

CHAPTER VI

POPULATION GROWTH AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Data on literacy have been routinely collected by all the four Nepalese censuses since 1952/54. The concept of literacy has been almost uniform in the various censuses. The censuses undertaken from 1952/54 to 1971, keeping in conformity with the international usages have defined a literate person as one who has the ability both to read and write in any language. However, this definition was slightly changed in the 1981 census when a literate person was defined as one who had the ability both to *read and write* in any language *with understanding*. Particulars regarding literacy were obtained for all persons aged 5 years and above in the 1952/54 census and 6 years and above in the subsequent three censuses (1961, 1971 and 1981).

Mention may also be made of the intercensal changes in regard to coding data on literacy. For example, people for whom information on literacy was available but not on their ages, were classified as 'age not stated' in the censuses of 1952/54 and 1961. But this category was done away with in the censuses of 1971 and 1981 even though there were people for whom information on education was available but not on their ages. Ages for these people were imputed in the censuses of 1971 and 1981 on the basis of some *a priori* internally consistent assumptions.

As regards the quality of census data on literacy the following points are in order i) it was not possible to administer a functional test of literacy during the census operation. As a result we cannot rule out the possibility of some response biases. For example, a

person who can read but not write or who has learnt how to write his/her name only but not read, may report himself/herself as literate. Some parents may exaggerate the level of literacy of their unmarried girls in the hope of enhancing their chances of marriage; ii) an adult illiterate person may consider it a matter of shame to admit his/ her illiteracy in an interview and therefore, may report as literate. As a result the census figures on literacy may be somewhat exaggerated.¹ However, the magnitude of this exaggeration cannot be ascertained in the absence of a representative national study which subjects its respondents to answering questions on their ability to read and write and also to taking the functional literacy test simultaneously.

Level of Literacy : Intercensal Changes

Table 6.1 presents data on the percentage of literacy by sex at various censuses. Examination of the data in Table 6.1 shows a considerable increase in literacy rates for the total population aged 10 years and over from 5 per cent in 1952/54 to 24 per cent in 1981. Both males and females have advanced their level of education over the years. The percentage of male literates increased from 10 per cent in 1952/54 to 35 per cent in 1981. The corresponding percentages for females were 1 in 1952/54 and 12 in 1981. Although there has been a substantial increase in female literacy over the years this level still falls far short of the level for male literacy, and furthermore, the disparity between the sexes in the

¹ The literacy rates in the ESCAP region obtained through censuses are usually exaggerated by 10-25 per cent (Central Bureau of Statistics 1977. *The Analysis of the Population Statistics of Nepal*, p. 122).

level of literacy was further widened during the intercensal period 1952/54 to 1981. For example, in 1952/54 the male literacy rate was only 9 percentage points higher than

that of the female rate. But in 1981 male literacy rate exceeded that of female rate by 23 percentage points.

Table 6.1 – Literacy rates (% with respect to population aged 10 years and over) and its intercensal change by sex, Nepal, Census years 1952/54-1981.

Sex	Literacy rates (%) with respect to population aged 10 years and above				Intercensal average increase in literacy rate per annum			
	1952/54	1961	1971	1981	1952/54	1961-1971	1971-1981	1961-1981
Both Sexes	5.3	8.9	14.3	23.5	.488	.540	0.920	.650
Male	9.5	16.3	24.7	34.9	.850	.840	1.020	.907
Female	0.7	1.8	3.7	11.5	.138	.190	0.780	.386

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1958-Population Census, 1952/54, Table No. 7;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1968 Population Census, 1961, Volume III, Part IV, Table No. 4;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975 Population Census, 1971, Vol.. II, Part II, Table No. 16;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1984 Population Census, 1981, Vol.. 1, Part IV, Table No. 14.

Literacy Rate by Age and Sex

Table 6.2 presents data on the literacy rate by age and sex. It shows a discontinuous relationship between age and the literacy rate. This literacy rate is lower in the youngest age-group (6-9 years) and then rises in the immediately following age-group (10-14). This lower level of literacy at the youngest age-group may be attributed to the reluctance on the part of parents to send their very young children to school unless they were grown up enough to look after themselves. And this may arise particularly when the schools are not located within a short distance from home. In 1981 the literacy rates for males and females in the age-

group 10-14 were 51 and 21 per cent respectively. The corresponding percentages in 1961 were only 15 for male and 3 for female. The improvement in the level of education is marked in almost every age-group over the years but particularly in the younger age-groups. The literacy rate was highest in the 10-14 years age-group in 1981 followed by the 15-19 years of age-group for both males and females. After age 10-14 the literacy rate tends to decline with advancing age. This is to be expected as it is the younger generations who are likely to receive the maximum benefit from the free education policy which was introduced only recently, i.e. in 1971/72.

Table 6.2-Literacy rates by age and sex, Nepal, Census years 1961—1981

Age Groups	1961				1971		1981		
	Both	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
6-9	-	-	-	11.1	16.4	5.5	21.6	27.8	15.2
10-14	9.2	14.5	3.1	23.8	35.8	9.6	38.5	50.8	21.2
15-19	11.4	19.5	2.4	21.9	35.4	7.1	33.6	43.2	17.5
20-24	10.6	20.2	1.6	17.0	30.9	4.1	26.5	41.7	12.6
25-29	9.1	17.4	1.2	18.3	24.4	2.5	23.0	36.3	10.1
30-34	8.4	16.4	1.2	10.5	20.3	1.6	19.3	31.8	7.8
35-39	9.0	16.4	0.9	9.8	17.6	1.4	17.5	27.6	6.7
40-44	7.8	15.4	0.9	8.7	16.4	1.1	14.6	23.7	5.5
45-54	7.5	14.3	0.8	8.7	15.7	1.0	13.4	17.3	4.8
55+	6.4	13.0	0.6	6.5	12.6	0.7	11.2	19.1	4.0
Not Stated	3.5	8.3	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Same as are those in Table 6.1

Literacy Rate by Age and Sex: Rural and Urban Areas

Table 6.3 presents data on the literacy , rate by age and sex for rural and urban areas. It may be observed that the literacy *rates* among both men and women at all ages are higher in urban than in rural areas in each census year. The urban literacy rate was 32 percentage points higher than that of the corresponding rural rate in 1961. Although the gap between the urban and rural literacy rates was slightly reduced in 1981, the rate of the former still exceeded that of the latter by 29 percentage points. The urban/ rural difference in the level of literacy was reduced for males from 43 percentage points in 1961 to 29 percentage points in 1981, while for females the difference increased from 19 percentage points in 1961 to 29 percentage points in 1981. Eventhough the difference in literacy rates between urban and rural areas decreased more for males than for females over the years, this gap in literacy rates was still higher among the males than among

the latter(females) at every age-group in both censuses of 1961 and 198 1, for which data were available (see Table 6.3)

Inspite of this rural/urban gap in literacy rate we may observe the following common patterns of relationship between age and literacy by sex for both the rural and urban sectors: i) there seems to be an improvement in the level of literacy for both males and females at all ages over the years; ii) the literacy rate of the 6-9 years age-group is lower than that of the 10-14 years age-group; iii) the literacy rate is highest in the 10-14 years age-group followed by the 15-19 years age-group.

The finding of a higher literacy rate in the urban sector may be attributed to i) the availability of greater opportunities for education; ii) a greater awareness on the part of the urban community of the needs of education in the present day world for employment and other socio-economic advancement and iii) the exodus of the educated people from rural to urban areas.

Table 6.3 - Literacy rates by age and sex, rural-urban sectors, Nepal, Census Years 1961 and 1981

	Rural--Male		Urban-Male		Rural - Female		Urban-Female	
Age Group	1961	1981	1961	1981	1961	1981	1961	1981
6- 9	-	20.06	-	54.42	-	13.48	-	44.36
10-14	13.05	49.19	57.81	73.90	1.99	22.28	34.92	60.12
15-19	17.42	46.18	66.46	72.99	1.88	14.81	34.29	53.54
20-24	17.74	39.21	68.18	69.90	1.49	10.35	24.64	44.05
25-29	15.49	33.87	59.68	66.71	1.04	8.19	17.73	37.74
30-34	14.54	29.40	57.81	62.15	0.83	6.33	14.24	31.37
35-39	14.94	25.43	54.20	57.15	0.81	5.46	12.00	26.00
40-44	13.79	21.75	51.43	51.68	0.63	4.65	9.87	20.44
45-49	13.85	17.84	49.82	49.71	0.65	4.28	9.12	17.91
50-54	11.73	17.76	48.06	44.55	0.52	3.99	7.95	15.42
55-59	12.90	19.23	50.15	43.16	0.51	3.97	7.19	13.80
60+	11.07	15.06	45.61	35.68	0.40	3.45	5.61	10.72
Total*	14.61	32.92	57.49	62.00	1.14	9.84	19.55	37.45

*aged 10 years and over.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1968, National Population Census, 1961, Vol., III, Part IV, Table 4;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1984, National Population Census, 1981, Vol. I, Part III, Table 11; and Vol.. Part IV, Table 14

Literacy Rate by Zone

Table 6.4 ranks the zones by percentage of literate persons in 1971 and 1981. In 1971 the Bagmati ranked first, i. e. the highest in terms of literacy, followed by the Koshi and Gandaki zones. However, in 1981 this rank order was changed. Mechi moved up from rank 4 in 1971 to 1 in 1981. Koshi zone retained rank 2 which it held in the 1971 census. Bagmati moves down from rank 1 in 1971 to rank 3 in 1981. In terms of male literacy Koshi and

Gandaki occupied second and third rank respectively in 1971 and 1981. However, Mechi moved up its position in terms of male literacy from rank 5 in 1971 to rank 1 in 1981. With regard to female literacy Bagmati, Koshi and Mechi occupied first, second and third rank respectively in 1971. But in 1981 the highest female literacy rate was found in Mechi followed by Bagmati and Koshi. Karnali had the lowest level of education followed by Seti in 1971 and also in 1981.

