HOUSEHOLD POPULATION AND
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

2

This chapter provides a summary of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the household population in the 2001 Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS). It provides valuable input for social and economic development planning and is also useful in understanding and identifying the major factors that determine or influence the basic demographic indicators of the population. In this chapter, the 2001 NDHS data have, in some instances, been compared with data from the 1991 and 2001 Censuses and the 1996 Nepal Family Health Survey (NFHS).

The 2001 NDHS collected information about all usual residents of a selected household (the de jure population) and persons who had slept in the selected household the night before the interview (the de facto population). The difference between these two populations is very small, and since past surveys have looked at the de facto population, for comparison purposes, all tables in this report refer to the de facto population, unless otherwise specified. A household is defined as a person or group of persons who live and eat together.

2.1 AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

Age and sex are important demographic variables and are the primary basis of demographic classification in vital statistics, censuses, and surveys. They are also important variables in the study of mortality, fertility, and nuptiality. In general, a cross-classification with sex is useful for the effective analysis of all forms of data obtained in surveys.

In most developing countries, age is of little significance to the majority of the population and especially to those living in rural areas. Because it is well documented that in Nepal ages are poorly reported, considerable emphasis was placed during interviewer training on obtaining accurate age information. There are also several built-in checks in the questionnaire that allowed interviewers to verify the accuracy of the information recorded on age. An examination of the quality of the data in relation to age reporting indicates that there is some preference for ages ending in 0 and 5, and as expected, this "age heaping" is more severe at older ages (Table C.1 and Figure 2.1). The typical pattern of heaping on age 12 is also evident. Nevertheless, age reporting in the 2001 NDHS is better than age data from most other sources and shows no serious biases in reporting. Information on the age and sex of each household member was obtained from the household head or some other responsible adult member of the household. Age reporting appears to be better among women and men in the reproductive age groups of 15-49 and 15-59, respectively, presumably because most of these women reported their own age in the individual questionnaires, as opposed to only one-third of the men who live in households selected for the men's survey. Another measure of the quality of the age data is the very small number of persons whose ages were recorded as not known or missing—two males and two females (Table C.1).

Sometimes eligible women and men, that is ever-married women age 15-49 and ever-married men age 15-59, may be shifted out of the eligible age range or recorded as not married by interviewers to reduce their workload. Analysis shows that in the 2001 NDHS, there is little bias in age reporting as indicated by the virtual absence of any differences between the age distribution of women and men recorded in the household schedule and those interviewed with the individual questionnaires (Tables C.2.1 and C.2.2).[1] Moreover, the expected pattern of declining percentages as age increases indicates that interviewers have not attempted to shift eligible women and men out of the eligible age range.

Figure 2.1 Distribution of De Facto Household Population by Single Year of Age and Sex
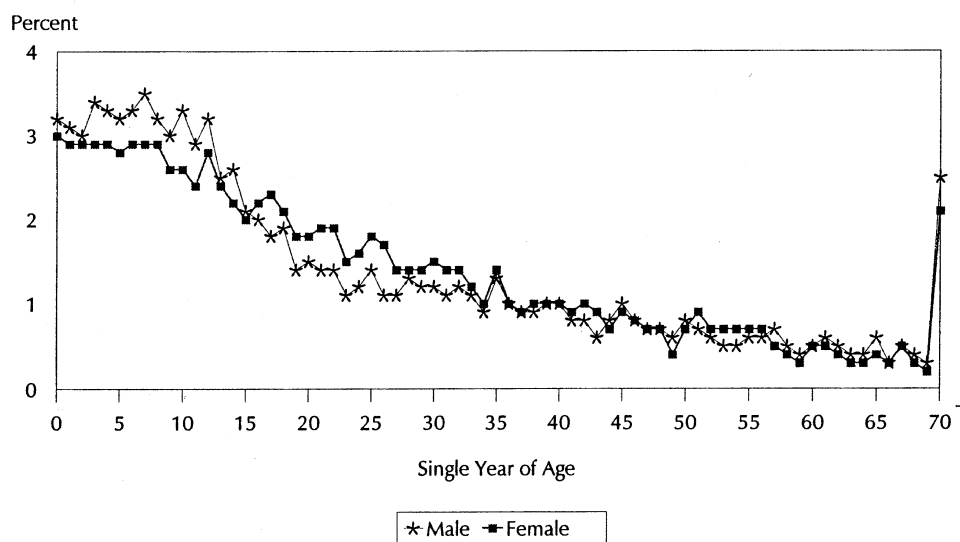
Nepal 2001

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of the population by five-year age groups, according to urban-rural residence and sex. The 2001 NDHS enumerated a total of 44,086 persons of whom 53 percent were females. Because of relatively high fertility in the past, a large proportion of Nepal's population (44 percent) is under 15 years of age.

As seen in Table 2.1, there is a smaller proportion of children under age five in urban areas, suggesting that recent declines in fertility are more evident in urban than in rural areas and that the transition to lower fertility began with the urban population. A similar finding was also observed in the 1996 NFHS (Pradhan et al., 1997).

