mean age at marriage has been and continues to remain higher for males than females by 3 years in rural and 4 years in urban areas during the last two decades (1991-2001). Male-female differences in mean age at marriage continues to remain higher in urban than in rural areas during the last two decades (see Table 7.7).

7.4.4 Variation in Singulate Mean Age at Marriage: Ecological and Development Region

The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) has been and continues to remain higher for males than females by 3-4 years in all ecological zones and development regions during the last two decades. Data however show an increase in SMAM in all ecological zones and development regions by at least one year for both males and females, except for males in the Mountain during the last intercensal period. SMAM for males in the Mountain increased marginally by 0.2 years during the last intercensal period. Among the ecological zones, the Terai has experienced the

highest increase in SMAM by 2.0 years for both males and females while the Mountain experienced the lowest increase.

The rank-order of the ecological zones with regard to singulate mean age at marriage by sex remained almost unchanged during last intercensal period (1991 to 2001), excepting that the Terai moved to second position and the Mountain moved to third position with regard to male singulate mean age marriage.

Among the development regions, the highest increase in SMAM was observed in the Central Development region by about two years, while the Eastern and Far-Western Development region experienced the lowest increase and this holds true for both males and females. The rank-order of the development regions in respect of singulate mean age at marriage remained unchanged during the last intercensal period.

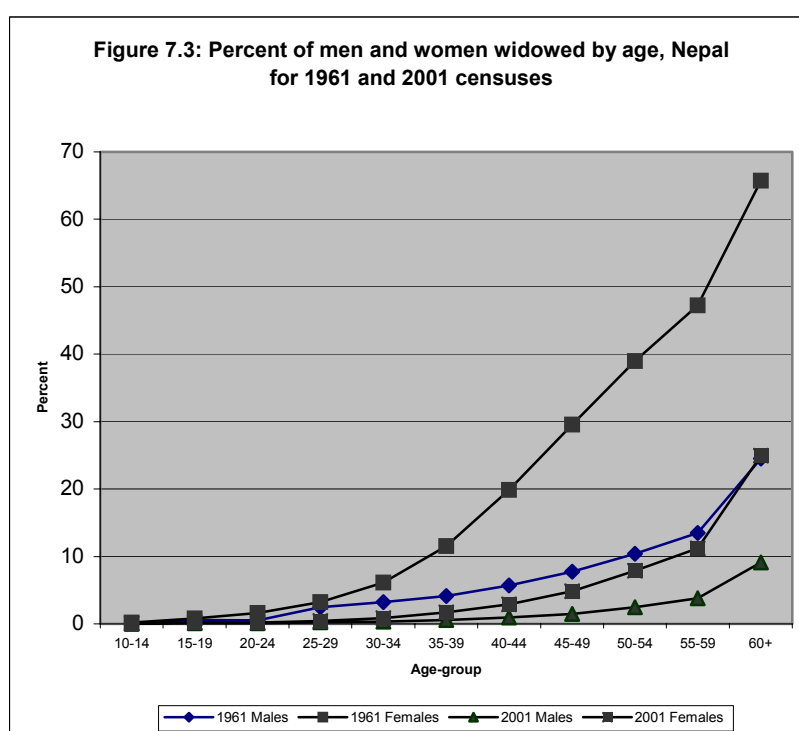
7.5 Intercensal Changes: Widowhood

There has been a considerable decline in the proportion of widowed persons over the last four decades, indicating declining mortality. The proportion of widows exceed that of widowers at every age group.

The percentage distribution of widowers and widows by five year age-group for the census years (1961-2001) is presented in Annex 7.2. Examination

of the table shows the following pattern of widowhood and its change over time: (i) the proportion

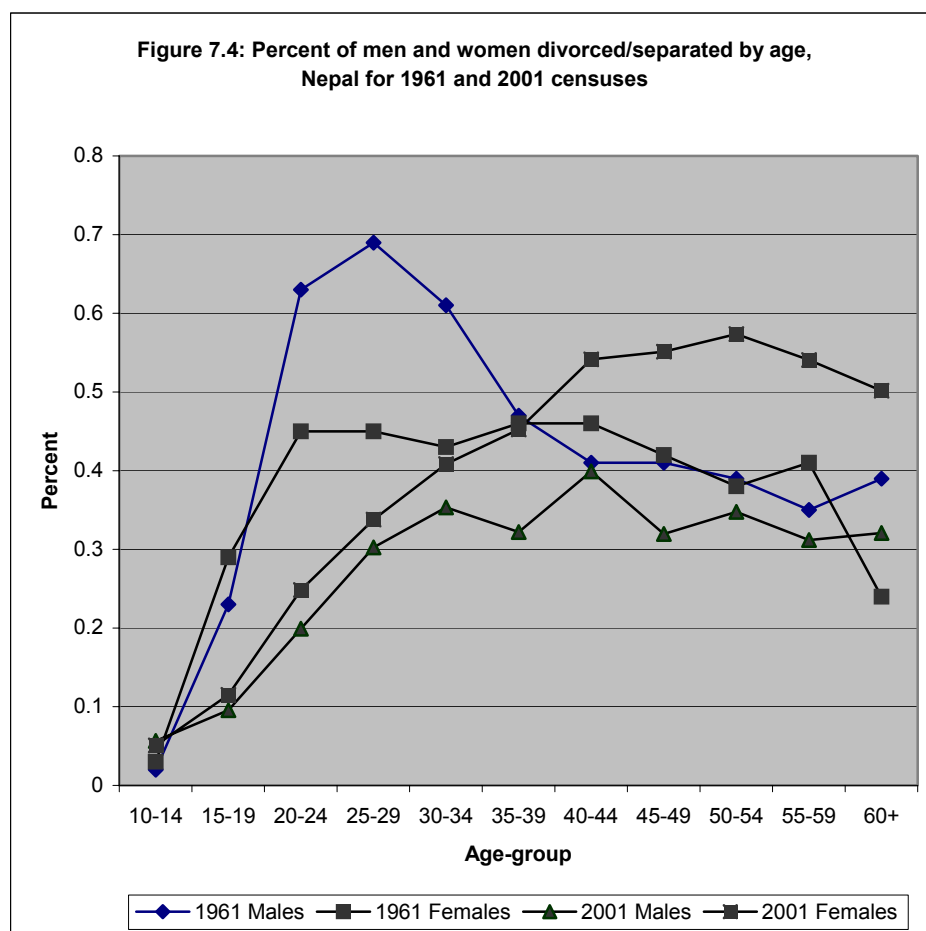
of the widowed tends to increase with age reaching its peak in the highest age 60 and above (see Figure 7.3). This is expected in view of greater risk of mortality at higher ages and its variation by sex; (ii) there is a sharp reduction in the proportion widowed at every age-group during the period 1961 to 2001. For instance, the proportion widowed declined by lowest 62 percent at age 60



years and above to highest 86 percent at age-group 20-24. The corresponding decline among widowers ranges between lowest 63 percent at age 60 years and above and highest 91 percent at age-group 25-29. The average decline reflecting to a large extent the declining mortality; (iii) proportion of widows exceeds that of widowers at every age-group. For instance, 25 percent of women aged 60 years and above were widowed in 2001. The corresponding figure for males was only 9 percent. The glaring disparity in widowhood between men and women may be attributed to higher chances of re-marriage among the former than among the latter. About 8 percent of older men compared to only 4-5 percent of older women aged 60 years and above were reported to be re-married in 2001. Also spouses of the former are younger by 3-4 years on average and hence wives have a higher chance of survival than their husband.

7.6 Intercensal Changes : Proportion Divorced/Separated

Annex 7.3 presents data on the percentage distribution of divorced/separated persons by age and sex for the census years 1961-2001. The proportion of divorced/separated accounts for a small fraction of the total number of people who have ever married and also showed a



decline during the last intercensal period (1991-2001) for all age-groups and for both males and females. However, compared to 1961, the proportion of divorced and/or separated increased among females, particularly for those aged 40 and above, while this has declined among men across all age-groups (see Figure 7.4).