Table 6.4-Literacy rates and rank in order for the Zones of Nepal, 1971 and 1981

Zones	1971						1981								
	Total		Male		Female		Total			Male			Female		
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	% variation	Percent	Rank	% variation	Percent	Rank	% variation
Nepal	13.9		23.6		3.9	23.3			67.6	34.0			44.1	12.0	207.7
Mechi	17.2	4	27.5	5	6.0	3	33.0	1	91.9	45.4	1	65.1	19.6	1	226.7
Koshi	18.1	2	28.7	2	6.8	2	29.6	2	63.5	41.9	2	46.0	16.5	3	142.6
Sagarmatha	12.5	9	22.3	8	2.7	6	21.0	9	68.0	32.6	8	46.2	9.1	9	237.0
Janakpur	10.6	10	18.6	10	2.5	7	17.3	10	63.2	26.5	10	42.5	7.5	11	200.0
Bagmati	18.2	1	28.3	3	7.5	1	29.0	3	59.3	39.1	5	38.2	17.9	2	138.7
Narayani	12.8	8	21.0	9	3.8	5	21.3	8	46.7	30.3	9	44.3	11.6	6	205.3
Gandaki	17.7	3	32.4	1	3.8	5	27.5	4	55.4	41.2	3	27.2	14.6	4	284.2
Lumbini	16.3	5	28.1	4	4.2	4	24.8	6	52.1	36.2	6	28.8	12.7	5	212.5
Dhawalagiri	13.6	7	24.5	7	3.2	8	25.5	5	87.5	39.4	4	60.8	11.4	7	256.3
Rapti	9.4	11	17.3	11	1.7	10	16.8	12	78.7	26.5	10	53.5	7.2	12	323.5
Karnali	6.1	14	11.0	14	0.8	12	12.3	14	101.6	19.3	13	75.5	4.7	14	487.5
Bheri	8.7	12	14.7	12	2.1	9	17.1	11	96.6	25.6	11	74.1	8.1	10	285.7
Seti	7.1	13	12.9	13	1.1	11	14.2	13	100.0	22.3	12	72.9	6.1	13	454.5
Mahakali	13.8	6	24.9	6	2.1	9	22.0	7	59.4	33.4	7	34.1	10.1	8	380.9

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975, Population Census –1971, Vol. II, Part II, Table No. 16;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975, Population Census –1981, Table No. 14.

Literacy Rate by Region

Table 6.5 ranks the development regions by the percentage of literate persons in 1971 and 1981. When ranking the development regions on the basis of overall literacy, we found the Western Development region had the highest literacy rate in 1971 followed by

the Eastern Development region and Central Development region. This rank order changed slightly in 1981. The Central Development region in 1981 the rank which it held in the 1971 census. The Eastern Development region improved its position from rank 2 in 1971 to 1 in 1981, while the position of

the Western Development region slid from rank 1 in 1971 to rank 2 in 1981.

With regard to the male literacy level the Eastern Development region improved its position from rank 2 in 1971 to rank 1 in 1981, while the position of the Western Development region went down from rank 1 in 1971 to rank 2 in 1981. The third highest male literacy rate was found in the Central Development region in both 1971 and 1981.

With regard to female education the Eastern and Western Development regions improved their position from ranks 2 and 3 in 1971 to ranks 1 and 2 in 1981 respectively. The position of the Central Development region in terms of female literacy slide from rank 1 in 1971 to rank 3 in 1981. The Mid-western Development region had the lowest literacy rate followed by the Far-western Development region in both 1971 and 1981.

Table 6.5 – Literacy rates (% of population literate to total population aged 6 years and over) and rank in order for the development regions of Nepal, census years 1971- 1981.

Development regions	1971						1931								
	Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female				
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	% vari ation	Perce nt	Rank	% variati on	Perce nt	Rank	% varia tion
Nepal	13.9		23.6		3.9		23.3		67.6	34.0		44.1	12.0		207.7
EDR	15.3	2	25.5	2	4.7	2	27.4	1	79.1	39.5	1	54.9	14.5	I	208.5
CDR	14.2	3	23.1	3	4.8	1	22.7	3	60.0	32.3	3	39.8	12.5	3	160.4
WDR	16.5	1	29.5	1	3.9	3	25.8	2	56.3	38.3	2	29.8	13.2	2	238.5
MWDR	8.7	5	15.4	5	1.7	4	16.4	5	88.5	25.2	5	63.6	7.3	5	329.4
FWDR	9.6	4	17.5	4	1.5	5	17.3	4	80.2	26.8	4	53.1	7.6	4	406.7

Source: Same as are those in Table 6.4.

Note: Abbreviation are same as are those in Table 2.4

Literacy Rates: Geographic Zones / Development Regions

Table 6.6 ranks the geographic zones and development regions by the percentage of literate persons in 1971 and 1981. When ranking the geographic zones on the basis of either the *overall literacy* level or the level of literacy for males and females separately, we found the Hill Zone had the highest literacy followed by the Terai and Mountain zones in both 1971 and 1981.

However, it shows an interesting intrazonal variation in the level of literacy and its changes over time: (a) *Within the Mountain Zone*: Within the Mountain zone the

Western Mountains had the highest literacy for both males and females in 1971. In 1981 female literacy was still found to be the highest in the Western Mountains but its rank-order in respect to male literacy dropped to second position; (b) *Within the Hill Zone*: Within the Hill zone the Central Hills occupied first position in terms both male and female literacy in 1981 and second in 1971, while the Western Hills retained its first and second position in regard to male and female literacy in both 1971 and 1981; (c) *Within the Terai Zone*: Within the Terai zone the Eastern Terai

had the highest level of education for both males and females in 1971 and 1981, while the Western Terai retained its second position in respect to male and female education in both 1971 and 1981.

The Mid-western Development region whether this referred to the Mountain, Hill and Terai area retained its lowest rank in terms of both male and female literacy in 1971 and 1981.

Table 6.6 - Literacy rates (% of population literate to total population aged 6 years & over) and rank in order for the geographic zones and development regions of Nepal, Census years 1971-81

Zones / Regions	1971						1981					
	Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female	
	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank
	13.9		23.6		3.9		23.26		33.96		12.05	
MOUNTAIN	9.89	3	17.56	3	2.06	3	17.96	3	27.64	3	7.84	3
Eastern	13.29	2	23.47	2	3.23	2	26.48	1	40.61	1	12.11	2
Central	8.66	4	15.60	4	1.66	3	15.56	3	23.57	4	6.91	3
Western	16.24	1	25.18	1	6.91	1	22.35	2	31.36	2	12.42	1
Mid-western	6.02	5	10.81	5	0.90	5	12.28	5	19.33	5	4.69	5
Far-western	9.77	3	17.83	3	1.38	4	15.54	4	24.85	3	6.23	4
HILL	14.81	1	25.83	1	3.94	2	24.94	1	36.90	1	12.90	1
Eastern	13.40	3	23.88	3	3.18	3	25.28	3	38.72	3	11.66	4
Central	17.58	1	27.88	2	6.89	1	28.58	1	39.31	2	28.94	1
Western	17.36	2	31.70	1	3.78	2	27.54	2	41.28	1	25.93	2
Mid-western	8.72	5	16.39	5	1.14	5	16.09	5	25.80	5	20.62	3
Far-western	9.86	4	18.64	4	1.26	4	16.96	4	26.86	4	7.63	5
TERAI	13.65	2	22.13	2	4.39	1	22.48	2	32.11	2	11.93	2
Eastern	17.21	1	27.12	1	6.28	1	28.78	1	39.70	1	16.77	1
Central	11.94	3	19.91	3	3.39	4	18.76	4	27.53	4	9.27	4
Western	14.54	2	23.96	2	4.32	2	22.10	2	32.22	2	11.02	2
Mid-western	9.87	4	15.58	4	3.54	3	18.28	5	26.47	5	9.34	3
Far-western	8.69	5	14.29	5	2.17	5	19.07	3	27.97	3	8.68	5

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975-Population Census 1971, Vol. II, Part II, Table 16 and Abstracts, Table 2;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975-Population Census 1981, Vol.. II, Table 13.