---

[1] In Tables C.2.1 and C.2.2, the number of ever-married women and men interviewed is calculated using household weights to compare with the number of ever-married women age 15-49 and men age 15-59 in the household. This number is slightly different from the total number of women and men interviewed based on individual weights.

The overall sex ratio, the number of males per 100 females, is 90, which is lower than that obtained in the 2001 Census (100) and the 1996 NFHS (93).[2] The sex ratio differs by residence (Table 2.1). Urban areas have a higher sex ratio (97) than rural areas (89). The sex ratio is markedly lower among the working-age population, which was also the case in the 1996 NFHS. A low sex ratio among the working-age population, particularly in rural areas, may be attributed to the high rate of out-migration of males to the urban areas of Nepal, as well as to other countries, including India, in search of short- and long-term employment.

The age structure of the household population observed in the survey is typical of a youthful population (see population pyramid in Figure 2.2). Nepal has a pyramidal age structure due to the high fertility levels prevailing in the past. Children under 15 years of age account for more than two-fifths of the population, a feature of populations with high fertility levels (Table 2.1). Fifty-two percent of the population is in the age group 15-64 and 4 percent are over 65. The distribution of the population by age group is similar to that in the 1996 NFHS.

Table 2.1 Household population by age, sex, and residence

Percent distribution of the de facto household population by five-year age groups, according to sex and residence, Nepal 2001

Age	Urban				Rural				Total			
	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio
<5	10.7	9.9	10.2	104.9	16.6	15.3	15.9	96.4	15.9	14.7	15.3	97.0
5-9	13.3	11.6	12.4	111.6	16.6	14.4	15.4	102.1	16.2	14.1	15.1	102.8
10-14	13.2	13.4	13.3	95.5	14.6	12.2	13.3	106.8	14.5	12.3	13.3	105.6
15-19	10.5	11.6	11.1	87.7	9.1	10.3	9.8	78.9	9.3	10.4	9.9	79.8
20-24	10.2	11.7	10.9	84.3	6.2	8.4	7.3	65.4	6.6	8.7	7.7	67.9
25-29	9.0	8.4	8.7	103.8	5.7	7.5	6.7	67.7	6.1	7.6	6.9	71.5
30-34	7.3	7.0	7.2	101.9	5.3	6.5	5.9	73.2	5.5	6.5	6.1	76.1
35-39	5.6	5.8	5.7	93.0	4.9	5.2	5.1	83.8	5.0	5.3	5.1	84.8
40-44	4.4	4.9	4.7	86.8	4.0	4.4	4.2	80.8	4.1	4.5	4.3	81.4
45-49	4.3	3.9	4.1	107.2	3.7	3.6	3.7	91.8	3.8	3.6	3.7	93.4
50-54	2.7	3.0	2.8	88.7	3.2	3.7	3.5	74.8	3.1	3.7	3.4	75.9
55-59	2.7	2.7	2.7	95.0	2.8	2.5	2.6	98.7	2.8	2.5	2.7	98.3
60-64	2.5	2.0	2.3	121.7	2.5	2.2	2.4	102.5	2.5	2.2	2.3	104.2
65-69	1.5	1.9	1.7	77.4	2.1	1.7	1.9	112.0	2.0	1.7	1.8	108.2
70-74	0.9	0.9	0.9	107.6	1.3	1.0	1.1	109.7	1.2	1.0	1.1	109.5
75-79	0.6	0.5	0.5	106.5	0.8	0.6	0.7	109.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	109.0
80 +	0.5	0.8	0.6	69.0	0.5	0.4	0.5	102.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	97.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	89.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0
Number	2,172	2,240	4,412	4,412	18,661	21,013	39,674	39,674	20,833	23,253	44,086	44,086

[2] The marked difference in the sex ratio between the 2001 Census and the 2001 NDHS could be because the sex ratio from the census is based on the de jure population, whereas the sex ratio obtained from the 2001 NDHS is based on the de facto household population.

Figure 2.2 Population Pyramid, Nepal, 2001
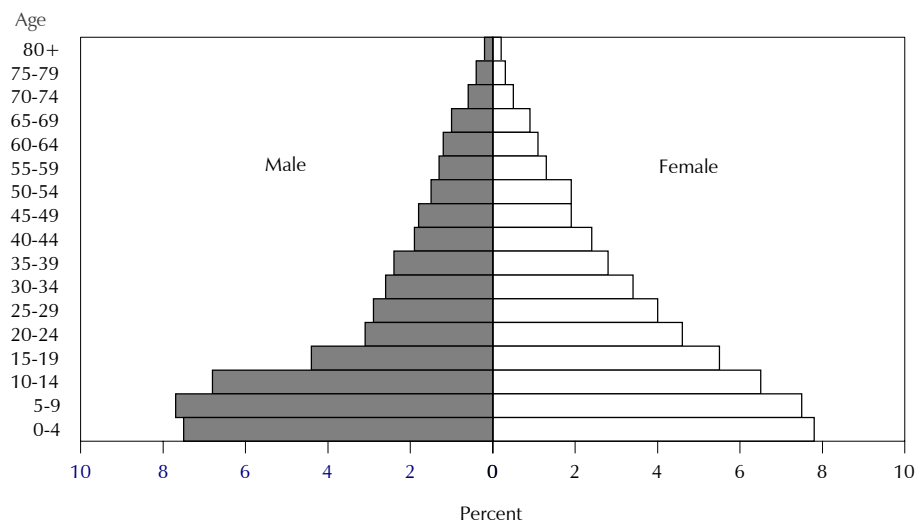
Nepal 2001

2.2   HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Table 2.2 presents the distribution of households by selected background characteristics. This information is useful for several reasons. For example, female-headed households are often found to be poorer than male-headed households and the size and composition of a household influences the allocation of limited resources and affects the living conditions of individuals in the household.