7.7 Variation in Marital Pattern

7.7.1 Rural/Urban Differences in Marital Pattern

Table 7.8 presents data on the distribution of ever and never married persons by rural and urban areas. An examination of the table shows that the proportion married for both males and females is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Conversely, a

The proportion of ever married persons, both males and females, are higher in urban than in rural areas and this remains almost unchanged during the last intercensal period. Mean age at marriage is higher in urban than in rural areas.

higher proportion of single in urban than in rural areas for both males and females. And these findings hold good even when allowance is made for the effect of the variation in age distribution over time and between rural and urban areas (see standardized rates in Table 7.8). The rural-urban differences in the proportion married remains almost unchanged over the last intercensal period. This is also reflected in rural-urban differences in mean age at marriage. The estimated singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is found to be higher in urban than in rural areas and this holds for the both males and females and for each census year under the study. These values in 2001 were 24.5 and 20.7 for males and females respectively in urban areas. The corresponding figures for males and females were 22.5 and 19.3 respectively in rural areas.

Table 7.8 : Percentage distribution of population aged 10 years and above by marital status and sex, Nepal by rural and urban areas 1991-2001.

Marital Status by Sex	1991						2001					
	Both Areas		Rural Areas		Urban Areas		Both Areas		Rural Areas		Urban Areas	
	Percent	Standardized Percent*	Percent	Standardized Percent*	Percent	Standardized Percent*	Percent	Standardized Percent*	Percent	Standardized Percent*	Percent	Standardized Percent*
Male	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Never Married	35.7	35.7	34.9	34.9	41.9	41.0	39.2	39.2	38.6	38.3	42.7	43.3
Married	60.6	60.4	61.1	61.1	55.6	56.1	58.5	58.5	59.1	59.4	55.5	54.8
Widowed	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1	1.6	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.8	1.0
Divorced/ Separated	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Unknown	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
Female	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ever Married	25.7	25.9	25.2	25.4	31.0	30.8	30.3	30.3	29.9	29.6	32.6	33.8
Married	65.7	65.2	66.2	65.8	61.3	60.4	65.5	65.5	65.8	66.1	63.2	61.6
Widowed	7.2	7.5	7.3	7.5	6.2	7.2	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.8
Divorced/ Separated	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
Unknown	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4

* Standardized on the basis of 2001 age-distribution for the population of Nepal aged 10 years and above.

Source : CBS, 1995; CBS 2002 National Report

7.7.2 Regional Differences in Marital Pattern: Ecological Zones

Tables 7.9 and 7.10 presents data on the distribution of ever married persons by ecological zones of the country. Confining the analysis to the standardized rates it may be observed that the proportion of ever married is lowest in the Hill for both males and females and highest in the Terai, particularly for females (see Table 7.9). The Mountain and Hill hold the intermediary position with regard to the proportion of ever married males. Conversely, the proportion of single people is highest in the Hill, for both males and females and lowest in the Terai, particularly for females (see Table 7.10).

Among the ecological zones Terai occupies the lowest position in regard to the proportion single and highest in regard to the proportion married. Conversely, the Hill occupies the highest position in regard to the proportion single and lowest in regard to the proportion married.

The estimated singulate mean age at marriage in 2001 for females was 20.2, 19.6 and 18.9 for the Hill, Mountain and Terai respectively. The corresponding figures for males were 23.4, 22.1 and 22.5 respectively (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.9 : Ever-married persons as proportion of total population 10 years of age and over and sex for different ecological zones Nepal, census year 2001.

Age Group	Nepal		Mountain		Hill		Terai	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10-14 Years	0.8	1.8	0.7	1.2	0.5	0.8	1.1	2.9
15-19 Years	11.9	33.6	13.4	32.9	9.2	27.3	14.2	40.3
20-24 Years	48.1	78.6	57.1	79.3	45.0	74.6	49.8	82.4
25-29 Years	81.6	94.4	85.6	93.0	79.0	92.7	83.1	96.1
30-34 Years	94.1	97.4	93.4	96.0	93.3	96.4	94.8	98.4
35-39 Years	96.9	98.2	95.9	97.0	96.5	97.5	97.4	99.0
40-44 Years	97.6	98.4	96.2	97.5	97.3	97.8	98.0	99.2
45-49 Years	98.0	98.6	96.8	98.0	97.9	98.0	98.2	99.3
50-54 Years	98.1	97.9	96.9	97.6	98.0	97.7	98.2	98.3
55-59 Years	98.2	98.1	97.8	97.9	98.1	97.9	98.4	98.3
60-64 Years	98.0	97.6	97.0	97.0	98.0	97.7	98.0	97.7
65+ Years	97.6	97.0	97.3	96.4	97.9	97.4	97.4	96.6
All Ages 10 Years and Above*	60.1	69.4	61.5	68.4	58.1	66.9	61.6	72.0
Standardized 10 Years and Above**	60.1	69.4	61.3	68.8	58.9	67.5	61.0	71.5

Source : Same as in Table 7.4.

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above.

** Standardized on the basis of 2001 age distribution for the population of Nepal aged 10 years and above.

Table 7.10 : Never-married persons as proportion of total population 10 years of age and over and sex for different ecological zones Nepal, census year 2001.

Age Group	Nepal		Mountain		Hill		Terai	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10-14 Years	99.2	98.2	99.3	98.8	99.5	99.2	98.9	97.1
15-19 Years	87.1	66.0	85.7	66.7	90.1	72.4	84.5	59.3
20-24 Years	49.4	21.0	41.1	20.5	53.0	25.1	47.2	17.2
25-29 Years	18.1	5.6	14.3	6.9	20.7	7.3	16.6	3.9
30-34 Years	5.7	2.6	6.3	4.0	6.5	3.6	4.9	1.6
35-39 Years	2.8	1.8	3.9	3.0	3.3	2.4	2.2	1.0
40-44 Years	2.0	1.5	3.5	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.5	0.8
45-49 Years	1.5	1.2	2.8	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.1	0.6
50-54 Years	1.4	1.3	2.6	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.1	0.7
55-59 Years	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.1	0.6
60-64 Years	1.4	1.1	2.3	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.7
65+ Years	1.4	1.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.3	0.8
All Ages 10 Years and Above*	39.2	30.3	38.0	31.3	41.3	32.8	37.5	27.6
Standardized 10 Years and Above**	39.2	30.3	38.2	31.0	40.5	32.3	38.2	28.1

Source : Same as in Table 4.

* Same as in Table 9.

** Same as in Table 9.

7.7.3 Regional Differences in Marital Pattern: Development Region

The marital structure and its changes over a period of time were also examined for the development regions. Tables 11 and 12 present data on the distribution of ever and never married persons by development regions for the census year 2001.

Table 7.11 : Ever-married persons as proportion of total population 10 years of age and over and sex for different development regions Nepal, census year 2001.

Age Group	Eastern Dev. Region		Central Dev. Region		Western Dev. Region		Mid-Western Dev. Region		Far-Western Dev. Region	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10-14 Years	0.4	0.9	0.9	2.4	1.2	2.4	0.8	1.4	0.7	1.3
15-19 Years	8.6	27.9	11.7	34.4	12.4	32.3	16.5	39.5	14.1	40.0
20-24 Years	41.4	72.1	45.8	77.4	48.6	80.0	60.1	84.5	57.8	88.3
25-29 Years	78.4	92.2	79.5	94.0	84.0	95.2	86.7	96.1	87.9	98.0
30-34 Years	92.9	96.1	93.8	97.6	94.5	97.4	94.9	98.2	96.4	98.9
35-39 Years	96.5	97.4	97.0	98.4	97.0	98.2	96.9	98.7	97.5	99.5
40-44 Years	97.7	97.8	97.7	98.5	97.5	98.5	96.9	98.9	97.6	99.3
45-49 Years	98.2	98.1	98.0	98.6	97.9	98.6	97.8	99.0	97.9	99.5
50-54 Years	98.1	97.5	98.0	98.0	98.1	98.2	97.9	98.0	98.1	98.3
55-59 Years	98.5	97.8	98.2	98.2	98.1	98.2	97.8	97.8	98.4	98.2
60-64 Years	98.2	97.6	97.7	97.5	98.0	98.1	97.8	97.7	98.5	96.8
65+ Years	97.9	96.7	97.4	97.1	97.9	97.3	97.2	96.8	97.4	96.4
All Ages 10 Years and Above*	58.9	67.4	60.9	70.7	59.3	69.3	61.0	69.1	60.2	70.5
Standardized 10 Years and Above**	58.4	67.1	59.6	69.5	60.6	69.7	62.6	71.3	62.3	72.2

Source : Same as in Table 7.4.