Literacy Rates by Districts

Literacy rates by districts are presented in Table 6.7. Among the districts Kathmandu occupied the first position in respect to literacy rate. And this held for both males and females and for 1971 and 1981. The rates were 53.8 and 21.1 for males and females in 1971. The corresponding rates in 1981 were 59.9 and 38.2

for males and females respectively. In respect to male education in 1971 *Kaski* occupied the second highest position followed by *Bhaktapur*. The rates were 43.5 and 40.2 for *Kaski* and *Bhaktapur* respectively. In 1981 the second and third position with respect to male literacy went to *Tehrathum* and *Parbat* respectively, the rates were 52.7 and 50.9 for

Tehrathum and *Parbat* respectively. In respect to female literacy in Jhapa improved its position from third highest in 1971 to second highest in 1981, while the position of Lalitpur went down from second highest in 1971 to third

highest in 1981. The literacy rate for females has improved considerably in each district during the last decade (1971-81). However, the female rate is still lagging far behind the male rate.

Table 6.7 - Literacy rates of population 6 years and above by sex for districts, Nepal, Census years 1971 & 1981

District	Male		Female		Districts	Male		Female	
	1971	1981	1971	1981		1971	1981	1971	1981
Nepal	23.6	34.0	3.9	12.0					
Taplejung	25.8	44.0	3.3	13.5	Kaski	43.5	48.7	7.0	21.0
Panchthar	24.4	39.2	2.5	9.0	Parbat	33.3	50.9	3.2	13.9
Ilam	26.9	46.1	6.0	19.0	Tanahun	32.7	37.2	3.8	13.0
Jhapa	30.1	47.5	9.6	25.1	Syangia	34.6	46.3	3.3	12.9
Sankhuwasahha	23.5	41.7	3.4	13.0	Nawalparasi	26.4	34.1	4.0	11.3
Tehrathum	30.0	52.7	4.3	15.2	Palpa	36.9	40.6	6.5	16.4
Dhankuta	27.7	47.4	4.7	14.3	Gulmi	31.4	49.2	2.9	16.0
Morang	30.3	40.3	8.4	19.6	Ankharahi	TS.2	35.8	2.4	12.1
Sunsari	29.0	42.9	9.1	17.3	Rupandehi	26.2	39.9	5.5	13.9
Bhojpur	21.8	35.9	2.9	11.3	Kapilbastu	19.6	19.2	3.2	6.3
Khotang	22.3	35.4	1.5	10.2	Mustang	30.5	31.7	8.3	13.6
Solukhumbu	21.5	34.5	3.0	8.9	Dolpa	8.9	19.3	1.6	5.1
Okhaldhunga	19.7	29.7	2.7	6.8	Myagdi	22.6	31.9	2.7	11.0
Udayapur	19.4	29.7	1.4	8.7	Baglung	25.9	36.8	2.7	9.9
Saptari	26.1	38.5	3.6	11.0	Rukum	12.9	23.2	1.0	4.0
Siraha	21.0	26.8	2.6	7.5	Rolpa	12.5	23.1	0.8	7.7
Dokha	18.3	27.6	2.3	7.4	Salyan	18.2	21.9	1.2	5.0
Ramechhap	20.0	30.1	1.7	6.8	Pyuthan	24.9	27.3	1.8	6.3
Sindhuli	18.1	28.7	2.0	9.5	Dang Deokhuri	17.8	32.1	3.3	10.2
Dhanusha	20.5	28.5	2.8	7.3	Humla	10.9	22.1	0.7	3.3
Mahottari	19.1	23.6	3.0	8.4	Mugu	9.3	16.2	0.8	2.1
Sarlahi	13.7	24.0	2.4	6.5	Kalikot	13.8	13.8	0.9	2.9
Sindhupalchok	14.3	22.2	1.3	7.0	Jumla	11.2	27.2	0.9	8.7
Rasuwa	11.4	14.6	1.4	3.2	Jajarkot	9.0	17.9	1.0	4.6
Nuwakot	13.6	27.9	1.6	8.0	Dailekh	16.1	29.8	0.7	7.1
Dhading	9.4	22.7	0.9	6.8	Surkhet	19.0	34.2	1.9	9.7
Kavrepalanchok	19.7	35.8	2.7	12.3	Banke	18.5	26.2	5.1	9.6
Bhaktapur	40.2	46.1	7.1	17.8	Bardiya	8.4	19.2	2.0	7.4
Kathmandu	53.8	59.9	21.2	38.2	Bajura	7.8	18.9	0.5	4.7
Lalitpur	39.1	48.1	10.4	24.6	Bajhang	17.6	20.7	1.3	4.7
Makawanpur	20.2	34.5	3.2	13.6	Achham	11.9	23.9	0.6	7.3
Chitwan	33.9	46.2	7.4	20.3	Doti	13.3	19.9	1.2	5.9
Rautahat	13.8	17.7	2.2	7.0	Kailali	11.9	32.5	1.6	6.6
Bara	19.3	28.0	2.8	6.8	Darchula	26.7	36.0	2.4	9.6
Parsa	23.5	29.9	4.9	12.4	Baitadi	25.4	32.9	2.0	8.2
Gorkha	20.8	27.6	2.4	9.3	Dadeldhura	27.6	32.5	1.3	10.6
Manang	7.4	30.6	1.6	10.2	Kanchanpur	18.6	33.3	3.2	12.1
Lamjung	32.1	48.8	3.8	18.7					

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975-Population Census 1971, Vol. II. Part II, Table 16;
Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975-Population Census 1981, Vol. I, Part VI

Educational Attainment

There has been considerable improvement in the level of literacy over the years. But this does not necessarily point out the level of educational attainment of the population. And this level of educational attainment is examined in Table 6.8. The table shows the proportions of males and females aged 10 years and over who had attained specific levels during the census period 1961-81. It will be observed from the table that there has been considerable improvement in the educational attainment over the years. For example, the proportion of people who are literate but had no formal schooling on the one hand declined from 7 per cent in 1961 to 4.6 per cent in 1971 and 1981, while on the other, the proportion of people who had received education up to primary level (grades 1-5) increased from less than one percent in 1961 to 6 percent and 11 per cent in 1971 and 1981 respectively. Likewise the proportion of people who have had education up to secondary level (grade 6-10) increased from less than one percent in 1961 to 3 percent and 5 percent in 1971 and 1981 respectively. A little over one quarter of one percent of the population aged 6 years and above has education upto intermediate level (grade 11 and 12) in 1961. The corresponding figures in 1971 and 1981 were 0.33 and 1.23 percent respectively. The proportion of people aged 6 years and above who were graduates and post graduates increased from less than one tenth of one percent in 1961 to a little over than one third of one percent in 1981.

The improvement in educational attainment is more marked for the younger age groups than for the higher age groups. Let us provide a few examples to illustrate the above points by utilizing 1981 census data : a comparison of 10-14 age groups with the 35 and above age group, shows that only 3 percent of the former had no formal schooling compared with 7 per

cent among the latter. Further, while 29 per cent of those aged 10-14 had a primary level education, the corresponding proportion among the 35 and above age-group was only 4 per cent. Fifteen percent of those aged 15-19 completed secondary level of education (grades 6-10), the corresponding proportion in the highest age groups (35 years and above) was only 2 per cent. And this trend of different educational attainment by age persists in each educational level, *albeit*, more prominently at lower level of educational attainment of the younger population has been increasing with the passage of time. This is what one would also expect to as the opportunities for education and awareness of its needs also have increased.

