

# CHAPTER 3

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

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### 3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **3.2 Ethnic /Caste Composition of Nepal**

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

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

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

As no anthropological/linguistic survey has been carried out in Nepal to date to note the various ethnic/caste groups, their distribution and population size, the exact number of ethnic/caste groups and their population size is somewhat imprecise in Nepal even today. In this kind of uncertain situation, the CBS has remained the single most important reliable source in providing the national- level information on caste/ethnicity and their various socioeconomic characteristics. The CBS provided data on 59 ethnic/caste groups in the 1991 census, whereas it provided data on 100 ethnic /caste groups in the 2001 census (see Annex 3.1 for details regarding the ethnic/caste composition of Nepal in the 1991 and 2001 censuses). Despite these available information, many agencies provide their own information on ethnic/caste groups and thus the number of ethnic/caste groups and their population size differ from one source to another. For example, the National Committee of Nationalities (2002) listed 59 distinct cultural groups within Janajati and Dalit Commission (Ayog) (2002) noted 28 cultural groups within Dalits<sup>1</sup>.

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

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

### **3.2.1 Caste Origin Hindu Groups**

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

#### **3.2.1.1 Caste - Origin Hill Hindu groups**

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

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

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

#### **3.2.1.2 Caste - Origin Tarai Hindu Groups**

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

### **3.2.2 Newar**

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

### 3.2.3 Janajati (Ethnic Groups /Nationalities)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.2.4 Musalman

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

### 3.2.5 Other

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mountain:** Byanshi, Walung.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

### **3.3.2 Major/Minor Groups by Number**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.3.4 Rural/Urban Population by Ethnic/Caste Groups

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.3.5 Literacy by Ethnic/Caste groups

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

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

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

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 census.



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

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

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census

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

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

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

### 3.4 Religion: The Nepali Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.4.1 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Hinduism

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

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

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

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census, Nepal.

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

### 3.4.2 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Buddhism

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

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

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

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census

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

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

### 3.4.3 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Kirat Religion.

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

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

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

Source : CBS, Nepal, 2001 Census.

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

### 3.4.4 Major Ethnic/Caste Groups Following Christianity

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

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

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

Source : Population Census 2001, CBS, Nepal

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

### **3.4.5 Islam as Religion**

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

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

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

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

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

| Ethnic/Caste Groups | Total Population<br>(2001 census) | Number of Religious<br>Followers |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jain                | 1,015                             | 4,180                            |
| Panjabi/Sikh        | 3,054                             | 5,890                            |

Source : Population Census, 2001, CBS, Nepal.

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

### **3.5 Ethnic/Caste Groups vs. Mother-Tongue Speakers**

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

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

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

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

Source: Population Census, 2001, CBS, Nepal

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



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

### **3.6 Conclusion**

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

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

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

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

## Foot Notes

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

#### **Hill Dalit:**

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

#### **Newar Dalit:**

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

#### **Tarai Dalits:**

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

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

#### **Mountain:**

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

#### **Hill:**

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

#### **Inner Tarai and Tarai:**

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

**Mechi Zone**

**1. Taplejung : 1,34,698**

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

**2. Panchthar : 2,02,056**

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

**3. Ilam : 2,82,806**

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

**4. Jhapa : 6,33,042**

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

**Koshi Zone**

**5. Morang : 8,43,220**

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

**6. Sunsari : 6,25,633**

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

**7. Dhankuta : 1,66,479**

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

**8. Terhathum : 1,13,111**

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

**9. Sankhuwasabha : 1,59,203**

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

**10. Bhojpur : 2,03,018**

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

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

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

**12. Okhaldhunga : 1,56,702**

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

**13. Khotang : 2,31,385**

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

**14. Udayapur : 2,87,689**

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

**15. Saptari : 5,70,282**

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

**16. Siraha : 5,69,880**

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

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

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

**18. Mahottari : 5,53,481**

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

**19. Sarlahi : 6,35,701**

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

**20. Sindhuli : 2,77,259**

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

**21. Ramechhap : 2,12,408**

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

**22. Dolakha : 1,75,912**

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

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

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

**24. Lalitpur : 3,37,785**

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

**25. Bhaktapur : 2,25,461**

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

**26. Sindhupalchok : 2,39,719**

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

**27. Kavrepalanchok : 3,85,672**

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

**28. Nuwakot : 2,88,478**

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

**29. Rasuwa : 44,731**

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

**30. Dhading : 3,38,658**

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

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

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

**32. Rautahat : 5,45,132**

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

**33. Bara : 5,59,135**

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

**35. Chitwan : 4,72,048**

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

**37. Lamjung : 1,77,149**

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

**39. Syanga : 317,320**

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

**34. Parsa : 4,97,219**

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

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

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

**38. Tanahu : 3,15,237**

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

**40. Kaski : 380,527**

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

**41. Manang : 9,587**

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

**43. Myagdi : 114,447**

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

**45. Baglung : 268,937**

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

**47. Palpa : 268,558**

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

**Dhawalagiri Zone**  
**42. Mustang : 14,981**

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

**44. Parbat : 157,826**

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

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

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

**48. Nawalparasi : 562,870**

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

**49. Rupandehi : 708,419**

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

**51. Arghakhanchi : 208,309**

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

**53. Rolpa : 210,004**

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

**55. Salyan : 60,643**

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

**50. Kapilvastu : 481,976**

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

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

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

**54. Rukum : 188,438**

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

**56. Dang Deokhari : 462,380**

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



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

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

**59. Surkhet : 269,870**

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

**61. Jajarkot : 134,868**

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

**63. Jumla : 69,226**

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

**58. Bardiya : 382,649**

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

**60. Dailekh : 225,201**

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

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

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

**64. Kalikot : 11,510**

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

**65. Mugu : 31,465**

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

**66. Humla : 40,595**

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

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

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

**68. Bajhyang : 167,026**

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

**69. Achham : 231,285**

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

**70. Doti : 207,066**

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

**Mahakali Zone****71. Kailali : 616,697**

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

**72. Kanchanpur : 377,899**

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

**73. Dadeldhura : 126,162**

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

**74. Baitadi : 234,418**

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

**75. Darchula : 121,966**

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

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

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

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

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

Source : CBS, 2001 Census, Kathmandu

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

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

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



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

Source : CBS, 2001 Census, Kathmandu.