

Urbanisation: With Special Reference to Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

Population dynamics, the forces behind the growth and movement of population play a central part in the urbanisation process. The process of urbanisation started and gathered momentum in the early industrialising countries as an outcome of the industrial revolution and commercial expansion. Urbanisation is a phenomenon whereby a society is transformed from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban one. Here it is also essential to distinguish between rate of urban population growth and the rate of urbanisation. The rate of urban population growth refers to a change in the number of population living in urban areas relative to the initial number at the beginning of a given period, whereas the rate of urbanisation refers to change in the level of urbanisation. The rate of urban population growth depends on both the rate of total population growth and the rate of urbanisation.

Urban dwellers represent majority of the population in the world today. Most of them live in developing countries, and an ever higher proportion in the biggest cities. Most of the world's biggest cities are now in developing countries, and they are growing to sizes never experienced before. The urban population is growing several times as fast as in the rural areas, either through natural growth (births over deaths) or through rural-urban migration.

The urban population in most of the countries is growing continuously whereas, only a small number of developed countries experienced a slight decline of urban population due to the negative growth in total population and zero or even negative rural-urban migration. The urban drama in developing countries is intimately linked in many complex ways with high fertility and rapid population growth.

WORLD URBANISATION

World population growth has reached its peak between 1965-70 at an average annual growth rate of 2 percent. Currently it is growing by 1.7 percent per annum and therefore is slowly declining. On the other hand, world's urban population growth will remain at about 2.5 percent per annum in the first quarter of the 21st century. If this rate of growth continues world urban population will be doubled in about 28 years.

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Currently more than 40 percent of the world's population live in urban areas. The corresponding figure was 2.9 percent in 1950. This will reach more than 50 percent shortly after the turn of this century (see Table 1). Developed countries have more than 50 percent urban population since the mid of the 20th century, whereas developing countries are expected to pass the mark in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Table 1
Proportion of Population Living in Urban Areas

	(Million)					
	1970	1980	1985	1990	2000	2025
World	1361 (36.9)	1776 (39.9)	2013 (41.6)	2286 (43.6)	2952 (48.2)	5107 (62.5)
More Developed Regions (a)	695 (66.4)	802 (70.6)	849 (72.4)	897 (74.2)	992 (77.8)	1192 (85.4)
Less Developed Regions (b)	666 (25.2)	974 (29.4)	1164 (31.7)	1389 (34.4)	1959 (40.4)	3915 (57.7)
Africa	82 (22.9)	137 (28.7)	177 (32.1)	229 (35.5)	370 (42.2)	958 (58.3)
Latin America	163 (57.4)	237 (65.3)	280 (68.8)	326 (71.9)	421 (76.6)	662 (84.2)
Northern America	167 (73.8)	186 (73.8)	196 (74.3)	207 (75.1)	232 (78.0)	298 (85.7)
Asia	494 (23.6)	688 (26.6)	798 (28.2)	828 (30.3)	1,267 (35.7)	2,400 (53.7)
Europe	304 (66.1)	344 (71.1)	361 (73.3)	376 (75.3)	405 (78.9)	453 (85.9)
Oceania (Pacific)	14 (70.8)	16 (71.6)	18 (71.7)	19 (71.9)	22 (73.1)	31 (78.4)
USSR	137 (56.7)	168 (63.2)	185 (66.3)	202 (69.2)	234 (74.3)	306 (83.4)

Source: Estimates and Projections of Urban, Rural and City Populations, 1950-2025: the 1982 Assessment, United Nations, New York, 1985.

Notes: (a) Northern America, Japan, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the USSR.

(b) All others.

The figures in parenthesis refers to percentage.

URBAN CHARACTER OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In developed countries, the rapid process of urbanisation started long time back. Approximately, 70 percent of the total population of developed countries are currently living in urban areas, whereas, in developing countries the process of urbanisation accelerated in the middle of this century and has been picking up momentum ever since.

The rate of growth of urban population in developing countries (3.5 percent per annum) is three times more than that of developed countries. If this rate of growth remains constant the urban population of these countries will be doubled in 20 years. There are major differences in the rate of growth of urban population among the developing regions. Africa has the highest rate of growth followed by Asia and Latin America. Similarly, among the developing countries there are important differences in the proportion of urban population. Table 1 reflects that Asia and Africa had nearly 30 percent urban population, whereas Latin America had about 70 percent urban population in 1985.