It will also be noted from Table 6.8 that in regard to the attainment of a particular educational level in each age group males had a higher proportion than females, and this differential increased further over the intercensal periods. For example, in 1961, 1.64 percent of the male population and 0.29 percent of the female were reported to have completed primary level education. The corresponding figures in 1981 were 15.65 and 6.80 percent for males and females respectively. Similarly, only 1.46 percent of males and 0.21 percent of females completed secondary level education (grades 6-10) in 1961, the corresponding percentages in 1981 were 7.55 and 1.92 for males and females respectively. Only 0.51 percent of males and 0.05 percent of females completed education to intermediate level (grades 11-12) in 1961, the corresponding proportions in 1981 were 1.98 and 0.45 for males and females respectively. These figures show on the one hand advancement in educational attainment for both males and females but on the other, it also shows the widening disparity between sexes in regard to educational attainment over the years. For

Table 6.8 – Percentage distribution of the population aged 6/10 years and over by level of education, age and sex, Nepal, Census years 1961 – 81

	1961						1971						1981							
Educational Attainment	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total
No Schooling*																				
Total	480	7.18	7.62	7.23	6.70	6.67	1.43	2.21	4.05	5.59	5.91	5.48	4.42	3.70	3.49	4.32	5.62	3.92	7.00	5.50
Male	7.88	12.49	14.48	13.88	12.94	12.37	1.99	3.12	6.36	10.13	11.11	10.15	7.75	4.44	4.12	5.32	8.06	10.03	11.39	8.13
Female	1.30	1.77	1.69	1.20	0.81	1.20	0.85	1.14	1.51	1.40	0.82	0.69	1.00	2.92	2.76	3.21	3.39	2.91	2.18	2.75
Primary (1-5 grade)																				
Total	3.24	152	064	036	027	0.95	9.66	16.84	7.30	3.75	2.39	1.64	5.79	17.92	29.37	12.93	8.35	3.88	4.06	11.33
Male	4.99	2.59	1.13	066	0.52	1.64	14.42	25.75	12.24	694	4.53	3.06	9.62	23.32	38.71	18.46	12.47	9.34	5.61	15.65
Female	1.25	0.42	0.21	0.09	0.03	0.29	4.70	6.29	1.88	0.80	0.39	0.19	1.86	12.32	18.47	6.85	4.59	3.44	2.36	6.80
Secondary (6-10 grade)																				
Total	1.06	1.92	1.30	0.63	0.35	0.83	-	4.77	9.58	5.79	2.65	0.91	3.10	-	5.87	14.60	8.23	3.16	1.78	4.80
Male	1.57	3.15	2.47	1.24	0.70	1.46	-	6.94	15.40	10.65	4.95	1.69	5.24	-	8.17	22.00	14.02	8.86	3.01	7.55
Female	0.49	0.67	0.29	0.08	0.02	0.21	-	2.22	3.19	1.30	0.50	0.11	0.90	-	3.44	6.45	2.94	1.61	0.42	1.92
S.L.C. & intermediate (11-12 grade)																				
Total	0.23	0.57	0.76	0.30	0.11	0.27	-	-	0.84	1.18	0.47	0.12	0.34	-	0.12	1.69	3.57	1.51	0.69	1.23
Male	0.04	0.93	1.50	0.61	0.22	0.51	-	-	1.21	2.07	0.89	0.22	0.57	-	0.02	2.33	5.97	4.21	1.19	1.98
Female	0.01	0.20	0.12	0.03	0.00	0.05	-	-	0.44	0.36	0.08	0.00	0.11	-	0.01	0.98	1.38	0.78	0.13	0.45
Graduate & Post Graduate																				
Total	0.01	0.03	0.17	0.14	0.05	0.08	-	-	0.13	0.72	0.55	0.17	0.24	-	-	0.07	0.73	0.65	0.37	0.39
Male	0.01	0.06	0.32	0.28	0.11	0.15	-	-	0.19	1.16	1.02	0.32	0.42	-	-	0.10	1.16	1.83	0.64	0.65
Female	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.01	-	-	0.06	0.22	0.11	0.01	0.05	-	-	0.05	0.34	0.33	0.64	0.13

* A person who is literate but also had no formal schooling.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1968 – Population Census – 1961, Vol. III, Part IV, V & VI Tables 4,5 & 7;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975 – Population Census – 1971, Vol. II, Part II, Tables 16,17 & 18;

Central Bureau of Statistics, 1984 – Population Census – 1981, Vol. I, Part I, Tables 5 & Vol. I, Part IV, Tables 15.

example, at the primary level the male rate was only 1 percentage point higher than that of the female rate in 1961, the corresponding disparity between sexes widened to 9 percentage points in 1981 in favour of the males. A similar trend of widening disparity between sexes can be found in other levels of educational attainment. However, this disparity is more prominent at younger ages and the lower levels of educational attainment. For example, in 1961, 5 per cent of males and 1 per cent of females aged 10-14 years had gone through primary level education, the corresponding percentages in 1981 were 39 and 18 for males and females respectively. In the "35 years and above" age-group only 0.52 per cent of males and 0.03 per cent of females had completed primary level education in 1961, the corresponding percentages in 1981 were 5.61 and 2.36 for males and females respectively. It shows that the disparity between sexes in terms of percentage points was more evident at the younger ages than at the higher ages. This trend persists in almost all levels of educational attainment.

The disparity between sexes is relatively less pronounced at the higher level than at the lower level of educational attainment. For example, in the age-group 20-24, 14.02 per cent of males had attained secondary level education compared with 2.94 per cent of female, while 5.97 of males as against 1.38 percent of females completed higher secondary level education (grades 11-12) in 1981. And this trend is the same for almost all age groups.

Educational Attainment: Rural-Urban Differences

Tables 6.9 and 6.10 show the proportions of males and females aged 10 years and over who had attained specific educational levels by rural and urban areas. An examination of these tables shows considerable improvement in educational attainment in both rural and

urban areas over the years. For example, the proportion of those who had completed primary level education increased from less than one per cent (0.80) in 1961 to 11 per cent in 1981 in the rural areas. The corresponding increase in the urban area was from 5 per cent in 1961 to 18 per cent in 1981. This trend persists in almost all levels of educational attainment.

Attainment of a particular educational level in each age-group is higher in urban than in rural areas. For example, the proportion of those aged 10-14 years who had attained primary level education accounted for 28 per cent and 43 per cent in rural and urban areas respectively in 1981. And this trend persists in all age-groups and at each level of educational attainment but particularly at the younger ages and the higher level of educational attainment. For example, in the 15-19 age-group 36 per cent of the urban population had attained secondary level education (grades 6-10) compared with 13 per cent of the rural population, while only 7 per cent of the urban population and 1 per cent of the rural in the "35 years and above" age-group reached the same level.

The urban-rural gap in regard to the attainment of a particular educational level is further widened over the years. For example; the difference in regard to the educational attainment between urban-rural areas at primary, secondary, higher secondary and graduate/post graduate levels were only 3.89, 7.59, 3.22 and 1.08 percentage points in favour of male in 1961. The corresponding urban rural differences increased to 6.95, 10.09, 5.9 and 3.1 percentage points at primary; secondary, higher secondary and graduate/ post graduate level respectively in 1981.

It may be further observed from Tables 6.9 and 6.10 that the male-female differences in regard to educational attainment is more glaring in rural than in urban area. For

Table 6.9-Percentage distribution of the population Census aged 6/10 years and over by level of education, age and sex, for rural Nepal, census years 1961 & 1981.

Educational attainment	1961						1981						
	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	29-34	35+	Total
No Schooling*													
Total	4.65	6.67	6.86	6.54	6.08	6.11	3.50	3.46	4.23	5.45	6.18	6.67	5.30
Male	7.79	11.99	13.57	12.94	12.00	11.63	4.24	4.09	5.27	7.97	9.98	11.07	7.97
Female	1.09	1.27	1.15	0.82	0.56	0.85	2.74	2.71	3.09	3.19	2.64	1.88	2.53
Primary (1-5 grade)													
Total	2.62	1.39	0.57	0.31	0.22	0.80	16.36	28.40	12.97	8.25	6.15	3.86	10.88
Male	4.30	2.47	1.05	0.60	0.44	1.46	21.82	38.06	18.82	12.61	9.32	5.44	15.35
Female	0.72	0.29	0.15	0.06	0.02	0.18	10.73	17.12	6.58	4.33	3.18	2.18	6.23
Secondary (6-10 grade)													
Total	0.59	1.24	0.92	0.43	0.24	0.54	-	4.89	12.90	7.37	4.51	1.45	4.15
Male	0.97	2.21	1.84	0.87	0.48	1.02	-	7.00	20.40	13.24	8.17	2.51	6.84
Female	0.16	0.26	0.14	0.04	0.01	0.09	-	2.44	4.70	2.10	1.09	0.25	1.34
S. L. C. and Intermediate (11-12 grade)													
Total	0.01	0.26	0.44	0.18	0.07	0.15	-	0.02	1.06	2.57	1.79	0.43	0.85
Male	0.02	0.49	0.92	0.38	0.14	0.30	-	0.01	1.64	4.70	3.34	0.79	1.48
Female	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.01	-	0.01	0.42	0.64	0.34	0.05	0.20
Graduate and Post Graduate													
Total	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.06	0.03	0.04	-	--	0.04	0.37	0.55	0.16	0.19
Male	0.00	0.04	0.15	0.13	0.05	0.07	-	---	0.06	0.68	1.04	0.30	0.35
Female	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	0.02	0.09	0.09	0.02	0.03

* A person who is literate but has had no formal schooling.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1968 - Population Census 1961, Vol. III, Part V, Table 6; and Part VI, Table 8;
Central Bureau of Statistics, 1984 - Population Census 1981, Vol. I, Part IV, Table 15; & Vol. III, Table 12.