Table 2.2 Household composition

Percent distribution of households by sex of head of household and by household size, according to residence, Nepal 2001

Characteristic	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Sex of head of household			
Male	83.3	83.9	83.9
Female	16.7	16.1	16.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of usual members			
1	5.1	3.8	4.0
2	8.7	8.1	8.2
3	12.9	11.3	11.5
4	17.8	16.7	16.8
5	19.1	18.5	18.5
6	14.3	14.8	14.7
7	9.2	10.7	10.6
8	4.7	6.3	6.1
9+	8.1	9.7	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	900	7,702	8,602
Mean size	5.0	5.3	5.3

Note: Table is based on de jure members, of household, i.e., usual residents

Households in Nepal are predominantly headed by males regardless of the type of residence (84 percent).

The average household size is 5.3 persons, which is slightly lower than in the 1996 NFHS (5.5). The average household size is slightly larger in rural areas (5.3) than in urban areas (5.0).

2.3   EDUCATION OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

The level of education attained by the population is an important indicator of social development. In addition, education has been found to influence reproductive behavior, the use of contraceptives, the health of mothers and children, and hygienic habits. Tables 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 show the distribution of the male and female household population age six years and above by the level of education attended or completed according to age, residence, ecological zone, development region, and subregion. In this report those who have never been to school are categorized as having no education.

About one-third of males (32 percent) and three out of five females (60 percent) have no education. Overall, 35 percent of males and 23 percent of females have some primary education only, while 7 percent of males and 4 percent of females have completed primary education and gone no further. Likewise, 18 percent of males and 9 percent of females have only some secondary education, while three times as many males (9 percent) as females (3 percent) have completed secondary education. The median number of years of schooling is 1.4 for males and less than 1 year for females (the median for females is not shown because more than 50 percent of the female household population in most of the categories have no education). An examination of the level of education by age group reveals that there has been an improvement over time in the educational attainment for both sexes. The proportion of males who have never been to school declines from 88 percent among the oldest age group (65 years or more) to 10 percent among those age 10-14 years. The comparable proportion among females is 99 percent and 28 percent, respectively. Nevertheless, the gender gap remains large. For example, 21 percent of males in the age group 6-9 have not been to school, compared with 34 percent among females in the same age group.

Data also indicate that there is a wide gap between urban and rural areas in educational attainment. Thirty-four percent of males and 63 percent of females in rural areas have never attended school, compared with 14 percent of males and 36 percent of females in urban areas. For both sexes, this difference is more pronounced at higher levels of education, presumably because of insufficient numbers of higher educational facilities, inaccessibility, and less affordability in rural areas.

Among both women and men, the percentage with no education is lowest in the hill ecological zone and almost the same in the *terai* and mountain zones. More than one-third of males residing in the Central region (36 percent) reported having no education. Among females, the highest percentage reporting no education is in the Far-western region (67 percent), followed closely by the Central region (65 percent) and the Mid-western region (64 percent).

Table 2.3.1 Educational attainment of household population: male

Percent distribution of the de facto male household population age six and over by highest level of education attended or completed, according to background characteristics, Nepal 2001