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above.

** Standardized on the basis of the 2001 age distribution for the population of Nepal aged 10 years and above.

It may be observed that the proportion of those who are ever married is lowest in the Eastern Development region, and highest in the Far-Western Development region and Mid-Western Development region for both females and males respectively (see Table 7.11). Conversely, the proportion of single people is highest in the Eastern development region and lowest in the Far-Western Development region for both males and females. The Central and Western Development regions occupy the intermediary position (see Table 7.12).

Among the development region, the Eastern Development region occupies the lowest position in regard to the proportion ever married but highest in regard to the proportion single. Conversely, the Far-Western and Mid-Western Development regions occupy the highest in regard to the proportion married but lowest in regard to the proportion

Table 7.12 : Never-married persons as proportion of total population 10 years of age and over and sex for different Development regions Nepal, census year 2001.

Age Group	Eastern		Central		Western		Mid-Western		Far-Western	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10-14 Years	99.6	99.1	99.1	97.6	98.8	97.6	99.2	98.6	99.3	98.7
15-19 Years	90.6	71.9	87.1	65.2	86.8	67.5	82.3	60.0	84.6	59.5
20-24 Years	56.3	27.6	51.5	22.1	49.0	19.6	37.7	15.2	39.2	11.3
25-29 Years	21.4	7.8	20.3	6.0	15.8	4.8	13.0	3.9	11.8	2.0
30-34 Years	6.9	3.9	6.0	2.4	5.3	2.6	4.8	1.8	3.2	1.0
35-39 Years	3.2	2.6	2.7	1.6	2.7	1.7	2.8	1.3	2.0	0.5
40-44 Years	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.4	2.1	1.5	2.4	1.0	1.7	0.6
45-49 Years	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.2	0.4
50-54 Years	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.7
55-59 Years	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.7	0.9	0.9	0.3
60-64 Years	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.8
65+ Years	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.6	0.9	1.2	0.8
All ages 10 Years and above*	40.5	32.3	38.4	29.0	40.1	30.4	38.2	30.5	38.8	29.0
Standardized 10 Years and above**	41.0	32.6	39.7	30.2	38.8	30.1	36.7	28.3	36.7	27.4

Source : Same as in Table 7.4.

* Same as in Table 7.11.

** Same as in Table 7.11.

The mean age at marriage for both males and females was found to be lowest in the Far Western Development Region, followed by Mid Western Development Region, while these were found to be highest in the Eastern Development Region. The Central and Western Development Region occupied the intermediary position. These values in 2001 for males were 23.7, 23.1, 22.7, 21.8 and 21.8 in the Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western and Far- Western Development regions respectively. The corresponding figures for females were 20.3, 19.5, 19.5, 18.9 and 18.5 respectively.

7.8 Intercensal Changes in The Marital Distribution by Development Region

Table 7.13 presents data on the intercensal changes in marital distribution. Examination of the table reveals a noticeable intercensal changes in the marital distribution in which all development regions experienced decline in the proportion of those ever married with a corresponding increase

in the proportion of single people and this holds good for both males and females. In this process of change, the Central Development region, followed by the Eastern Development are in the forefront, while the Mid-Western Development region is lagging behind.

Table 7.13 : Percentage distribution of population aged 10 years and above by marital status and sex and by development region, Nepal, census year 1981-2001.

Sex/Regions	Ever Married*						Never Married*					
	%		% Change	Standardized Rate**		% Change	%		% Change	Standardized Rate**		% Change
	1981	2001		1981	2001		1981	2001		1981	2001	
Males												
Eastern	62.4	58.9	-5.6	62.0	58.4	-5.8	37.6	40.6	7.7	38.0	41.0	7.9
Central	66.1	60.9	-7.9	63.9	59.6	-6.7	33.9	38.4	13.3	36.1	39.7	9.9
Western	64.7	59.3	-8.2	62.9	60.6	-3.7	35.4	40.1	13.9	37.1	38.8	4.6
Mid-Western	65.3	61.0	-6.6	63.9	62.6	-2.0	34.7	38.2	10.1	36.1	36.7	1.7
Far-Western	67.0	60.2	-10.1	64.4	62.3	-3.3	32.9	38.8	17.9	35.7	36.7	3.1
Females												
Eastern	73.5	67.4	-6.0	72.8	67.1	-7.8	26.6	32.3	21.8	27.3	32.6	19.4
Central	78.5	70.7	-7.9	75.7	69.5	-8.2	21.5	29.0	35.3	24.4	30.2	24.2
Western	76.7	69.3	-7.4	74.2	69.7	-6.1	23.3	30.4	30.5	25.8	30.1	16.7
Mid-Western	76.2	69.1	-7.1	74.1	71.3	-3.8	23.8	30.5	28.6	25.9	28.3	9.3
Far-Western	89.8	70.5	-19.2	76.1	72.2	-5.1	10.2	29.9	184.3	23.9	27.4	14.6

Source : Same as Table 7.12

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above.

** Standardized on the basis of the 2001 age distribution for the population of Nepal aged 10 years and above.

7.9. District Level Variation

We have so far presented data on age at marriage at national and regional level. However, this picture at aggregate level may conceal variation in mean age at marriage within the country and also within a region. What is true for the country or for a region may not be true for its constituents. In order to get a clue to this variation we have calculated the singulate mean age marriage at the district level. Analysis of variation in mean age at marriage at district level may also help us to identify factors affecting nuptiality more appropriately by relating the characteristics of a district to its level of nuptiality. Annexes 7.4 and 7.5 present data on the singulate mean age at marriage by district for male and female for the year 1981 and 2001.

Examination of data reveals a shift in rank-order of the districts in respect of mean age at marriage between the last two decades. The singulate mean age at marriage for male is found to be

Data reveal a shift in rank-order of the districts in respect of mean age at marriage between the last two decades.

highest in Kathmandu followed by Mustang and lowest in Rolpa in 2001. Kathmandu moved up from 19th position in 1981 to first position in 2001, while Mustang moved down from first position in 1981 to second position in 2001 and Rolpa moved down from 25th position in 1981 to 75th position in 2001. The singulate mean age at marriage for female is found to be highest in Manang and lowest in Rautahat in 2001. Comparing 1981 with 2001, we find Manang is holding on to the first position in both 1981 and 2001 in respect of female mean age at marriage. However, Rautahat moved down the scale from 70th position in 1981 to 75th position in 2001. It would be an interesting exercise to understand the underlying factors affecting high and low nuptiality and intercensal changes in district level nuptiality.

7.10 Nuptiality Index

Various other summary indexes of nuptiality have been calculated from census data to measure the changing pattern of nuptiality over a period of time and also to show inter-regional difference in marriage

Examination of nuptiality indexes between intercensal period confirms continuation of universal marriage in Nepal. However, proportion married is declining slowly but steadily with corresponding increase in the proportion single. But the dampening effect of rising proportion of single on fertility is, to some extent, counteracted by decreasing widowed.

patterns in Nepal. The indexes include the proportion married (I_m), the proportion single (I_s), the proportion separated (I_p), the proportion divorced (I_d) and the proportion widowed (I_w). The indexes (I_s , I_d , I_p and I_w) are the components of the reciprocal of the index proportion of women married (I_m). The index I_m (proportion of women married) was originally developed by Coale (1970). This was further broadened by Hull and Saladi (1977) in an attempt to broaden its use.

These indexes indicate the distribution of women of reproductive age of various marital status which are weighted according to the Hutterite Schedule of age specific fertility which is meant to represent an approximate weighting for potential fecundity patterns. In other words, these indexes reflect not only the marriage pattern of women but also their marital status with regard to its potential effect on fertility. For example, the index proportion divorced (I_d) will be inflated if these women are predominantly young and presumably fecund. That is to say – what would be

the potential effect of divorce on reducing fertility, if it is among younger than older women. The coefficients of these indexes are presented in Table 7.14.