Table 6.10-Percentage distribution of the population aged 6/10 years and over by level of education, age and sex, for urban Nepal,

Census years 1961 & 1981

Educational attainment	1961						1981						
	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35+	Total
No Schooling*													
Total	10.67	20.41	24.86	26.35	23.65	21.85	6.78	4.03	5.46	7.72	8.96	12.10	8.37
Male	13.33	25.20	32.63	37.43	37.49	31.39	7.60	4.49	6.01	9.12	10.72	16.11	10.37
Female	7.54	14.81	15.59	12.94	8.17	10.81	5.88	3.49	4.80	6.19	7.00	7.13	6.04
Primary (1-5 grade)													
Total	21.30	4.63	2.15	1.54	1.44	4.69	42.82	43.43	12.41	9.55	8.51	7.19	17.83
Male	25.01	5.38	2.56	1.98	2.50	5.85	46.82	47.70	14.13	10.84	9.60	8.55	19.84
Female	16.96	3.75	1.66	1.01	0.26	3.34	38.47	38.31	10.36	8.14	7.29	5.50	15.50
Secondary (6-10 grade)													
Total	14.80	18.26	9.51	5.79	3.29	8.13	-	20.05	36.07	18.89	13.63	6.96	14.24
Male	18.73	24.27	13.88	9.47	5.99	11.90	-	21.58	41.53	22.93	17.48	9.97	17.27
Female	10.18	11.24	4.29	1.33	0.26	3.78	-	18.21	29.61	14.52	9.36	3.22	10.72
S L. C. and Intermediate (11-12 grade)													
Total	0.41	7.86	7.79	3.53	1.27	3.37	-	0.12	9.65	16.08	11.44	4.68	6.75
Male	0.55	11.01	12.28	5.98	2.34	5.38	-	0.13	10.74	20.36	15.12	7.22	8.81
Female	0.24	4.19	2.44	0.57	0.08	1.05	-	0.10	8.35	11.44	7.34	1.54	4.36
Graduate and Post Graduate													
Total	-	0.31	2.22	2.14	0.83	1.12	-	-	0.50	5.26	8.02	3.57	3.29
Male	-	0.36	3.57	3.70	1.57	1.94	-	-	0.56	6.64	11.72	5.74	4.79
Female	-	0.26	0.61	0.24	0.00	0.17	-	-	0.42	3.76	3.92	0.88	1.54

* A person who is literate but has had no formal schooling.

Source: Same as the those in Table No. 6.9

Table 6.11 – Growth in school enrolments, Nepal, 1965/66-1984/85

Year	Primary (I-V)			Lower Secondary (VI-VII)			Secondary (VIII-X)			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1965/66	259,974	43,119	303,093	18,488	3,130	21,618	15,816	2,716	18,532	294,278	48,965	343,243
1966/67	308,027	51,162	359,189	26,258	4,680	30,938	23,386	4,345	27,731	357,671	60,187	417,858
1968/69	301,858	52,373	354,231	28,371	4,659	33,030	25,601	4,914	30,515	355,830	61,946	417,776
1972	283,527	52,509	336,036	35,471	6,112	41,583	34,400	6,647	41,047	353,398	65,268	418,666
1973	336,486	64,016	400,502	48,930	9,516	58,446	47,907	10,577	58,484	433,323	84,109	517,432
1974	411,932	85,572	497,504	52,867	9,921	62,788	50,719	10,606	61,325	515,518	106,099	621,617
1975	462,819	101,880	564,699	56,761	11,199	67,960	55,826	11,388	67,214	575,406	124,467	699,873
1976	512,065	150,398	662,463	57,786	12,274	70,060	61,524	12,536	74,060	631,375	175,208	806,583
1977	720,395	195,183	915,578	65,665	14,445	80,110	68,560	13,598	82,158	854,620	223,226	1,077,846
1978	814,308	241,244	1,055,552	78,876	17,636	96,512	78,220	15,431	93,651	971,404	274,311	1,245,715
1979	920,705	314,980	1,235,685	95,881	23,893	119,774	87,856	18,253	106,109	1,104,442	357,126	1,461,568
1980	965,065	352,003	1,317,068	113,873	28,398	142,271	99,394	21,613	121,007	1,178,332	402,014	1,580,346
1981	1,014,265	373,736	1,388,001	135,203	34,361	169,564	117,065	27,266	144,331	1,270,533	435,363	1,705,896
1982	1,064,259	410,439	1,474,698	155,916	42,807	198,723	137,273	33,131	170,404	1,357,448	486,377	1,843,825
1983	1,171,007	455,430	1,626,437	169,468	50,171	219,639	157,576	40,870	198,446	1,511,080	543,564	2,054,644
1984	1,237,286	510,571	1,747,857	180,874	58,054	238,928	170,018	46,455	216,473	1,588,178	615,080	2,203,258

Source: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Education and Culture, Planning Division, Manpower and Statistics Section:

Educational Statistics of Nepal at a Glance various series, Kathmandu, Nepal.

example, the proportions of males exceeded the proportions of females at primary, secondary, higher secondary and graduate level by 2.46, 5.10, 7.40 and 11.66 times respectively in rural areas in 1981, while in urban areas, the proportions of males exceeded the proportions of females by 1.71, 1.20, 1.61, 2.02 and 3.11; times at primary, secondary, higher secondary and graduate level respectively. These findings show that sex differences in favour of males at every level of educational attainment are not only higher in rural than in urban areas but also this disparity between sexes rises with the level of educational attainment particularly in rural areas.

Male-female differences in regard to the educational attainment between rural and urban areas is more pronounced in the younger than in the higher age-groups. For example, in rural areas the proportion of males completing primary level education exceeded that of the proportion of females by 21 and 3 percentage points in the 10-14 and 35 years and above age-groups in 1981. The corresponding sex imbalance in urban areas went down to only 9 percentage points in the 10-14 age group and 3 percentage points in the 35 years and above age-group. This trend persists in almost every level of educational attainment.

School Enrolment

The minimum age of admission to schools in Nepal is 6 years and the full course of school education is of 10 years duration with five years at the *primary*, two years at *lower secondary* and three years at *secondary* level. The *primary* level education includes grades I to V corresponding to ages 6 to 10 years, *lower secondary* level constitutes grade VI to VII corresponding to ages 11 to 12 and the *secondary* level includes grades VIII to X corresponding to ages 13 to 15. School education, particularly primary education, is the major responsibility of the government. In 1975, primary education was made free and

all the primary schools were nationalized and the government became responsible for the provision of class rooms, teachers and education materials including text books²

Trends in Educational Enrolment

The growth in school enrolment at the primary, lower secondary and secondary level of education is shown in Table 6.11.

It may be seen that the total enrolment recorded a continuous increase from 343,243 in 1965 to 2,203,258 in 1984. It will also be noted that enrolment at lower secondary and secondary level have shown a steady increase throughout the study period 1965-84, enrolment at the primary level also grew steadily except for minor dips in 1968 and 1972. Though there was continuous growth in the total enrolment between 1965 and 1984, this growth was not uniform throughout the period (see Table 6.12).

Table (12)—Average annual rates of growth* of total primary, lower secondary and secondary level enrolment, Nepal

Period	Primary	Lower secondary	Secondary	Total
1965-74	5.50	11.85	13.29	6.60
1974-80	16.22	13.63	11.32	15.55
1980-84	7.07	12.96	14.54	8.30

* Calculated from data in Table 6.11

During the nine year period 1965-74, the total enrolment increased to 278,374, or about 30,930 per annum, and the average annual rate of increase was 6.6 per cent. But during the subsequent 6 years, 1974-80, the increase in enrolment averaged about 159,788 per annum, the average annual rate of increase being 15.55 per cent. However, this tempo in the growth of school enrolment observed during the period 1974-80, tapered off considerably during the subsequent four years

² Setting up schools at the private sector is, however, being recently encouraged by the government.

1980-84. The rate of increase in total school enrolment averaged about 8.30 per cent between 1980 and 1984.