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary[1]	Some secondary	Completed secondary[2]	More than secondary	Don't know/ missing	Total	Number of men	Median number of years
Age										
6-9	20.8	78.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	100.0	2,706	0.0
10-14	10.4	64.2	12.1	13.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	100.0	3,018	2.4
15-19	13.3	18.8	10.7	47.8	7.4	2.0	0.1	100.0	1,935	5.6
20-24	16.2	17.2	9.3	32.7	13.4	11.2	0.0	100.0	1,371	6.3
25-29	24.4	16.6	7.5	27.9	10.9	12.4	0.3	100.0	1,266	5.4
30-34	33.6	17.3	6.1	23.4	9.6	9.9	0.1	100.0	1,155	3.8
35-39	37.0	21.3	7.4	18.9	7.3	7.8	0.2	100.0	1,041	2.5
40-44	47.6	19.0	7.5	13.7	4.8	7.2	0.1	100.0	846	0.4
45-49	48.1	20.0	6.7	14.5	5.0	5.5	0.1	100.0	792	0.0
50-54	60.2	17.6	5.8	9.2	3.3	3.5	0.4	100.0	648	0.0
55-59	75.5	9.3	4.5	4.9	3.2	2.1	0.5	100.0	580	0.0
60-64	80.5	11.6	1.6	3.5	1.4	1.2	0.2	100.0	528	0.0
65+	88.3	6.2	1.3	2.6	0.6	0.7	0.3	100.0	947	0.0
Residence										
Urban	14.1	28.8	6.5	23.8	10.6	15.7	0.4	100.0	1,880	5.1
Rural	33.7	35.9	6.9	16.8	3.9	2.7	0.1	100.0	14,954	1.0
Ecological zone										
Mountain	33.4	40.2	6.2	14.9	3.6	1.8	0.0	100.0	1,193	0.7
Hill	26.1	38.6	7.6	18.4	4.6	4.7	0.1	100.0	6,925	2.0
Terai	35.6	31.6	6.3	17.3	4.9	4.0	0.3	100.0	8,716	1.1
Development region										
Eastern	29.0	35.7	6.6	19.1	5.4	4.0	0.2	100.0	4,348	1.8
Central	36.1	32.5	6.1	14.5	5.0	5.5	0.3	100.0	5,325	0.7
Western	27.8	35.5	7.8	20.5	4.5	3.8	0.1	100.0	3,357	2.1
Mid-western	32.9	36.4	6.3	17.9	3.4	3.0	0.1	100.0	2,261	1.1
Far-western	29.1	39.5	8.6	17.1	3.6	2.0	0.1	100.0	1,543	1.3
Subregion										
Eastern Mountain	27.0	37.7	7.1	18.4	5.9	3.8	0.0	100.0	310	1.9
Central Mountain	35.0	43.6	5.6	12.4	2.9	0.5	0.0	100.0	400	0.1
Western Mountain	36.2	38.9	6.0	14.6	2.7	1.6	0.0	100.0	483	0.4
Eastern Hill	27.4	41.8	6.4	18.2	3.7	2.3	0.2	100.0	1,252	1.4
Central Hill	25.5	35.7	6.4	16.7	6.1	9.5	0.1	100.0	1,978	2.3
Western Hill	23.7	36.6	9.0	21.3	5.1	4.3	0.1	100.0	1,928	2.6
Mid-western Hill	28.3	43.0	7.8	16.6	2.8	1.5	0.1	100.0	1,151	1.3
Far-western Hill	28.9	39.4	9.2	18.1	2.9	1.3	0.2	100.0	616	1.1
Eastern Terai	30.0	32.7	6.6	19.5	6.1	4.8	0.2	100.0	2,786	2.0
Central Terai	43.3	28.9	6.0	13.2	4.6	3.5	0.5	100.0	2,947	0.0
Western Terai	33.5	34.1	6.2	19.4	3.6	3.2	0.1	100.0	1,429	1.4
Mid-western Terai	35.1	29.7	4.9	20.5	4.1	5.5	0.1	100.0	902	1.1
Far-western Terai	30.3	36.6	8.7	16.9	4.9	2.4	0.1	100.0	652	1.6
Total	31.6	35.1	6.8	17.6	4.7	4.1	0.2	100.0	16,834	1.4

Note: Total includes 2 men with missing information on age who are not shown separately.
[1]Completed grade 5 at the primary level
[2]Completed grade 10 at the secondary level

Table 2.3.2 Educational attainment of household population: female

Percent distribution of the de facto female household population age six and over by highest level of education attended or completed, according to background characteristics, Nepal 2001

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary[1]	Some secondary	Completed secondary[2]	More than secondary	Don't know/ missing	Total	Number of women
Age									
6-9	33.7	66.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0	2,629
10-14	28.2	52.4	9.4	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,858
15-19	37.6	17.2	8.0	30.3	5.7	1.0	0.1	100.0	2,423
20-24	55.6	10.5	5.1	17.5	6.4	4.7	0.1	100.0	2,019
25-29	67.6	10.2	4.7	10.3	4.6	2.6	0.0	100.0	1,771
30-34	75.4	9.6	3.2	7.7	3.0	1.1	0.0	100.0	1,517
35-39	86.2	5.8	2.0	4.3	1.0	0.8	0.0	100.0	1,228
40-44	87.5	6.3	2.2	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.0	100.0	1,039
45-49	92.7	2.8	0.8	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.2	100.0	849
50-54	94.3	2.3	1.3	1.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	100.0	854
55-59	97.2	1.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0	589
60-64	97.8	0.8	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	100.0	506
65+	98.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0	883
Residence									
Urban	36.1	24.4	4.7	21.7	7.6	5.6	0.0	100.0	1,974
Rural	63.1	22.7	3.9	8.0	1.6	0.6	0.1	100.0	17,192
Ecological zone									
Mountain	66.1	24.3	2.5	5.9	1.1	0.2	0.0	100.0	1,361
Hill	53.7	27.3	4.8	10.2	2.5	1.4	0.0	100.0	8,296
Terai	65.3	18.9	3.5	9.1	2.2	1.0	0.1	100.0	9,509
Development region									
Eastern	55.5	24.0	4.9	12.1	2.4	1.1	0.0	100.0	4,840
Central	65.1	19.9	3.0	7.7	2.8	1.5	0.1	100.0	5,877
Western	53.8	25.8	5.3	11.7	2.3	1.1	0.1	100.0	4,019
Mid-western	64.4	22.6	3.4	7.3	1.5	0.7	0.0	100.0	2,573
Far-western	66.5	23.8	3.0	5.6	0.9	0.2	0.1	100.0	1,856
Subregion									
Eastern Mountain	48.6	30.9	4.3	13.4	2.2	0.6	0.0	100.0	343
Central Mountain	65.5	27.4	1.9	4.4	0.7	0.1	0.0	100.0	458
Western Mountain	77.4	17.7	1.9	2.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	560
Eastern Hill	52.4	30.6	5.8	9.5	1.1	0.6	0.0	100.0	1,455
Central Hill	50.3	26.2	4.1	11.4	4.6	3.3	0.0	100.0	2,234
Western Hill	45.9	29.8	6.3	14.0	2.8	1.2	0.1	100.0	2,449
Mid-western Hill	63.9	24.9	3.7	6.1	1.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	1,385
Far-western Hill	72.6	20.7	2.6	3.7	0.3	0.0	0.2	100.0	774
Eastern Terai	57.7	20.0	4.5	13.2	3.1	1.4	0.0	100.0	3,043
Central Terai	75.5	14.3	2.3	5.5	1.8	0.4	0.1	100.0	3,185
Western Terai	66.2	19.6	3.7	8.1	1.4	0.9	0.1	100.0	1,571
Mid-western Terai	60.2	21.6	3.6	10.4	2.2	1.9	0.1	100.0	962
Far-western Terai	57.7	28.2	3.5	8.7	1.5	0.4	0.1	100.0	748
Total	60.4	22.9	4.0	9.4	2.2	1.1	0.1	100.0	19,166