Examination of table reveals that 80 percent of women of presumable reproductive potential are currently married – which once again confirms that marriage is universal in Nepal. The finding indicates that 80 percent of the reproductive potential is realized through the present marriage pattern assuming few or no births outside legal marriage. About 19 percent of potential fertility is reduced because of the fact that not all women are married but approximately 19 percent are still single. The remaining 1 percent of the reduction is attributed to the dissolution of marriage. Among the indexes of marriage dissolution the index of widowhood is consistently higher than the proportion divorced/separated.

However, it should be noted that even though four-fifth of women of presumed reproductive potential are currently married, the I_m has been falling slowly but consistently over the years from 0.884 in 1961 to 0.801 in 2001. The falling I_m is the result of rising I_s , which is counteracted to some extent by decreasing widowhood (I_w). The proportion of single people (I_s) has increased by 234 percent, from 0.056 in 1961 to 0.187 in 2001, while the proportion of widowed (I_w) declined by 88 percent, from 0.056 in 1981 to 0.007 in 2001. Even though the decline of I_w falls short of the increase in I_s , the former is likely to dampen some what the potential fertility control effect of the rapidly rising I_s .

The changing pattern of marriage as observed above for the country as a whole also holds good for different regions of the country, although there are some interesting regional variations in these patterns.

7.10.1 Rural/Urban Differences in Nuptiality Indexes

Nuptiality pattern, at least with respect to the indexes of the proportion married (I_m) and the proportion single (I_s), varies between rural and urban areas (see Table 7.19). The proportion married is higher in rural than in urban areas. The value of I_m varies from a high 0.811 in rural area to a low 0.750 in urban area in 2001. Conversely, the proportion single in urban areas exceeds that of rural areas. This value (I_s) ranges from 0.238 in urban area to 0.177 in rural area. The proportion widowed (I_w) is marginally higher in rural area than in urban area. There is no rural/urban difference in regard to the proportion divorced and separated. Data show no significant reduction in rural-urban gap regarding the proportions of married and single people over the years.

Table 7.14: Nuptiality indexes for Nepal, rural urban areas, geographic and development regions.

Region, Zone and Rural/Urban Areas	Year	Proportion Single (I _s)	Proportion Married (I _m)	Proportion Widowed (I _w)	Proportion Divorced (I _d)	Proportion Separated (I _p)	Proportion Not Currently Married (I _n)
NEPAL	1961	0.056	0.884	0.056	NA	NA	0.116
	1971	0.085	0.881	0.031	NA	NA	0.119
	1981	0.126	0.854	0.016	NA	NA	0.146
	1991	0.123	0.844	0.016	0.002	0.004	0.156
	2001	0.187	0.801	0.007	0.001	0.002	0.197
Rural/Urban Residence							
Rural	1981	0.122	0.857	0.017	0.004	0.000	0.143
	1991	0.126	0.851	0.016	0.003	0.004	0.149
	2001	0.177	0.811	0.008	0.001	0.002	0.188
Urban	1981	0.189	0.795	0.013	0.003	0.000	0.205
	1991	0.209	0.773	0.012	0.002	0.004	0.227
	2001	0.238	0.750	0.007	0.001	0.002	0.248
Ecological Zones							
Mountain	1981	0.168	0.808	0.018	0.006	0.000	0.192
	1991	0.155	0.815	0.02	0.01	0.006	0.185
	2001	0.197	0.789	0.008	0.004	0.002	0.210
Hill	1981	0.163	0.817	0.015	0.005	0.000	0.183
	1991	0.172	0.805	0.015	0.008	0.000	0.195
	2001	0.221	0.767	0.007	0.004	0.002	0.232
Terai	1981	0.076	0.903	0.018	0.003	0.000	0.097
	1991	0.095	0.884	0.015	0.006	0.004	0.116
	2001	0.153	0.835	0.008	0.003	0.002	0.163
Development Regions							
Eastern	1981	0.151	0.827	0.017	0.005	0.000	0.173
	1991	0.177	0.799	0.016	0.008	0.000	0.201
	2001	0.221	0.767	0.007	0.003	0.000	0.232
Central	1981	0.111	0.868	0.017	0.004	0.000	0.132
	1991	0.122	0.858	0.014	0.006	0.000	0.142
	2001	0.181	0.807	0.007	0.003	0.000	0.191
Western	1981	0.133	0.848	0.015	0.004	0.000	0.152
	1991	0.137	0.842	0.014	0.006	0.000	0.158
	2001	0.190	0.798	0.007	0.004	0.000	0.200
Mid-Western	1981	0.124	0.854	0.017	0.005	0.000	0.146
	1991	0.115	0.859	0.017	0.009	0.004	0.141
	2001	0.162	0.823	0.008	0.005	0.002	0.175
Far-Western	1981	0.102	0.881	0.015	0.002	0.000	0.119
	1991	0.084	0.888	0.023	0.005	0.000	0.112
	2001	0.142	0.844	0.010	0.002	0.000	0.154

Source : CBS 1995; CBS 2002 National Report.

Note: NA = Not available.

7.10.2 Variation in Nuptiality Indexes: Geographic Zones

The data show a considerable variation in the marital pattern by geographic zones. For example, the proportion married ranges from a low 0.767 in the Hill to a high 0.835 in the Terai. The Mountain occupies the intermediary position. Conversely, the proportion single (I_s) in the Hill is 44 percent higher than that of the corresponding proportion in the Terai. The value of I_s ranges from 0.221 in the Hill to 0.197 and 0.153 in the Mountain and Terai respectively. There is hardly any difference among geographical zones in the values of I_w (proportion widowed) and I_d and I_p (proportion divorced and separated) and these values are also very insignificant (see Table 7.14).

7.10.3 Variation in Nuptiality Indexes: Development Regions

Data in Table 7.14 show a good deal of variation in the proportion of the single (I_s) and married (I_m) among regions, indicating some alternative patterns of delayed marriage existing in Nepal. The proportion of single (I_s) ranges from a high 0.221 in the Eastern Development region to a low 0.142 in the Far-Western Development region. Conversely, the proportion of married ranges from a low 0.767 in the Eastern development region to a high 0.844 in the Far-Western Development region. The data show that more than three-quarters of women of presumed reproductive potential are currently married in each region.

There is hardly any noticeable difference among the regions in regard to the proportion widowed (I_w). The value of I_w varies between 0.007 in the Eastern, Central and Western Development regions to 0.008 and 0.010 in the Mid-Western and Far-Western Development region respectively. The proportion of divorced and separated ($I_d + I_p$) account for a very small proportion of ever married women. It ranges within a narrow range of 0.002 – 0.005, with a high 0.005 in the Mid-Western Development region and a low 0.002 in the Far-Western Development region.

7.10.4 The Coale Model for First Marriage

Coale's (1971) nuptiality indices are also employed to measure the changing pattern of nuptiality over time. These indices comprise of three parameters: a_0 , (age at which a significant number of marriages takes place), k (pace of marriage) and c (ultimate proportion ever married). The value of these indices are given in Table 7.15.

Table 7.15 : Coale's nuptiality parameters (females) for 1981 and 2001 censuses.

Area	1981			2001		
	a_0	k	c	a_0	k	c
NEPAL	12.18	0.491	0.9615	12.83	0.60	0.9908
Development Regions						
Eastern	12.53	0.600	0.9611	12.33	0.73	0.9976
Central	12.15	0.467	0.9641	12.33	0.65	0.9999
Western	12.09	0.502	0.9564	13.33	0.55	0.9952
Mid-Western	12.41	0.453	0.9529	12.83	0.52	0.9898
Far-Western	11.67	0.427	0.9405	13.83	0.42	0.9921

Source : CBS 1987, CBS 2002 National Report.

Data reveal a small but positive shift in the age at which a significant number of marriages takes places (a_0), from 12.2 in 1981 to 12.8 in 2001. This shift is noted in almost every region of the country, except Eastern Development region. Data also show an expansion of the period in which the marriages take place (k), from 0.49 in 1981 to 0.60 in 2001 – indicating a change in the pace of marriage. The expansion in k values is also noted in almost all development regions, except Far-Western Development region. However, " c " value not only remained high but has also increased during the last two decades (1981-2001), confirming that marriage not only remaining universal but also the ultimate proportion who have ever married increased. This may be attributed to declining proportion of widowed.