The sharp increase in school enrolment observed between 1974 and 1980, was mostly due to the introduction of free primary education under the New Education System in 1975 and the subsequent efforts made by the government to provide educational opportunities at least at primary level³ throughout the country. Under the New Education System all government and non-government schools were placed under government control and a massive programme was launched to make primary education universal and particular emphasis was placed on promoting schooling in rural and remote areas of the country in an effort to equalize education opportunities. And the government took the responsibility for the provision of class rooms, teachers and educational materials including text books. In 1978 text books were made available free for children up to grade III. The number of schools have increased by 69 per cent from 8,805 in 1972 to 14,907 in 1982. All these efforts resulted in the massive increase of school enrolment particularly during the 6-year periods immediately following the introduction of the New Education System. However, the tempo of school enrolment has apparently slackened with the passage of time as indicated by the slow growth rate of enrolment during 1980-84. A combination of factors could be responsible for this decline in the growth rate of school enrolment in recent years, such as slackening in commitment and/or resource constraints. It is likely that the degree of commitment to provide universal primary education has

³ Enrolment in primary education accounted for 88 percent of the total *school* enrolments in 1968. This preponderance of primary *school* enrolment, although reduced over the years, still accounted for 79 per cent of the total enrolment in 1984. Therefore, any change in the total school enrolment is mostly due to changes in enrolment at the primary level.

slackened somewhat due to the loss of zeal and/or resource constraints as the task of bringing more and more of the school age population into the school system became more difficult with the passage of time. Decline in the growth rate of school enrolment may also imply that all those of school age who could be brought into the school system had been either completely or nearly brought into the system. Any further progress in enrolment will require extra effort to bring those of the student population who find it difficult to get themselves enrolled into the school system. This group possibly includes children of the remote inaccessible areas of the country where there is either no school or fewer schools and also female children who are not usually encouraged to go to school.

It will also be noted that in all three periods (1965-74; 1974-80 and 1980-84), enrolment at the lower secondary and secondary level increased at a faster rate than enrolment at the primary level. This may primarily be attributed to larger proportion of children enrolled into primary schools in the preceding years and expansion of lower and secondary schools and also to the smaller base of the school age population at the lower secondary and secondary levels.

Enrolment Ratio

One way to measure the progress achieved in regard to the proportion of the eligible population entering the school system, is to compare the enrolments in primary, lower secondary and secondary level with the number of children in the appropriate age groups⁴. The usual index used for measuring this progress is the gross apparent enrolment ratio or the number of enrolment in a given grade, regardless of age, per 100 children in

⁴ These specific age-grade relationships are as follows; primary, 6-10 years; lower secondary, 11-12 years and secondary, 13-15 years.

the appropriate age-groups.

The enrolment ratios were calculated using both census data and those provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The apparent/gross enrolment

ratios for primary, lower secondary and secondary level of general education for the last twelve years using data of the Ministry of Education and Culture are provided in Table 6.13.

Table. 6.13: Apparent/Gross*enrolment ratios at different educational levels

Year	Primary (I-V)			Lower Secondary (VI-VII)			Secondary (VII-X)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1972/73	35.0	7.1	21.6	12.3	2.3	7.6	8.7	1.8	5.4
1973/74	40.5	8.4	25.1	16.5	3.6	10.4	11.8	2.8	7.5
1974/75	48.3	10.9	30.4	17.4	3.6	10.8	12.2	2.8	7.7
1975/76	52.8	12.7	33.6	18.2	4.0	11.4	13.1	2.9	8.2
1976/77	57.0	18.2	38.4	18.0	4.3	11.5	14.1	3.1	8.8
1977/78	78.0	23.0	51.7	20.0	4.9	12.8	15.3	3.3	9.5
1978/79	85.9	27.7	58.1	23.4	5.8	15.1	17.0	3.6	10.6
1979/80	94.6	35.3	66.2	27.7	7.7	18.2	18.6	4.2	11.7
1980/81	96.6	38.4	68.7	32.1	8.9	21.1	20.5	4.8	13.0
1981/82	98.9	39.7	70.6	37.2	10.5	24.5	23.5	5.9	15.1
1982/83	101.1	42.5	73.0	41.5	12.6	27.8	26.6	7.0	17.2
1983/84	108.3	45.9	78.4	43.7	14.2	29.7	29.5	8.4	19.4
1984/85	111.5	50.0	82.1	45.2	15.9	31.2	30.8	9.2	20.5

*The apparent/gross enrolment ratio is derived, by dividing the total number of enrolment in a given grade regardless of age by the population of legal admission age, here assumed to be the population aged 6-10 years for primary, 11-12 years for lower secondary and 13-15 for secondary levels.

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture: *Educational Statistics of Nepal* for, various years.

It will be seen that there has been an impressive increase in the enrolment ratios at the primary, lower secondary and secondary level of general education over the last 12 years 1972-84. The enrolment ratios at the primary level increased from a mere 21.6 per cent in 1972 to 82 per cent in 1984. This reflects the expansion of the provision of schooling facilities to cope with the increase in school age population. The enrolment ratio at lower secondary levels although falling far short of the ratio at primary level, yet shows a considerable increase over the years. The enrolment ratio at the lower secondary level increased from 7.6 per cent in 1972 to 31.2 per cent in 1984. The corresponding ratio at the secondary level

increased from a mere 5.4 per cent in 1972 to 20.5 per cent in 1984. It shows that nearly 18 per cent of primary, 69 per cent of lower secondary school and 80 per cent of secondary school age population are still outside the purview of school system of the country. And this proportion is considerably higher for female than male school age population. At every level of education, female enrolment ratio falls far short of male. For example, in 1984 male enrolment ratio was more than 100 per cent⁵ at primary level while this was, only 50 per cent among the females. At lower

⁵ Enrolment ratio of over one hundred per cent is due to the inclusion under aged, over aged and repeaters among the reported male students at primary level in 1984,

secondary and secondary level, female enrolment ratios are only 35 per cent and 30 per cent respectively of male ratios. Even though, the female enrolment ratios fall far short of the male ratios, the percentage increase in female enrolment ratios has been higher than that of males at every level of education. For example, the female enrolment ratio at the primary level has increased steadily from 7.1 per cent in 1972 to 50 per cent in 1984, a more than seven fold increase during a period of only 12 years. The corresponding increase in enrolment ratio is less than threefold among the males.

Enrolment ratios were also calculated by using census data of 1981. Though the census questionnaire did not have a separate question on present school attendance, one of the classifications of "economically inactive" persons was that of "students". It has thus been possible to obtain information on the student population. However, the student

population as recorded in the census is not free from enumeration bias, resulting from an ambiguity in clearly identifying a student from that of a worker and vice-versa. But the extent of under/over-enumeration is not likely to be very high in view of the fact that those who have been working as well as studying are few in number and they are mostly concentrated in urban areas which account for only a small fraction of the total population of Nepal.

Table 6.14 presents the numerical distribution of students (10-24 years) and enrolment ratios recorded in the 1971 and 1981 population censuses of Nepal. It may be observed from Table 6.14 that although there has been a considerable improvement in enrolment ratios over the years, the absolute majority of the student population still remained outside the education system. Even when confining the analysis to the 10-14 age-group only we find a dismal picture in the enrolment ratio of

Table 6.14-Numerical distribution of students and enrolment ratio (10-24 years of age) of Nepal by sex and area, for the Census years 1971 & 1981

Age/Sex	1971		1981		Rural/1981		Urban/1981	
	Number	Enrolment ratio*	Number	Enrolment ratio	Number	Enrolment ratio	Number	Enrolment Ratio
Both sexes								
10-14	255,637	19.71	446,497	26.16	392,967	24.61	53,530	48.44
15-19	124,930	11.93	232,147	17.48	194,453	15.8	37,694	38.7
20-24	33,432	3.45	75,275	5.64	59,518	4.81	15,757	15.92
Male								
14-Oct	210,654	29.96	319,367	34.74	287,504	33.47	31,863	52.91
15-19	107,934	19.71	181,954	26.15	158,392	24.64	23,562	44.61
20-24	29,626	6.36	57,523	9.03	46,972	8.02	10,551	20.51
Female								
14-Oct	44,983	7.57	127,130	16.14	105,463	14.3	21,667	43.09
15-19	16,996	3.4	50,193	7.93	36,061	6.13	14,132	31.71
20-24	3,806	0.76	17,552	2.54	12,546	1.93	5,206	10.96

*The enrolment ratio (%) is defined as number of children enrolled divided by total number of children in same age range, times 100.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics 1975- Population Census 1971, Vol. III, Part II, Table 31
Central Bureau of Statistics 1984- Population Census 1981, Table 22

only 26 per cent in 1981.

The enrolment ratio in urban area is higher than that in rural area. For example, 48 per cent of the urban student population in the 10-14 age-group were enrolled in 1981 as against only 25 per cent in the corresponding age-group in rural area.