Note: Total includes 2 women with missing information on age who are not shown separately.
[1]Completed grade 5 at the primary level
[2]Completed grade 10 at the secondary level

The table shows the persistence of the gender gap in the level of education even among the subregions. Although among males, the percentage that have never been to school is less than 45 percent in all subregions, among females, the percentage who have never been to school exceeds 50 percent in most of the subregions and exceeds 75 percent in two of the thirteen subregions (Western mountain and Central *terai*).

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATIOS

The net attendance ratio (NAR) indicates participation in primary schooling for the population age 6-10 and secondary schooling for the population age 11-15. The gross attendance ratio (GAR) measures participation at each level of schooling among those of any age from 5 to 24. The GAR is nearly always higher than the NAR for the same level because the GAR includes participation by those who may be older or younger than the official age range for that level.[3] An NAR of 100 percent would indicate that all those in the official age range of the level are attending at that level. The GAR can exceed 100 percent if there is significant overage or underage participation at a given level of schooling.

Table 2.4 presents the NAR and GAR for the de jure household population by level of schooling of the male and female population age 5-24 years according to residence. The NAR is 73 percent at the primary level and 31 percent at the secondary level, while the GAR at the primary level is more than two times as high as at the secondary level. Male attendance ratios are much higher than female attendance ratios at both the primary and secondary levels. Attendance ratios are also much higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Attendance ratios at the primary and secondary levels are highest in the hill ecological region and the Western development region. At the primary level, they are lowest in the *terai* ecological zone and Central region, while at the secondary level, they are lowest in the mountain zone.

---

[3] Students who are overage for a given level of schooling may have started school overage, may have repeated one or more grades in school, or may have dropped out of school and later returned.

Table 2.4 School attendance ratios

Net attendance ratios (NAR) and gross attendance ratios (GAR) for the de jure household population by level of schooling and sex, according to background characteristics, Nepal 2001