7.11 The Effect of Education on Nuptiality

One would expect to find a positive association between educational attainment and literacy on the one hand and age at marriage on the other. There are several mechanisms through which education may positively effect the age at marriage: (i) longer schooling may involuntarily delay the age at marriage; (ii) work opportunities increase with the level of education. Educated boys and girls may join labour force outside the home. And employment outside the home may foster interests in non-formal activities which may compete with marriage and consequently lead to a postponement of marriage; and (iii) educated boys and girls may also consider early age at marriage as an obstacle to achieving social and economic mobility and therefore may postpone their marriages until they have a stable career path and a permanent source of income. And this process could delay the age at marriage of educated boys and girls. Data tend to support the hypothesized relationship between education and nuptiality.

7.11.1 Literacy and Age at Marriage

Table 7.16 examines the effect of education on age at marriage. It may be observed that literate men and women have a higher singulate age at marriage than their counterparts. This relationship is more pronounced among females than males. For men the singulate mean age at marriage is 21.2 for the illiterate and 23.6 for the literate. The corresponding figures for women are 17.6 and 20.8 respectively.

This literate and illiterate differences in mean age at marriage is also reflected in age standardized proportion of single people. For example, age standardized proportion of single people is 35.7 for the illiterate men and 40.4 for their literate counterparts. The corresponding figures for women are 25.0 and 34.2 respectively. From the preceding findings it may be noted that the differences in the nuptiality pattern observed between literate men and their illiterate counterparts are less marked when compared to those observed between literate women and their illiterate counterparts. It indicates that literacy seems to affect female nuptiality more strongly than men's.

7.11.2 Educational Attainment and Age at Marriage

Data show a discontinuous relationship between the level of education and nuptiality in which singulate mean age at marriage increases with the increase in level of education, although not significantly, from no formal education category to primary level for both men and women. However, the mean age at marriage rises substantially beyond the lower secondary level for both men and women, particularly for the former. For men the age at marriage rises from 21 for those with primary education to 22 and 25 for those who completed lower secondary and secondary and higher secondary level education respectively. The female age at marriage rises from 19 for those with primary education to 20 and 22 for those who completed lower secondary and secondary and higher level education respectively.

The standardized proportion of single people also increases with the level of education, particularly beyond the primary level for both men and women, especially for the former. The standardized proportion of single people among men rises from 35.6 percent for those with no formal schooling to 36.2, 38 and 43 percent for those with primary, lower secondary and secondary and higher secondary level education respectively. The corresponding figures among women are 28, 30, 33 and 38 respectively.

Table 7.16 : Percent of men and women never married and singulate mean age at marriage by level of literacy and educational attainment, Nepal census year 2001.

Age Group	Total Illiterate		Total Literate		No Schooling		Primary		Lower Secondary		Secondary & Above	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14 Years	98.9	96.5	99.6	99.4	99.3	98.5	99.7	99.5	99.5	99.4	99.3	99.5
15-19 Years	77.2	45.3	91.5	78.5	79.8	56.7	86.8	69.3	92.3	81.2	94.1	84.7
20-24 Years	33.6	8.5	54.4	31.1	35.8	14.0	33.5	16.3	41.2	20.5	66.6	44.2
25-29 Years	12.0	2.8	20.4	8.7	10.8	5.0	9.9	4.9	11.5	5.2	28.1	13.0
30-34 Years	6.0	1.7	5.3	3.7	3.9	2.7	3.5	2.3	3.3	2.7	6.7	5.3
35-39 Years	4.0	1.3	2.0	2.4	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	2	1.8	2.1	3.7
40-44 Years	3.2	1.2	1.1	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.2	0.9	3.2
45-49 Years	2.3	1.1	0.9	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.4	0.6	1.0	0.7	3.3
50-54 Years	2.1	1.1	0.7	2.2	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.6	1.8	0.6	4.6
55-59 Years	1.9	0.9	0.8	2.3	0.7	2.0	0.9	1.7	0.8	1.6	0.6	5.1
60-64 Years	1.8	1.1	0.7	2.3	0.8	1.7	0.6	2.3	0.2	1.7	0.8	4.0
65+ Years	1.7	1.0	1.1	1.9	0.9	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.4	3.1
Total	19.2	12.7	49.9	54.5	11.6	16.3	65.5	70.2	59.9	61.5	40.0	43.0
Standardized for Age*	35.7	25.0	40.4	34.2	35.6	28.1	36.2	30.3	37.9	32.6	43.0	38.0
Singulate Mean Age at Marriage	21.2	17.6	23.6	20.8	21.4	18.7	21.6	19.4	22.4	20.2	24.8	21.7
Male-Female Difference	3.6		2.8		2.7		2.2		2.2		3.1	

Source : CBS 2003 (sample raw data).

*Standardized on the basis of 2001 population.

Note: Percentages are based on unweighted sample data.

Male-female differences in age at marriage is higher among illiterate (4.0 years) compared to literate people (3.0 years) by about one year. However, data show no systematic relationship between the level of education and male-female difference in age at marriage. The difference between men and women in age at marriage decreases from 3.0 years for those with no schooling to 2.0 years for those with primary education and then it remains unchanged from primary to lower secondary level. But it rises to 3.0 years for the secondary and higher secondary group.

This unexpected increase in male-female difference in age at marriage at the higher level of education (i.e., secondary and above) is due to increase in the age at marriage of the male by 2 years without a corresponding increase of the female age at marriage from lower to secondary and higher level.

An important conclusion one draws from the above findings is that the effect of education on age at marriage is greatest beyond the primary level. And this is also supported in other studies conducted in Asia (see, Smith, 1976).

Data in Table 7.17 also show a significant increase in mean age at marriage at each level of education, particularly beyond "no schooling" level during the last three decades (1981-2001). For the nation as a whole, mean age at marriage increased by about 4 years among literate women compared to one year among the illiterate women.

Table 7.17 : Intercensal changes (1981-2001) in mean age at marriage by level of education and sex.

Level of Education	1981		2001		Change (in years)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	20.0	16.7	21.2	17.6	1.2	0.9
Literate	20.1	17.3	23.6	20.8	3.5	3.5
No Schooling	20.8	18.1	21.4	18.7	0.60	0.60
Primary	20.4	17.9	21.6	19.4	1.20	1.50
Lower Secondary	21.1	19.9	22.4	20.2	1.30	0.30
Secondary and Higher Secondary	22.1	19.5	24.8	21.7	2.70	2.20

Source : CBS 1987, CBS 2003 (sample raw data).

7.12 The Effect of Changes in The Marriage Pattern on Fertility

The marriage pattern in Nepal has undergone considerable change during the inter-censal period 1961-2001. These changes are marked by the increasing proportion of single people resulting in the increased mean age at marriage on the one hand and the falling proportion of widowed on the other. Between 1961 and 2001, the proportion of single females has increased by 100 percent, from 15 percent to 30 percent and the estimated mean age at marriage for females rose from 15.4 to 19.5, while the proportion widowed declined by 74 percent, from 14.3 percent to 3.7 percent. These changes are likely to have counteracting effect on fertility. Increasing age at marriage will have a depressing effect on fertility by limiting the number of younger women who are exposed to pregnancy, while an increase in the number of widowhood has the opposite effect of increasing the number of women exposed to the risk of pregnancy. This section examines the effect of the changes of nuptiality pattern on fertility particularly the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) by comparing the CBRs which would have resulted in 2001 if the proportions married and proportions widowed had remained unchanged from 1961. And the results are presented in Table 7.18.

Table 7.18: Impact of changes in marital structure on birth rate.

CBR (2001) = 32
ECBR (2001) = 40
CBRW (2001) = 33
% change (CBRW - CBR) 2001 = (33-32) = 3%
% change (ECBR - CBR) 2001 = (40-32) = 20%

Where,

CBR (2001) = Estimated Crude Birth Rate in 2001.

ECBR (2001) = Estimated CBR in 2001 if the proportion married in 2001 had remained unchanged from 1961.