When we see the absolute increment of urban population, we find accelerating rate of growth in developing countries. In 1970, the total urban population of the highly developed countries was almost 30 million more than that of the developing countries. Only five years later the picture was reversed and expected that by the year 2000, the urban population of developing countries will be almost double, and by the year 2025 it will be almost four times larger than that of developed countries.

URBANISATION IN SAARC COUNTRIES

The continent of Asia has been conveniently divided into four sub-regions -- East Asia, Eastern-South Asia, Middle South Asia and Western-South Asia. This study relates only with seven countries of Middle South Asia. They are known as SAARC countries -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Srilanka.

Table 2 presents the situation of urban population in SAARC countries. Urban population in SAARC countries varies from 4 percent to 28 percent in the year 1981, irrespective to the definition of urban areas followed among the countries of this region. Urban population of Bangladesh was 7.1 percent in 1971, where it reached 15.2 percent in 1981. Population data of Bhutan is based on a rough guess rather than on any scientific count or survey. About 4 percent of the total population were urban residents in 1981, whereas it was estimated about 2 percent in 1960.

India, the second most populous country in the world at present, has about one fourth urban population of the total population. This percentage was 19.9 in 1971. The urban population of Maldives, a small country of this region, is found to be 20.7 percent in 1977 and it reached 25.5 percent of the total population in 1985. Male, the capital city is the only urban area of Maldives. In Nepal, about 3 percent of the total population were urban residents in 1961 which reached 6.4 percent in 1981 (as recorded by the population census, 1981). At present it is estimated that about 8 percent of the total population is living in urban areas.

Table 2
Proportion of Urban Population in SAARC Countries by Sex 1971-86

Year/ Country	Bangladesh		Bhutan		India		Maldives		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka				
	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female	Total	Male/Female			
1971	7.1	-	-	-	19.9	20.7	19.1	-	-	4.0	5.1	3.7	-	-	22.4	23.2	21.7
1972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25.5	-	-	-	-
1974	8.8	9.5	7.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1977	9.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.7	22.1	19.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1978	9.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1979	10.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1980	15.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.5	-	-	-	-	28.1	28.9	27.7	-	-
1981	15.2	16.4	13.9	4.0	23.3	-	-	20.5	-	6.4	6.7	6.1	28.3	-	21.5	22.1	20.9
1982	13.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.8	-	-	-	-	28.3	-	-	-	-
1983	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.8	-	-	-	-	28.2	-	-	-	-
1984	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21.9	-	-	-	-	28.2	-	-	-	-
1985	-	-	-	-	25.0	-	-	25.5	27.7	23.2	-	-	28.3	-	-	-	-
1986	-	-	-	-	25.4	26.0	24.7	-	-	-	-	-	28.3	-	-	-	-

Source: Demographic Year Book.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan constitutes 28.3 percent urban residents out of the total population in 1986, whereas it was 25.5 percent in 1972. From 1980 to 1986, the proportion of urban population of Pakistan is found to be nearly constant. Only two cities, Karachi and Lahore, constitute about 40 percent of the total urban population. In Sri Lanka 22.4 percent people were urban residents in 1971 and it declined by about one percent in 1981. While considering the process of urbanisation among the SAARC countries, Pakistan comes at the top and Bhutan at the bottom.

URBANISATION IN NEPAL

The role of urban society is hardly overemphasized in determining the socio-political, cultural and economic history of a country. Nepal, one of the members of SAARC countries, is no exception to it. The urban society exerts its influence in charting the direction of the country's political, social and economic development. It is, therefore, imperative to study the extent and character of urbanisation in Nepal.

Data on urbanisation in Nepal are available only since 1952/54 population census. But these data are not strictly comparable due to changes in definitions, district boundaries, emergence of new urban areas as well as change in the size of the urban areas over time. The 1952/54 census did not provide any formal definition of urban area, but it furnished detailed socio-economic characteristics for few urban areas called Shahar. The formal definition of urban area came out for the first time in 1961 population census. According to this definition, an urban area was a locality which was inhabited with not less than 5 thousand people, having town atmosphere such as location of school, college, government offices, legal courts and marketing facilities. Sixteen localities met these criteria in 1961. Both in 1952/54 and 1961 census urban area was known as Shahar. The nomenclature of an urban area has been changed subsequently to Town Panchayat with the introduction of panchayat system in 1961. The Town Panchayat Act of 1962 defined Town Panchayat as being "an area having not less than 10 thousand population." However, the Act did not specify any other attributes of a Town Panchayat, except the criterion of population size.