Background characteristic	Net attendance ratio[1]			Gross attendance ratio[2]			Gender Parity Index[3]
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
PRIMARY SCHOOL							
Residence							
Urban	90.8	86.4	88.7	142.7	128.7	135.8	0.9
Rural	78.2	64.7	71.6	126.1	103.7	115.2	0.8
Ecological zone							
Mountain	83.9	64.3	73.9	140.9	100.7	120.3	0.7
Hill	87.2	79.1	83.2	140.9	127.9	134.5	0.9
Terai	72.2	56.2	64.5	114.8	87.9	101.8	0.8
Development region							
Eastern	82.6	66.3	74.9	133.3	113.0	123.6	0.8
Central	71.7	60.4	66.1	111.7	87.5	99.7	0.8
Western	83.8	77.6	80.7	135.6	123.9	129.8	0.9
Mid-western	78.7	62.6	71.1	129.3	103.9	117.3	0.8
Far-western	86.4	69.3	78.0	143.9	113.4	128.8	0.8
Subregion							
Eastern Mountain	84.5	79.7	82.1	164.1	143.4	153.7	0.9
Central Mountain	88.7	69.7	79.4	130.2	105.3	118.0	0.8
Western Mountain	79.5	53.5	65.6	137.5	77.7	105.6	0.6
Eastern Hill	84.4	77.2	80.9	143.8	141.5	142.7	1.0
Central Hill	84.9	81.7	83.2	132.4	116.4	124.1	0.9
Western Hill	94.0	91.3	92.6	152.4	149.9	151.2	1.0
Mid-western Hill	83.3	64.4	74.8	132.4	106.8	120.9	0.8
Far-western Hill	87.1	64.7	76.3	143.2	107.6	126.1	0.8
Eastern Terai	81.5	58.9	70.9	124.9	94.1	110.5	0.8
Central Terai	62.0	45.2	53.9	97.7	66.1	82.5	0.7
Western Terai	70.4	58.7	64.6	113.5	88.1	101.0	0.8
Mid-western Terai	75.3	67.6	71.6	125.5	111.9	119.0	0.9
Far-western Terai	83.8	76.1	79.9	144.5	132.1	138.3	0.9
Total	79.3	66.5	73.0	127.5	105.9	116.9	0.8
SECONDARY SCHOOL							
Residence							
Urban	48.8	51.5	50.2	72.6	75.0	73.9	1.0
Rural	33.5	23.6	28.7	56.5	39.2	48.0	0.7
Ecological zone							
Mountain	31.6	20.7	26.5	56.2	30.8	44.3	0.5
Hill	38.7	30.6	34.6	62.0	49.5	55.7	0.8
Terai	32.3	23.7	28.1	54.9	38.8	47.1	0.7
Development region							
Eastern	34.4	29.4	31.9	59.5	51.5	55.5	0.9
Central	32.8	24.4	28.8	50.9	38.9	45.1	0.8
Western	41.4	33.7	37.6	65.4	50.9	58.3	0.8
Mid-western	30.6	22.7	26.6	57.2	34.1	45.5	0.6
Far-western	35.4	16.4	26.0	60.6	30.0	45.6	0.5
Subregion							
Eastern Mountain	28.0	30.1	29.0	52.8	51.5	52.2	1.0
Central Mountain	31.9	21.3	26.9	52.9	31.5	42.7	0.6
Western Mountain	33.8	14.3	24.7	60.6	17.1	40.3	0.3
Eastern Hill	31.6	24.9	28.2	56.8	47.3	51.9	0.8
Central Hill	40.1	36.8	38.4	62.6	59.3	60.9	0.9
Western Hill	48.6	41.3	45.0	70.7	61.7	66.3	0.9
Mid-western Hill	31.4	21.6	26.5	52.7	33.8	43.2	0.6
Far-western Hill	31.9	10.0	20.9	61.0	22.3	41.6	0.4
Eastern Terai	36.7	31.7	34.2	61.8	53.7	57.8	0.9
Central Terai	28.5	15.1	22.5	43.3	23.9	34.6	0.6
Western Terai	30.3	22.2	26.3	57.1	34.6	46.0	0.6
Mid-western Terai	30.8	28.8	29.8	66.2	40.9	53.3	0.6
Far-western Terai	36.4	19.4	27.9	57.2	38.1	47.6	0.7
Total	35.0	26.5	30.8	58.0	43.0	50.6	0.7

[1]The NAR for primary school is the percentage of the primary-school age (6-10 years) population that is attending primary school. The NAR for secondary school is the percentage of the secondary-school age (11-15 years) population that is attending secondary school. By definition the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent.
[2]The GAR for primary school is the total number of primary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official primary-school-age population. The GAR for secondary school is the total number of secondary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official secondary-school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage and underage students at a given level of schooling, the GAR can exceed 100 percent.
[3]The Gender Parity Index for primary school is the ratio of the primary school GAR for females to the GAR for males. The Gender Parity Index for secondary school is the ratio of the secondary school GAR for females to the GAR for males.

The repetition rate is the percentage of students in a given grade the previous school year who are repeating that grade in the current school year. Likewise, the dropout rate is the percentage of students in a given grade in the previous school year not attending school. By asking about the grade that children were attending during the previous school year, it is possible to calculate dropout rates and repetition rates. Table 2.5 indicates that the repetition rate is high in grade one (about one-third), which may be related to the teachers' decision to ensure a more uniform preparedness before promoting children to grade two. The repetition rate declines significantly after grade one. Table 2.5 also shows that as the school grade rises, the dropout rate generally increases. Only 1 percent of children drop out of school after attending grade one, compared with a dropout rate of 3 percent at grades four and five.

Table 2.5 Grade repetition and dropout rates

Repetition and dropout rates for the de jure household population age 5-24 years by school grade, according to background characteristics, Nepal 2001