CBRW (2001) = Estimated CBR in 2001 if the rate of widowhood in 2001 had remained unchanged from 1961.

The formulae for these estimates are as follows:

$$CBR = \frac{\sum_{i-n}^{TM} [(F) (MW)]}{P}; \quad ECBR = \frac{\sum_{i-n}^{TM} [W] (PMW) (F)]}{P}$$

$$CBRW = \frac{\sum_{i-n}^{TM} \left[\left(\frac{W_1}{EW_1} - \frac{w}{EW} \right) (EW) \right] (F) + \sum_{i-n}^{TM} [(F) (MW)]}{P}$$

Where,

- \sum_{i-n}^{TM} = summation of the quantity for the i th through the n age groups.
- F = marital age-specific fertility rate (estimated for 2001).
- MW = number of married women (2001).
- P = total population (2001).
- W = number of women (2001).
- PMW = percentage of married women in 1961.
- W_1 = number of widowed women in 1961.
- w = number of widowed women in 2001.
- EW_1 = number of ever-married women in 1961.
- EW = number of ever-married women in 2001.

It may be observed that the effect of increasing age at marriage on reducing fertility outweighs the boosting effect of the declining proportion of widowed. If the proportions married in 2001 were the same as were those in 1961 the CBR in 2001 would have been 40 instead of 32 – an impressive reduction of CBR by 20 percent. Whereas, if the proportions widowed in 2001 were

the same as were those in 1961 the CBR would have been 3 percent lower than what is now the case. It shows that the net impact of the increase in age at marriage on the reduction of birth rate still holds, although slightly attenuated, even when allowance is made of the counteracting effect of falling incidence of widowhood on birth rate. This has been further explored by

Table 7.19: Estimated percentage change in births by age between 1961 and 2001 produced by shift in marital structure

Age Group	Percentage Change
15-19	- 53.8
20-24	- 15.6
25-29	- 20.0
30-34	+ 2.0
35-39	+ 7.2
40-44	+ 16.5
45-49	+ 29.9

estimating the percentage change in births by age-group produced by the changes in marital structure. The data are presented in Table 7.19.

It is to be noted that there has been a substantial decline in the number of births to younger women aged 15-29 years due to increasing proportions of single girls in these ages in 2001. This was followed by a slow but steady percentage increase in the number of births to women aged 30 years and older due to falling incidence of widowhood in 2001. The percentage decline in the number of births to women aged 15-29 years was very impressive and sufficient to offset the percentage increase in the number of births to women aged 30 years and above for the following reasons: the contribution to the total number of births by younger women, particularly those in the age-groups 20-24 and 25-29 is considerably higher than that of women in the higher age-groups 30-49 due to differences in age-specific fertility. As a result, the impact of increasing age at marriage on the number of births is higher than that of the declining incidence of widowhood. This finding points out that a significant increase in age at marriage can outweigh the boosting effect of the falling incidence of widowhood on fertility, keeping other factors constant.

7.13 Summary of the Findings and Policy Implications

The salient findings may be summarized as follows:

Marriage pattern characterized by universal early age at marriage and absence of "celibacy" remains almost unchanged. However, data show a slow but steady change in the composition of population by marital status in which proportion of singles increased with a corresponding decline in the proportion married. This has resulted in increase in mean age at marriage for both males and females and this holds good for rural and urban areas, ecological zones and most of the

development regions. However, male-female differences, regional and district level variations in mean age at marriage still hold. Mean age at marriage for males has been and continues to exceed that of females in all regions and development regions. Likewise, mean age at marriage has been and continues to remain higher in urban than in rural areas.

Data also reveal intercensal changes in regional and district level nuptiality. In this process of changes in the marital distribution, the Central and Eastern Development regions and the districts of Kathmandu and Manang are in the forefront, while the Mid-Western Development region, the Terai zone and districts of Rolpa and Rautahat lagged behind.

Other salient findings include: increasing number of females among ever married persons, practice of polygamy among a good proportion of people particularly males; significant decline in widowhood, indicating improved mortality over the years; predominance of widows among widowed persons, particularly at higher ages, increasing age at marriage with increasing education and depressing effect of increasing age at marriage on fertility.

Some of these findings merit further probing and policy action. For example, the finding of more females than males among currently married persons which is attributed to rise in emigration of married males to foreign countries in search of jobs leaving behind their spouses may adversely affect health; both mental and physical, and nutrition of wives and children, including education of children. Research studies conducted elsewhere have shown adverse affect of male migration on health of children. This calls for an appropriate policy action based on further probing into causes and consequences of emigration of married males on health and well being of wives and children.

The finding of the practice of polygamy, although confined among a limited section of the population, is a manifestation of inferior position of women compared to men in a traditional patriarchal society. This is likely to have an adverse repercussions on health and education of children as well as the overall well being of the family members, including wives due to unhealthy competition over limited resources among several competitors, among other things. This calls for an appropriate policy action against polygamy based on research into underlying causes and consequences of polygamy.

Probing into factors affecting variation and intercensal changes in district and regional level nuptiality will help in identifying appropriate programme interventions to increase age at marriage.

Spouse age gender gaps at marriage in which married women are more likely to be younger than are their men counterparts, also an indication of lower social position of women compared to men, is detrimental to promotion of equitable conjugal role relationship and gender equity and equality. Appropriate programme interventions are needed to reduce the male-female gap in age at marriage.

The finding of more widows than widowers at older ages is also a cause of concern because widows are more likely to be economically dependent and suffer from both physical and mental stress than are the widowers, particularly at older ages. This is also confirmed by Nepal 2001 population census data. This calls for appropriate gender sensitive policies and programme of action to improve the living conditions of both male and female elderly persons, particularly widowed.

The finding of positive association between level of education and nuptiality implies enhancement of education will lead to higher age at marriage.

The depressing effect of increasing age at marriage on fertility points out that nuptiality is an important determinant of fertility, particularly in a society where most of the births take place within marriage. This calls for supporting enabling policy and programme initiatives such as female education and employment that will lead to significant postponement of marriage and increase in age at marriage.

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Annex 7.1: Age-sex proportions of never married persons, Nepal, census year 1961-2001 and percentage changes in proportions never married between 1961-71, 1971-81, 1981-91, 1991-2001 and 1961-2001.

Age Group and Sex	% Never Married					Percentage Change				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	1961-2001
Males										
All ages*	28.47	31.93	35.12	35.65	39.23	12.2	10.0	1.5	10.0	37.8
6-9	97.01	98.78				1.8				
10-14	89.3	93.71	85.11	95.76	99.18	4.9	-9.2	12.5	3.6	11.1
15-19	63.33	73.02	74.13	79.44	87.08	15.3	1.5	7.2	9.6	37.5
20-24	26.35	33.11	40.85	38.07	49.38	25.7	23.4	-6.8	29.7	87.4
25-29	10.21	12.26	19.52	12.66	18.15	20.1	59.2	-35.1	43.4	77.8
30-34	4.72	5.7	12.36	5.15	5.69	20.8	116.8	-58.3	10.4	20.5
35-39	2.71	3.25	8.93	2.75	2.77	19.9	174.8	-69.2	0.6	2.1
40-44	2.06	2.31	8.04	2.11	2.01	12.1	248.1	-73.8	-5.0	-2.7
45-49	1.6	1.6	7.37	1.64	1.52	0.0	360.6	-77.7	-7.6	-5.3
50-54	1.47	1.43	6.88	1.55	1.43	-2.7	381.1	-77.5	-7.9	-2.9
55-59	1.26	1.22	7.04	1.38	1.35	-3.2	477.0	-80.4	-2.5	6.8
60+	0.98	1.07	7.83	1.29	1.42	9.2	631.8	-83.5	9.9	44.6
Females										
All ages*	15.12	19.35	23.3	25.71	30.26	28.0	20.4	10.3	17.7	100.1
6-9	94.67	97.65				3.1				-100.0
10-14	75.14	86.56	85.73	92.36	98.19	15.2	-1.0	7.7	6.3	30.7
15-19	25.68	39.33	49.17	52.72	66.05	53.2	25.0	7.2	25.3	157.2
20-24	5.33	7.87	13.06	12.76	21.02	47.7	65.9	-2.3	64.8	294.4
25-29	1.91	2.59	5.35	3.66	5.58	35.6	106.6	-31.6	52.3	191.9
30-34	1.04	1.4	3.07	1.92	2.61	34.6	119.3	-37.5	36.1	151.2
35-39	0.77	1.08	2.63	1.3	1.75	40.3	143.5	-50.6	35.0	127.8
40-44	0.68	0.92	2.52	1.09	1.50	35.3	173.9	-56.7	37.3	120.0
45-49	0.58	0.77	2.93	0.9	1.24	32.8	280.5	-69.3	38.1	114.3
50-54	0.55	0.71	3.56	0.93	1.31	29.1	401.4	-73.9	40.6	137.7
55-59	0.51	0.68	4.2	0.89	1.05	33.3	517.6	-78.8	17.6	105.3
60+	0.45	0.62	6.24	0.89	1.18	37.8	906.5	-85.7	33.1	163.2