The 1971 census took only 16 town panchayats, identified by the government as urban areas. The population censuses of 1971 and 1981 showed arbitrariness in classifying an urban area. On the one hand, some localities were declared as urban areas even though they did not meet the population size criterion of town panchayat (urban area), on the other hand, some areas having population more than 10 thousand were not recognised as urban. The criteria of an urban area was once changed in 1976. According to this revised criteria of population size (9 thousand and above), there were 23 town panchayats in 1981 census. After 1981 census 10 new town panchayats (urban areas) emerged and at present the total number of urban areas in the country is 33.

GROWTH OF URBANISATION IN NEPAL

Table 3 shows the growth of urbanisation based on the definition of population size criterion of 5 thousand and above, and of 10 thousand and above for the census year 1952/54 to 1981. When the level and growth of urbanisation is measured in terms of the criterion of population of 5 thousand and above, 1952/54 census records only 2.9 percent of the total population of the country as urban residents and this figure reached 6.4 percent in 1981. Urban population grew at the rate of 7.6 percent per annum during the intercensal period 1971/81, whereas it was only 3.2 percent during the period 1961/71. On the other hand, the scenario of urban population as presented above is somewhat changed if we measure the level and growth of urban population considering the definition of urban areas having a population of 10 thousand and above. According to this definition the urban population in 1952/54, 1961, 1971, and 1981 is found to be 2.4 percent, 2.9 percent, 3.7 percent and 6.2 percent respectively. And it grew at the rate of 8.0 percent per annum during the intercensal period 1971/81. In 1987, 8.3 percent of the total population was estimated as urban population with the annual growth rate of 7.3 percent during 1981/87. During the same period, national population growth rate was estimated to be 2.5 percent per annum.

Although the size of urban area is increasing and the urban population is growing faster, the country still remains rural in character. If the current rate of growth of urban population continues, it takes only 9 years to double its population.

The number of urban areas with less than 10 thousand population is found 50 percent in 1952/54, 56 percent in 1961, 25 percent in 1971, 9 percent in 1981 census and 3 percent at present. It is interesting to note here that there was only one urban centre (Kathmandu Town Panchayat) having population more than one lack since 1952/54 to 1987. On the other hand, the proportion of urban population living in the largest and smallest urban areas is declining over the years, and has been concentrating more in medium to large sized urban areas.

DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN POPULATION AND AREAS BY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

All the urban areas are concentrated only in the hill and Terai regions. Until now, there is no urban area in the mountain region. The urban areas were evenly distributed between hill and Terai in 1952/54 and 1961 censuses, but in 1971 and 1981 censuses 56 percent and 60 percent of the urban areas were located in the Terai region respectively. Similarly, the proportion of urban population living in the hill region is reduced from 82 percent in 1952/54 to 52 percent in 1981. On the contrary, in the same period the corresponding figure in the Terai region is increased from 18 percent to 48 percent.

It is also interesting to note that within the hill and Terai, the urban population is concentrated only in fewer areas. Table 4 highlights the percentage distribution of urban population by geographical regions

Table 3
 Percentage Distribution and Rate of Growth of Urban Population, Nepal-1952/54-87

Census Year	Total Population	Urban popula- tion (5 thou- sand and above)	Percent- age urban	Annual rate of growth urban popula- tion (Geo- metric)	Urban popula- tion (10 thou- sand and above)	Percent- age urban	Annual rate of growth of urban popula- tion (Geo- metric)	Annual rate of growth of total popu- lation
1952/54	82,56,625	2,38,275	2.9	-	2,01,932	2.4	-	-
1961	94,12,996	3,36,222	3.6	4.4	2,78,548	2.9	4.1	1.7
1971	1,15,55,983	4,61,938	4.0	3.2	4,32,874	3.7	4.5	2.1
1981	1,50,22,839	9,56,721	6.4	7.6	9,37,187	6.2	8.0	2.7
1987*	1,75,57,355	14,60,149	8.3	7.3	14,50,687	8.2	7.6	2.5

*Estimated.