| Background characteristic	Repetition rate[1]					Dropout rate[2]				
	School grade					School grade				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sex										
Male	31.6	10.1	7.1	6.0	6.4	1.2	1.5	2.1	3.2	3.0
Female	34.0	9.2	8.1	6.8	5.8	1.7	1.0	1.7	2.3	2.0
Residence										
Urban	15.4	4.8	2.1	3.9	3.4	0.6	2.0	2.5	4.3	1.8
Rural	34.0	10.3	8.2	6.7	6.5	1.5	1.2	1.9	2.6	2.7
Ecological zone										
Mountain	36.0	16.6	9.1	14.6	12.7	0.7	1.1	3.9	2.3	4.1
Hill	36.9	12.1	7.0	6.3	6.1	1.9	1.8	2.0	3.1	3.0
Terai	26.6	6.3	8.0	5.2	5.2	1.0	0.9	1.5	2.6	1.9
Development region										
Eastern	30.1	13.1	11.9	6.1	8.2	1.7	0.5	1.4	2.7	2.8
Central	39.8	10.7	8.0	8.2	4.4	1.4	1.9	3.6	4.2	5.4
Western	28.3	6.2	5.7	4.4	5.2	0.5	1.2	0.5	0.6	1.4
Mid-western	36.1	6.8	3.9	3.0	8.7	2.4	1.9	2.5	4.0	0.0
Far-western	20.9	10.0	6.0	11.5	4.1	1.4	1.5	1.9	2.9	0.7
Subregion										
Eastern Mountain	34.6	15.1	3.4	3.8	19.1	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.9	4.3
Central Mountain	44.2	20.0	10.5	23.8	12.9	0.8	0.0	3.5	2.4	9.7
Western Mountain	29.9	14.6	12.0	15.0	7.5	0.0	2.1	6.0	2.5	0.0
Eastern Hill	42.6	18.5	9.9	6.6	8.3	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.8
Central Hill	38.9	16.1	9.7	8.6	6.4	3.1	3.2	5.2	7.0	6.1
Western Hill	32.0	7.1	6.2	5.1	3.7	0.5	1.3	0.7	0.9	2.0
Mid-western Hill	43.0	10.0	4.3	2.6	8.9	3.4	3.3	2.8	2.6	0.0
Far-western Hill	16.9	9.5	1.5	10.4	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Eastern Terai	16.5	10.1	14.8	6.2	6.8	1.8	0.6	2.4	2.1	2.7
Central Terai	39.7	3.8	4.8	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.6	1.6	3.6
Western Terai	21.1	4.2	4.3	2.0	8.8	0.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mid-western Terai	21.9	1.2	1.6	2.9	7.9	0.9	0.0	1.1	6.2	0.0
Far-western Terai	20.8	8.8	7.1	9.8	2.7	3.7	2.0	1.8	4.5	0.0
Total	32.7	9.7	7.5	6.4	6.2	1.4	1.3	2.0	2.8	2.6

[1] The repetition rate is the percentage of students in a given grade in the previous school year who are repeating that grade in the current school year.
[2] The dropout rate is the percentage of students in a given grade in the previous school year who are not attending school.

Repetition among rural children is higher than among urban children at all grade levels. However, after grade one, rural children are less likely to drop out than urban children. With the exception of grade one, children from the mountain ecological zone are more likely repeat a grade at every level. Differentials in the dropout rate by ecological zone are small.

Figure 2.3 shows the percentage of the de jure household population age 5-24 years attending school by age and sex. The age-specific attendance rate indicates participation in school at any level from primary to higher levels of education. Only 40 percent of girls and 47 percent of boys are attending school at age five, indicating that a majority of children in Nepal at that age have not entered the school system. The minimum official age for school attendance is six years. A higher proportion of males than females attend school at every age, but this difference is significantly higher after age ten. School attendance drops substantially after age 15 for females and after age 17 for males. This sudden drop may be partly due to lack of financial resources to continue schooling and partly due to the need to work to support the family.

Figure 2.3 Age-Specific School Attendance Rates
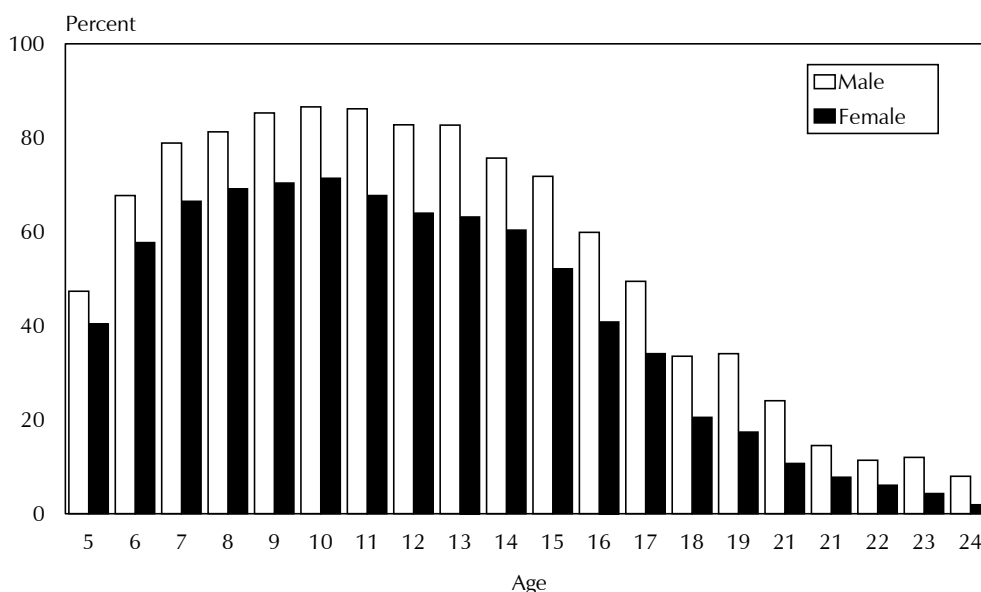
Note: Figure shows percentage of the de jure household population age 5-24 years attending school.