Source: CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1975 Vol. II, Part II, Table 15

CBS, 1984 Vol. II, Part Table 15

CBS, 1993 Vol. I, Part XI, Table 34

CBS, 2002 National Report Vol. II, Table 17

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above

Annex 7.2: Age-specific proportion of widowed persons, Nepal, census years 1961-2001 and percentage changes in proportions widowed between 1961-71, 1971-81, 1981-91, 1991-2001 and 1961-2001.

Age Group and Sex	% Widowed/Widower					Percentage Change				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	1961-2001
Males										
All ages*	4.76	3.66	2.36	2.95	1.34	-23.1	-35.5	25.0	-54.4	-71.8
10-14	0.09	0.04	0.68	0.05	0.01	-55.6	1600.0	-92.6	-80.0	-88.9
15-19	0.58	0.24	0.55	0.13	0.09	-58.6	129.2	-76.4	-27.2	-83.7
20-24	0.54	0.9	0.82	0.38	0.10	66.7	-8.9	-53.7	-74.2	-81.9
25-29	2.46	1.59	1.09	0.68	0.23	-35.4	-31.4	-37.6	-66.6	-90.8
30-34	3.25	2.35	1.35	1.03	0.34	-27.7	-42.6	-23.7	-67.0	-89.5
35-39	4.12	3.05	1.67	1.59	0.58	-26.0	-45.2	-4.8	-63.6	-85.9
40-44	5.69	4.4	2.48	2.67	0.96	-22.7	-43.6	7.7	-64.0	-83.1
45-49	7.73	5.67	3.11	4.04	1.46	-26.6	-45.1	29.9	-63.9	-81.1
50-54	10.41	7.79	4.39	6.43	2.49	-25.2	-43.6	46.5	-61.3	-76.1
55-59	13.52	9.99	5.44	8.57	3.79	-26.1	-45.5	57.5	-55.8	-72.0
60+	24.5	19.68	10.92	18.24	9.11	-19.7	-44.5	67.0	-50.1	-62.8
Females										
All ages*	14.26	10.1	5.45	7.18	3.65	-29.2	-46.0	31.7	-49.1	-74.4
10-14	0.18	0.06	0.7	0.06	0.02	-66.7	1066.7	-91.4	-58.7	-86.2
15-19	0.8	0.3	0.49	0.16	0.22	-62.5	63.3	-67.3	37.0	-72.6
20-24	1.62	0.73	0.62	0.4	0.17	-54.9	-15.1	-35.5	-58.2	-89.7
25-29	3.24	1.64	1.03	0.89	0.44	-49.4	-37.2	-13.6	-50.9	-86.5
30-34	6.14	3.28	1.73	1.76	0.86	-46.6	-47.3	1.7	-51.2	-86.0
35-39	11.56	6.62	3.1	3.62	1.71	-42.7	-53.2	16.8	-52.7	-85.2
40-44	19.88	12.1	5.82	6.74	2.91	-39.1	-51.9	15.8	-56.8	-85.4
45-49	29.57	18.3	8.74	11.35	4.84	-38.1	-52.2	29.9	-57.4	-83.6
50-54	38.99	28.13	14.08	18.93	7.90	-27.9	-49.9	34.4	-58.3	-79.7
55-59	47.24	32.39	16.19	24.85	11.21	-31.4	-50.0	53.5	-54.9	-76.3
60+	65.73	54.65	32.07	47.53	24.94	-16.9	-41.3	48.2	-47.5	-62.1

Source: CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1975 Vol. II, Part II, Table 15

CBS, 1984 Vol. II, Part Table 15

CBS, 1993 Vol. I, Part XI, Table 34

CBS, 2002 National Report Vol. II, Table 17

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above

Annex 7.3: Age-sex specific proportion of divorced/separated persons, Nepal census years 1961-2001 and percentage changes in proportion divorced/separated between 1961-71, 1971-81, 1981-91, 1991-2001 and 1961-2001.

Age Group and Sex	% Divorced/Separated					Percentage Change				
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	1961-2001
Males										
All ages*	0.4	0.28	0.38	0.46	0.23	-30.0	35.7	21.1	-49.3	-41.7
10-14	0.02	0.02	0.17	0.06	0.06	0.0	750.0	-64.7	-5.8	182.6
15-19	0.23	0.13	0.23	0.2	0.10	-43.5	76.9	-13.0	-52.3	-58.5
20-24	0.63	0.4	0.52	0.59	0.20	-36.5	30.0	13.5	-66.2	-68.4
25-29	0.69	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.30	-27.5	20.0	16.7	-56.8	-56.2
30-34	0.61	0.46	0.52	0.65	0.35	-24.6	13.0	25.0	-45.6	-42.1
35-39	0.47	0.39	0.43	0.63	0.32	-17.0	10.3	46.5	-48.9	-31.5
40-44	0.41	0.35	0.41	0.62	0.40	-14.6	17.1	51.2	-35.6	-2.7
45-49	0.41	0.29	0.37	0.59	0.32	-29.3	27.6	59.5	-45.9	-22.1
50-54	0.39	0.26	0.36	0.62	0.35	-33.3	38.5	72.2	-43.9	-10.9
55-59	0.35	0.25	0.34	0.59	0.31	-28.6	36.0	73.5	-47.2	-11.0
60+	0.39	0.3	0.43	0.56	0.32	-23.1	43.3	30.2	-42.7	-17.8
Females										
All ages*	0.34	0.28	0.42	0.69	0.32	-17.6	50.0	64.3	-54.1	-5.9
10-14	0.03	0.02	0.21	0.08	0.05	-33.3	950.0	-61.9	-36.7	68.7
15-19	0.29	0.18	0.29	0.34	0.11	-37.9	61.1	17.2	-66.2	-60.4
20-24	0.45	0.33	0.39	0.64	0.25	-26.7	18.2	64.1	-61.2	-44.8
25-29	0.45	0.35	0.42	0.72	0.34	-22.2	20.0	71.4	-53.1	-24.9
30-34	0.43	0.33	0.42	0.78	0.41	-23.3	27.3	85.7	-47.6	-5.0
35-39	0.46	0.35	0.45	0.91	0.45	-23.9	28.6	102.2	-50.3	-1.6
40-44	0.46	0.35	0.54	1.07	0.54	-23.9	54.3	98.1	-49.4	17.7
45-49	0.42	0.35	0.53	1.16	0.55	-16.7	51.4	118.9	-52.5	31.2
50-54	0.38	0.34	0.62	1.37	0.57	-10.5	82.4	121.0	-58.1	50.9
55-59	0.41	0.31	0.55	1.32	0.54	-24.4	77.4	140.0	-59.0	31.9
60+	0.24	0.36	0.65	1.05	0.50	50.0	80.6	61.5	-52.2	109.1

Source: CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1968 Vol. III, Part VI, Table 7

CBS, 1975 Vol. II, Part II, Table 15

CBS, 1984 Vol. II, Part Table 15

CBS, 1993 Vol. I, Part XI, Table 34

CBS, 2002 National Report Vol. II, Table 17

* In respect of population aged 10 years and above

Annex 7.4: Singulate mean age at marriage of men by districts, Nepal, 1981-2001.