There are proportionately more males than females enrolled in every age group. For example, the 1981 enrolment ratios in the 10-14 age group were 35 per cent and 16 per cent for males and females respectively. However, the sex differences in enrolment ratios were less pronounced in urban than

in rural areas. For example, in 1981 the enrolment ratios for males and females were 53 per cent and 43 per cent respectively in the 10-14 age-group, the corresponding ratios in rural areas for males and females were 33 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

Regional Variation in Enrolment Ratios

The enrolment ratios are not uniform throughout the country, it varies from one region to another. The enrolment ratios at primary, lower secondary and secondary level of general education for various development regions and ecological zones presented in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15-Enrolment ratio at primary, lower secondary and secondary level of general education by development regions and ecological zones, 1981

Development regions/ Ecological zones	Primary Level (I-V)			Lower Secondary level (VI-VII)			Secondary Level (VIII - X)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Development regions									
Eastern Dev. Reg.	88.69	35.80	64.5	36.76	11.59	24.96	27.14	7.42	17.86
Central Dev. Reg.	84.14	34.83	60.71	35.89	13.71	25.97	28.64	9.79	20.02
Western Dev. Reg.	120.89	55.67	88.93	42.85	12.19	28.65	28.14	6.33	17.91
Mid-west Dev. Reg.	85.79	20.89	53.73	26.25	5.22	16.50	14.24	2.56	8.09
Far-west Dev. Reg.	86.24	14.08	50.88	37.47	2.91	21.87	19.27	1.56	11.12
Ecological zones									
Mountain	99.94	26.09	63.92	27.92	5.00	17.40	14.66	1.83	8.67
Hill	115.35	46.79	81.36	38.17	11.40	25.62	24.79	6.88	16.28
Terai	71.75	28.11	51.12	36.08	11.52	25.11	29.02	7.93	19.48

Source: Same as are those in Table 6.11

Among the development regions and ecological zones, we note the following common pattern of enrolment ratios: i) enrolment ratio decreases as the level of education increases. The enrolment ratio is highest at primary level and lowest at the secondary level and the lower secondary level occupies the intermediate position, ii) at every level of education, the female enrolment ratio falls far short of males and

iii) variation among the regions in regard to male enrolment ratios is less marked compared to female enrolment ratio. In other words the regional variation in enrolment ratios is mostly due to variation in the female rather than the male ratio.

Development Regions

Among the development regions the enrolment ratio at primary level is highest in the Western Development region followed by the

Eastern and Central Development regions. The Mid-western Development region and Far-western Development region occupy the fourth and fifth positions. At the lower secondary level, the enrolment ratio is highest in the Western Development region followed by the Central and Eastern Development regions. The Far-western and Mid-western Development regions occupy the fourth and fifth positions. Enrolment ratio at the secondary level is highest in the Central Development region followed by the Western and Eastern Development regions. The Farwestern and Mid-western Development regions occupy the fourth and fifth position. It should be further noted here that the regional variation in enrolment ratios is less pronounced in respect of males.

From the preceding findings it appears that the Mid-western and Far-western Development regions had the lowest enrolment ratios among the development regions. And this was mostly due to poor enrolment ratios at every level of education in these regions compared to other development regions. The male enrolment ratios do not vary markedly among the development regions.

Ecological Zones

The enrolment ratio at the primary level is highest in the Hill and lowest in the Terai, the Mountain occupies the intermediary position. In 1981 the male enrolment ratios at primary level reached at least one hundred per cent in the Hill and Mountain, while this was 72 per cent in the Terai. In respect to female enrolment ratio at primary level, this was highest in the Hill followed by the Terai and Mountain. At the lower secondary and secondary level, the enrolment ratios for male and female are lowest in the Mountain among the ecological zones. At the lower secondary level, the enrolment ratio is higher in the Hill than in the Terai, but the differences

between the two zones are very negligible. However, at the secondary level, the enrolment ratio is higher in the Terai than in the Hill. And this ecological differences in enrolment ratios hold good for both males and females but particularly for males. The male enrolment ratio at the secondary level in the Terai is at least 4 percentage points higher than that of the corresponding ratio in the Hill.

From the preceding findings, it appears that among ecological zones the proportion of school children remaining outside the reach of the school system is highest in the Mountain.

Net Enrolment Ratio

We have so far discussed the gross/apparent enrolment ratio. But the gross/apparent ratio fails to provide the true picture of the progress achieved in regard to the proportion of the eligible population entering the school system since it also includes into its denominator all the enrolment, both new and repeater, in a given grade irrespective of their ages. As a result the specific age-grade relationship cannot be easily determined and therefore, the use of the index is not very meaningful. To make this index meaningful, i. e. to appreciate the exact proportion of the eligible population entering the school system, it is necessary to calculate the net enrolment ratio which is derived by dividing the number of admissions of children of legal age into a particular grade by the population of the corresponding age-group.

The calculation of net enrolment ratio is possible provided information on under aged and over aged children are available. But these data at national level was available only for 1983 and 1984. Employing these data, net enrolment ratios were culculated at different school levels of Nepal for 1984 and these ratios are presented in Table 6.16.

Table 6.16-Gross and Net Enrolment ratios* at varies level of General Education, Nepal, 1984

Enrolment ration	Primary			Lower Secondary			Secondary		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Net	84.81	44.12	65.33	35.90	14.45	25.66	27.49	8.85	18.59
Gross	115.50	50.00	82.10	45.20	15.90	31.20	30.80	9.20	20.50
Net/Gross ratio	0.71	0.88	0.80	0.79	0.91	0.82	0.89	0.95	0.91

*In these calculation the proportion of over aged and under aged children at each level of education was the same as that was provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. These over aged and under aged proportions at primary, lower secondary and secondary levels were as follows in 1984.

Level	Proportion	
	Under aged	Over aged
Primary		
Total	3.7	16.7
Male	4.2	19.7
Female	2.5	9.4
Lower Secondary		
Total	2.1	15.7
Male	2.3	18.2
Female	1.3	7.8
Secondary		
Total	0.5	8.9
Male	0.6	10.3
Female	0.3	3.7

Source: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Education and Culture, Nepal.

It may be observed that the net enrolment ratio was 80, 82 and 91 per cent of the gross enrolment ratio at primary, lower secondary and secondary level of education in 1984. According to net enrolment ratio, nearly 56 per cent of female and 15 per cent of male children in the age group 6-10 are yet to be enrolled at primary level education. These figures were 64 per cent for male and 36 per cent for female at lower secondary level. At the secondary level, 73 per cent of male and 91 per cent of female children aged 13-15 years were still outside the school system.

This shows that a good proportion of children are still outside the school system and this situation is likely to worsen further in the future with the increase of the school age population unless a two pronged effort is made to curtail fertility and to expand further educational facilities.

Enrolment at Higher Level Education

The growth in enrolment in higher level education, i. e. beyond high school level at colleges/university, is shown in Table 6.17.

The data shows an impressive increase in enrolment in higher level education over the years. Between 1973 and 1980, enrolment at the higher level increased by 2,765 and between 1980 and 1984 this further sharply increased by 4,220 per annum. The enrolment in higher level education grew over 9 per cent per annum during the period 1973-84.

An important feature of the higher level enrolment is that the female enrolment is not only very low, but also remained almost unchanged at 20-21 per cent of the total enrolment during the last four years 1980-84. However, the percentage increase in female enrolment has been higher than that of males. During the period 1980-84 the percentage increase in higher level enrolment has been 59 per cent and 78 per cent for males and females respectively.

Table 6.17-Growth in higher level education* 1973-1984

Year	Enrolment at higher level education			Percent female
	Male	Female	Total	
1973			19094	
1974			22340	
1975			23504	
1976			21438	
1977			24714	
1978			31942	
1979			39863	
1980	27378	6716	38450	19.69
1981	40891	10465	51356	20.37
1982	41222	10848	52070	20.83
1983	33245	9984	48229	20.70
1984	43594	11961	55332	21.53
Growth Rate (total) in %				
1973-80			9.99%	
1980-84			9.09%	
1973-84			9.67 %	
Percentage (%) Change				
1980-84	59.23	78.09	62.94	

*This excludes the enrolment at private campuses/colleges which was estimated to be nearly 15 per cent of total enrolment at higher level in 1981.

Source: Tribhuvan University. Planning Division: 1986, and His Majesty's Government. Ministry of Education and Culture, Planning Division, *Educational Statistics of Nepal at a Glance*, (Various series), Kathmandu.

Another note worthy trend in regard to higher level enrolment has been the lack of change in the proportions enrolled in the various courses of studies. In other words, the structure of higher level enrolment, i. e. the proportions enrolled in the various courses of studies have remained almost unchanged inspite of an impressive increase in enrolment (See Table 6.18).

Humanities and Social Science courses⁶ continue to attract the majority of students

enrolled in higher level education. In 1973 nearly 63 per cent of all students enrolled in

⁶ This includes courses in humanities and social sciences, law, language/religious studies (Sanskrit) and education.

higher level education, took courses in the arts/humanities and social science faculties. This proportion, although it declined over the years, still accounted for 53 per cent in 1984. The decline in enrolment in arts/humanities! social sciences was mostly due to the decline in enrolment in the education faculty. The students enrolled in the education faculty declined from 22 per cent of all higher level enrolment in 1973 to a mere 6 per cent in 1984. The poor job market and/or lower enrolments of the graduates in education may account for this decline.

Table 6.18-Percentage distribution of enrolment at higher level education by courses of study, 1973-1984.