Nepal 2001

2.4 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics of households are important in assessing the general socioeconomic condition of the population. In the 2001 NDHS, respondents were asked about access to electricity, sources of drinking water and time taken to the nearest source, type of toilet facility, main material of the floor, and type of cooking fuel.

Table 2.6 provides information on selected housing characteristics by residence. Overall, 25 percent of households have electricity. This is a 37 percent increase over the last five years according to data obtained in the 1996 NFHS. There is a considerable difference between urban and rural households in the availability of electricity. Eighty-six percent of urban households have electricity, compared with only 17 percent of rural households.

Table 2.6 Housing characteristics

Percent distribution of households by background characteristics, according to residence, Nepal 2001

Background characteristic	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Electricity			
Yes	85.7	17.4	24.6
No	14.3	82.6	75.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Source of drinking water			
Piped water	55.2	33.0	35.4
Dug well	10.9	3.8	4.6
Tubewell/borehole	30.8	38.1	37.4
Surface water	3.1	24.9	22.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Time to water source			
Percentage <15 minutes	93.0	74.1	76.1
Median time to source	0.0	4.8	4.6
Sanitation facility			
Flush toilet	58.3	6.1	11.5
Traditional pit toilet	14.6	17.1	16.8
Ventilated/improved pit latrine	7.0	1.5	2.1
No facility/bush/field	20.1	75.3	69.5
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Type of cooking fuel			
Firewood, charcoal, dung	39.1	94.1	88.3
Biogas	3.5	1.5	1.7
LPG gas	20.5	0.6	2.7
Electricity	0.3	0.0	0.1
Kerosene	35.8	2.3	5.8
Other	0.8	1.5	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Flooring material			
Earth, mud, dung	34.4	91.7	85.7
Wood planks	4.9	2.7	2.9
Linoleum, carpet	16.3	0.6	2.3
Ceramic tiles, marble chips	1.1	0.0	0.1
Cement	42.2	4.6	8.5
Other	1.1	0.3	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	900	7,702	8,602

Note: Total includes households for which information on flooring material is missing.

Information on the source of drinking water and accessibility to the source was also collected in the 2001 NDHS. Safe drinking water is important for health and sanitation. Table 2.6 shows that only 35 percent of households (55 percent in urban areas and 33 percent in rural areas) have access to piped drinking water, a small increase from the1996 level. Tubewells and boreholes are the major source of drinking water used by 37 percent of households; this source is important for both urban and rural households (31 percent and 38 percent, respectively). One-fourth of households in rural areas reported surface water as their main source of drinking water. Households with no access to drinking water within their own premises were also asked about the time required to fetch water. Overall, 76 percent of households have access to water within 15 minutes. As expected, there is better access to water in urban areas than in rural areas.

The majority of households (70 percent) do not have sanitation facilities. Lack of sanitation facilities is more common in rural areas (75 percent) than in urban areas (20 percent). Nineteen percent of households have a traditional pit toilet or ventilated/improved pit latrine (22 percent in urban areas and 19 percent in rural areas). Twelve percent of households have flush toilets, which are predominantly located in urban households (58 percent).

Traditional fuels such as firewood, charcoal, and dung are the most commonly used (88 percent) type of cooking fuel in Nepal (39 percent in urban areas and 94 percent in rural areas). Use of kerosene and gas for cooking is only common in urban households (36 percent and 21 percent, respectively). Smoke inhalation from burning firewood, charcoal, or dung during the process of cooking is one of the common causes of respiratory illnesses among women. The 2001 NDHS collected information on the number of households that have improved smokeless chulos, that is, households with a fireplace that has an outlet for the smoke to escape. Only 1 percent of households using firewood, charcoal, or dung have improved smokeless chulos (data not shown).

Most households (86 percent) have earth, mud, or dung floors. Such traditional floors are almost universal in rural households (92 percent), while one in three urban households has this type of flooring. Nine percent of all households have a cement floor, which is more common in urban households (42 percent) than in rural households (5 percent).

Information on the possession of various durable goods was also collected at the household level. Table 2.7 shows that overall, 44 percent of households have radios, one-fourth have bicycles, 13 percent have televisions, and 3 percent have telephones. There is a vast difference between urban and rural households, with urban households much more likely to own these consumer durable items than rural households. The urban-rural difference is especially pronounced for ownership of televisions and telephones. Overall, the possession of these items has increased over the last five years; this is reflected in the decrease in the percentage that possesses none of these items from 53 percent in 1996 to 42 percent in 2001.

Table 2.7 Household durable goods

Percentage of households possessing various durable consumer goods, by residence, Nepal 2001

Durable consumer goods	Residence		
	Urban	Rural	Total
Radio	61.0	41.4	43.5
Television	58.9	7.7	13.1
Telephone	18.0	0.6	2.5
Bicycle	44.0	24.0	26.1
None of the above	17.0	44.9	42.0
Number of households	900	7,702	8,602