S. N.	District	Male Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 2001	Male Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 1981	Difference 2001-1981
1.	Manang	28.27	25.40	2.87
2.	Kathmandu	25.74	22.40	3.34
3.	Mustang	25.22	25.80	-0.58
4.	Jhapa	24.97	22.80	2.17
5.	Lalitpur	24.84	21.70	3.14
6.	Ilam	24.82	24.20	0.62
7.	Dhankuta	24.56	23.30	1.26
8.	Syangja	24.01	21.30	2.71
9.	Bhaktapur	24.00	21.20	2.80
10.	Sunsari	23.98	21.00	2.98
11.	Solukhumbu	23.93	23.90	0.03
12.	Chitawan	23.92	21.60	2.32
13.	Terhathum	23.89	23.10	0.79
14.	Morang	23.89	21.90	1.99
15.	Bhojpur	23.84	23.40	0.44
16.	Panchthar	23.83	22.80	1.03
17.	Palpa	23.82	22.20	1.62
18.	Kaski	23.82	22.60	1.22
19.	Taplejung	23.80	23.40	0.40
20.	Makawanpur	23.59	20.40	3.19
21.	Sankhuwasabha	23.50	23.50	0.00
22.	Banke	23.31	20.90	2.41
23.	Gulmi	23.20	21.60	1.60
24.	Parbat	23.19	22.70	0.49
25.	Rupandehi	23.07	18.10	4.97
26.	Khotang	23.06	23.00	0.06
27.	Myagdi	22.96	21.00	1.96
28.	Udaypur	22.87	21.60	1.27
29.	Saptari	22.87	17.70	5.17
30.	Dhanusa	22.85	18.40	4.45
31.	Kavre	22.74	21.20	1.54
32.	Gorkha	22.74	21.30	1.44
33.	Baglung	22.71	22.30	0.41
34.	Arghakhanchi	22.69	21.60	1.09
35.	Lamjung	22.66	22.30	0.36
36.	Tanahun	22.63	21.40	1.23
37.	Humla	22.63	23.40	-0.77
38.	Kanchanpur	22.62	18.40	4.22
39.	Dolakha	22.53	22.70	-0.17

S. N.	District	Male Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 2001	Male Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 1981	Difference 2001-1981
40.	Sindhuli	22.52	21.60	0.92
41.	Baitadi	22.44	20.00	2.44
42.	Okhaldhunga	22.37	21.80	0.57
43.	Dadeldhura	22.29	19.80	2.49
44.	Rasuwa	22.24	22.90	-0.66
45.	Mahottari	22.20	18.60	3.60
46.	Kailali	22.13	19.80	2.33
47.	Ramechhap	22.09	21.70	0.39
48.	Siraha	22.00	18.50	3.50
49.	Nuwakot	21.97	22.30	-0.33
50.	Dolpa	21.96	23.00	-1.04
51.	Dhading	21.96	21.60	0.36
52.	Dang	21.94	20.60	1.34
53.	Surkhet	21.83	19.10	2.73
54.	Sarlahi	21.76	19.40	2.36
55.	Jajarkot	21.73	18.90	2.83
56.	Pyuthan	21.61	20.10	1.51
57.	Salyan	21.54	18.70	2.84
58.	Bardiya	21.53	19.10	2.43
59.	Doti	21.43	20.40	1.03
60.	Darchula	21.42	19.70	1.72
61.	Sindhupalchok	21.41	21.50	-0.09
62.	Rautahat	21.41	18.70	2.71
63.	Rukum	21.39	20.90	0.49
64.	Bara	21.20	18.70	2.50
65.	Nawalparasi	21.17	19.90	1.27
66.	Parsa	21.12	18.00	3.12
67.	Kalikot	21.00	19.70	1.30
68.	Bajura	21.00	19.50	1.50
69.	Mugu	20.91	21.10	-0.19
70.	Dailekh	20.78	19.50	1.28
71.	Achham	20.64	19.50	1.14
72.	Kapilbastu	20.59	17.90	2.69
73.	Jumla	20.55	19.60	0.95
74.	Rolpa	20.41	20.30	0.11
75.	Bajhang	19.84	19.00	0.84

Annex 7.5: Singulate mean age at marriage of women by districts, Nepal, 1981-2001.

S. N.	District	Female Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 2001	Female Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 1981	Difference 2001-1981
1.	Manang	25.36	24.5	0.9
2.	Mustang	23.94	22.7	1.2
3.	Solukhumbu	22.42	20.9	1.5
4.	Lalitpur	21.87	18.7	3.2
5.	Taplejung	21.86	19.6	2.3
6.	Kathmandu	21.73	18.9	2.8
7.	Ilam	21.72	NA	NA
8.	Terhathum	21.71	19.7	2.0
9.	Bhaktapur	21.61	18.3	3.3
10.	Dhankuta	21.48	20.2	1.3
11.	Jhapa	21.38	18.2	3.2
12.	Panchthar	21.29	20.1	1.2
13.	Bhojpur	21.15	20.0	1.2
14.	Sankhuwasabha	20.78	20.1	0.7
15.	Dolpa	20.65	20.7	-0.1
16.	Khotang	20.61	19.5	1.1
17.	Kavre	20.57	17.7	2.9
18.	Makawanpur	20.55	17.3	3.3
19.	Palpa	20.46	17.8	2.7
20.	Morang	20.25	17.8	2.5
21.	Okhaldhunga	20.25	18.9	1.4
22.	Chitawan	20.24	17.5	2.7
23.	Sunsari	20.22	17.4	2.8
24.	Gorkha	20.14	17.8	2.3
25.	Syangja	20.09	17.4	2.7
26.	Kaski	19.99	18.4	1.6
27.	Myagdi	19.98	19.5	0.5
28.	Dolakha	19.96	19.3	0.7
29.	Lamjung	19.91	19.2	0.7
30.	Nuwakot	19.87	18.0	1.9
31.	Ramechhap	19.75	18.7	1.1
32.	Udaypur	19.73	18.1	1.6
33.	Rupandehi	19.68	15.1	4.6
34.	Parbat	19.66	18.3	1.4
35.	Baglung	19.60	18.4	1.2
36.	Banke	19.56	16.2	3.4
37.	Sindhuli	19.48	18.0	1.5

S. N.	District	Female Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 2001	Female Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 1981	Difference 2001-1981
38.	Gulmi	19.43	17.4	2.0
39.	Dhading	19.41	17.5	1.9
40.	Tanahun	19.41	17.8	1.6
41.	Rasuwa	19.40	19.3	0.1
42.	Rukum	19.33	17.8	1.5
43.	Sindhupalchok	19.30	18.0	1.3
44.	Humla	19.23	19.3	-0.1
45.	Arghakhanchi	19.16	16.9	2.3
46.	Dang	19.03	17.4	1.6
47.	Jajarkot	18.91	16.9	2.0
48.	Kanchanpur	18.90	14.2	4.7
49.	Kailali	18.87	16.1	2.8
50.	Salyan	18.86	15.6	3.3
51.	Pyuthan	18.83	17.3	1.5
52.	Baitadi	18.81	14.9	3.9
53.	Surkhet	18.77	16.8	2.0
54.	Saptari	18.73	14.3	4.4
55.	Rolpa	18.70	18.3	0.4
56.	Dadeldhura	18.58	15.6	3.0
57.	Bardiya	18.52	15.5	3.0
58.	Nawalparasi	18.50	16.2	2.3
59.	Achham	18.33	16.7	1.6
60.	Bajura	18.30	17.1	1.2
61.	Darchula	18.24	16.2	2.0
62.	Dailekh	18.13	16.0	2.1
63.	Dhanusa	18.08	14.6	3.5
64.	Mugu	18.01	17.6	0.4
65.	Jumla	17.76	16.3	1.5
66.	Doti	17.72	16.3	1.4
67.	Kapilbastu	17.66	14.6	3.1
68.	Siraha	17.64	14.3	3.3
69.	Kalikot	17.63	16.0	1.6
70.	Sarlahi	17.53	15.4	2.1
71.	Mahottari	17.48	13.7	3.8
72.	Bajhang	17.43	15.7	1.7
73.	Bara	17.31	14.9	2.4
74.	Parsa	17.24	13.7	3.5
75.	Rautahat	17.22	14.5	2.7