Courses of Study	Proportions enrolment in the year		
	1973	1980	1984
Humanities and Social sciences	38.26	40.87	38.95
Law	0.66	5.37	7.61
Sanskrit	1.39	1.31	0.68
Education	22.27	7.35	5.74
General and Applied Sciences	13.12	10.51	15.95
Engineering	3.03	3.91	3.88
Medical Science	2.52	3.36	2.04
Business Administration/Commerce	15.61	23.88	22.41
Agriculture/Forestry	3.04	3.43	2.72

Source: His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Education and Culture: Planning Division. Manpower and Statistics Section. *Education Statistics of Nepal at a Glance*. (Various series), Kathmandu.

The enrolment in science based courses (general/applied sciences, engineering, and medical sciences) formed about 19 per cent of the total in 1973 and the situation has hardly changed thereafter. Between 1973 and 1984, the enrolment in the science faculty increased marginally by 3 percentage points, reaching

only 22 per cent of the total higher level enrolment in 1984. The expansion in school enrolment without adequate facilities for the teaching science courses at this (school) level, has produced a large number of high school graduates who have majored in arts, humanities and social sciences. This has resulted in the admission of relatively fewer science students in higher level education.

The limited opportunities for science education and/or strict requirements for admission into science faculties in colleges/university may have also contributed to lower the intake of science students in higher level education. However, this imbalance of arts over science students at the higher levels of education must be rectified for further technological /scientific development of the country by providing more facilities for the teaching of science at higher level education.

It should be noted further that even though there was very little change in the proportion enrolled in the various major courses of study over the years, enrolment in the business administration and commerce faculty showed a marked increase from 16 per cent of the total in 1973 to 22 per cent in 1984. This could partly be attributed to increasing demand for Commerce / business administration graduates as the country modernizes and expand its trade /commerce activities. The Enrolment in the law faculty shows also an increase from less than one per cent of the total enrolment in 1973 to nearly 8 per cent in 1984. This is what one would also expect as the country modernizes and the people become more and more aware of their rights.

Enrolment in agriculture and forestry faculty is not only very low but also remained unchanged at about 3 per cent of total enrolment over the years 1973-84. Agriculture/forestry remain very unattractive subjects for higher studies. Only about 3 per cent of the

students were enrolled in the faculty of agriculture/forestry. And this has remained unchanged over the years. The failure to attract a good proportion of educated youths in the faculty of agriculture/forestry may arise from lower societal status attached to this profession and also limited scope for admission. This will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on raising agricultural productivity of the country. To meet the growing food need of the increasing population, there is an urgent need to modernize agriculture which in turn depends, among other things, on creating a large body of trained professional in agriculture/forestry.

Retention Rate

The movement of the students as they progress through the education system can be studied with the help of retention rates that is, the number in successive grades related to the number when they first entered the school system. Retention rates of the cohort enrolled in grade I during the period 1973-83 as they pass through different stages of the education system are shown in Table 6.19. These rates are given separately for boys and girls and for both sexes.

It will be seen that the retention rates were progressively diminishing from, grades I to V during the period 1973 to 1979. Out of 100 students enrolled in grade I an average of 30 % reached grade V. In other words more than two thirds of the students dropped out before they could reach grade V, an indication of a colossal wastage of human resources. And this calls for taking up urgent measures to control this situation. The rate of dropouts between grade I to II is particularly very high, it varied between 52-57 per cent during the Period 1973-82 with the exception of 1975 when the rate dropped to 46 per cent. But this was the exception rather than the rule. The retention rates from grade I through VIII were progressively diminishing during the period 1973-76. Out of 100 students enrolled

Table 6.19-Retention rates, Nepal, 1973--1983

Progression rates of pupils enrolled in grade I in the year										
Grade	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982 1983
Both sexes										
I	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
II	42.66	47.78	53.97	46.92	46.43	48.09	46.97	47.29	48.10	48.90
III	41.40	46.36	50.16	40.56	41.94	41.36	40.15	40.05	42.68	
IV	32.96	36.68	39.84	32.77	30.87	30.50	30.65	35.49		
V	28.58	32.68	36.21	27.61	27.37	27.36	26.77			
VI	25.48	29.05	30.91	24.03	24.10	24.14				
VII	24.40	26.43	28.85	22.63	21.55					
VIII	23.79	25.91	26.85	22.72						
IX	22.07	23.62	24.51							
X	21.50	23.47								
Boys										
I					100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
II					47.76	49.27	47.85	48.35	45.52	49.97
III					42.36	41.88	41.75	41.58	43.65	
IV					31.87	31.81	32.36	37.44		
V					28.12	28.46	28.24			
VI					24.65	25.11				
VII					21.86					
Girls										
I					100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
II					42.18	44.72	44.83	44.74	47.07	46.43
III					40.59	39.89	36.27	37.10	40.30	
IV					27.66	26.70	26.47	30.78		
V					24.95	24.21	23.16			
VI					22.32	21.37				
VII					20.58					

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture (various years).

in grade one about 25 per cent reached grade VIII. In other words, three-quarters of the children joining school in grade I dropped out before reaching grade VIII. Considering that there is no examination barrier, except for school level examinations conducted locally, this rate of dropout must be regarded as very high.

Retention rates for males at each grade is higher than those for females. For example, on average only 28 per cent of boys

as against 24 per cent of girls reached grade 5 out of 100 students enrolled in grade I during the period 1977-79. The rate of dropout between grades I and II was about 51 per cent and 55 per cent for boys and girls respectively during the period 1977-83.

Future Prospects

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the tasks involved in providing education to the future generations of Nepal we have: projected the school age population from

Table 6.20-Projected growth of total and school age population, Nepal 1981-2001

Year						
Population Parameters	1981		1985	1991	1996	2001
	(Base Population)					
Total Population	15022839					
Low projection ¹			17051990	18768995	20017258	21053845
Medium projection ²			17191277	19370405	21539081	23592956
High projection ³			17205353	19758408	22687116	26164927
School Age Population (6-15 years)	3617074					
Low projection			4193105	4859900	5134658	4561641
Medium projection			4190440	4900004	5575002	5512348
High projection			4187952	4943382	5862583	6693846
Average annual growth rate of increase (in percentage)						
	1981-86	1986-91	1991-96	1996-2001	1981-91	1991-2001
Total Population						
Low projection	2.53	1.92	1.28	1.00	2.22	1.15
Medium projection	2.62	2.46	2.12	1.82	2.54	1.97
High projection	2.71	2.76	2.76	2.85	2.74	2.81
School Age Population (5-14 years)						
Low projection	2.98	2.95	1.09	-2.37	2.95	-0.63
(Medium projection	2.94	3.13	2.58	0.83	3.04	1.71
High Projection	2.93	3.32	3.41	2.65	3.12	3.03

1. i) TFR will decline (linearly) from 6.3 in 1981 to 5.68, 3.85, 3.10 and 2.35 in 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 respectively;
 ii) e° for male will increase from 50.88 in 1981 to 53.38, 55.88, 57.88 and 59.88 in 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 respectively; while e° for female will increase from 48.10 in 1981 to 50.60, 53.10, 55.60 and 58.10 in 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 respectively;
 iii) initial population (i.e. population of 1981) were smoothed by employing Hill Technique, before projecting the population.
2. i) TFR will decline from 6.3 in 1981 to 6.00, 5.44, 4.64 and 3.84 in 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 respectively; ii) same as in (ii) of footnote No. 1; iii) same as in (iii) of footnote No. 1.
3. i) TFR will remain unchanged at 6.3 from 1981 to 2001; ii) same as in (ii) of footnote No. 1; iii) same as in (iii) of footnote No. 1.

1981 to 2001. The projected growth of total and school age population are presented in Table 6.20.

It may be observed that the school age population grows more rapidly than the total population in all three projections during the period from 1981 to 1991. This is because 'most of the school age children of this period

(1981-91) were born at time when fertility was very high. However, during the period 1991-2001, when fertility was assumed to decline very rapidly in the low projection, the school age population is found to be declining by 0.63 per annum, although the total population is continuing to increase by 1.15 per cent per annum. The school age population still

grows but at a slower rate than that of the growth of the total population in the medium projection during the period, 1991-2001. During the same period the school age population continues to grow faster than the total population in a situation of an unchanging regime of high fertility.

The school age population will almost double from 3.61 million in 1981 to 6.69 million in 2001, if the total fertility rate (TFR) remains unchanged at the high level of 6.3 per woman during this period, while the school age population will increase very moderately from 3.61 million in 1981 to 4.56 million in 2001 in low projection, i.e. when fertility

(TFR) will decline drastically from 6.3 in 1981 to 2.20 and 2.35 in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The school age population will still increase by 58 per cent from 3.61 million in 1981 to 5.81 million in 2001 in the medium projection when TFR assumed to decline moderately from 6.30 in 1981 to 3.84 in 2001.

The findings clearly show that it would be easier for the government to achieve its ambitious educational goals if fertility were to reduce more rapidly than remain unchanged at the present high level or decline very modestly because there will be fewer children to be educated.