Source: Sankhya Bibhag, Nepalko Janaganana 1952/54, 1958, Appendix, p. 1.
 Central Bureau of Statistics, Population Census 1961, 1967, Vol. II, Table 6.
 " " " " Population Census, 1971, 1975, Vol. V, Major Urban Tables.
 " " " " Population Census 1981, 1984, Vol. IX, Table 3.
 " " " " Statistical Pocket Book 1988.

Table 4
 Percentage Distribution of Urban Population by Geographic Regions,
 Nepal, 1952-54-81

Geographic Regions*	1952/54		1961		1971		1981	
	% of urban population areas	No. of urban areas	% of urban population areas	No. of urban areas	% of urban population areas	No. of urban areas	% of urban population areas	No. of urban areas
Eastern Hill	-	-	-	-	1.6	1	2.5	2
Central Hill	82.4	5	66.6	6	57.5	4	41.6	4
Western Hill	-	-	3.1	2	5.9	2	6.2	2
Mid-western Hill	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	1
Far-western Hill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Hill	82.4	5	69.7	8	65.0	7	51.8	9
Eastern Terai	3.4	1	16.2	3	17.5	4	18.4	5
Central Terai	9.6	3	9.4	4	5.9	2	11.1	3
Western Terai	-	-	-	-	6.5	2	5.6	2
Mid-western Terai	4.6	1	4.7	1	5.1	1	5.7	2
Far-western Terai	-	-	-	-	-	1	7.4	2
Total Terai	17.6	5	30.3	8	35.0	9	48.2	14
Total Nepal	100.0	10	100.0	16	100.0	16	100.0	23
Total Urban Population (urban areas having 5,000 and more people)	238,275		336,222		461,938		956,721	

*The Geographic Regions are for each year as per 1981 population census.

Source: Same as in Table 3.

from 1952/54 to 1981. The central hill accounts for 80 percent of the urban population living in the hill region in 1981, while it was 100 percent in 1952/54. Similarly, within the Terai region, Eastern and Central Terai accounts 74 percent in 1952/54 and 61 percent in 1981 of the total urban population living in the Terai region. It is still being concentrated in fewer places within each of the major regions particularly in the hill.

DISTRIBUTION AND GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATION BY DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

At present, Nepal is divided into five development regions -- Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-western and Far-western. Table 5 shows that the urban population of Nepal was disproportionately distributed among different regions of the country. This is particularly concentrated in the Central Development Region (CDR), which accounted for 92.1 percent of the urban population in 1952/54. Though the percentage in this region reduced over the years, but the dominant role of the Central Development Region still continues. Out of the total population of this region, about 10 percent was living in urban areas in 1981. This region accounted 32 percent of the total population of Nepal and contained 53 percent of the urban population in 1981.

The Eastern Development Region (EDR) comes next to the CDR which has the highest proportion of people living in the urban areas. This region accounted for only 3.2 percent in 1971 and 5.4 percent in 1981 of its population. It was followed by Far-western Development Region (FWDR) and Western Development Region (WDR). The proportion of people living in the urban areas of FWDR and WDR was only 5.4 percent and 3.6 percent respectively. Only 3.5 percent of its population was living in urban areas in Mid-western Development Region (MWDR) which is the least urbanised region of the country.

In 1981 EDR accounted 25 percent of the total population of Nepal. This figure was 21 percent for WDR, 13 percent for MWDR and 9 percent for FWDR. On the other hand, EDR constituted 20.8 percent, 11.9 percent by WDR, 7.2 percent by MWDR and 7.4 percent by FWDR of the total urban population.

When we measure the urbanisation in terms of urban areas, the CDR occupied the first place followed by EDR, WDR, and MWDR during 1952/54 to 1971. The FWDR has its urban population only since 1981 and the above situation slightly changed in this year. Out of the 23 urban areas EDR, CDR, WDR, MWDR and FWDR constituted 7, 7, 4, 3, and 2 respectively. At present, there are 33 urban areas (town panchayats) in the country. Among them, 10 were emerged after the population census of 1981. Thus in this study these areas are not included due to lack of data of these areas.

The rate of growth of urban population is found 2.7 percent, 1.9 percent and 4.9 percent in Eastern, Central, and Mid-western Development Regions respectively during the intercensal period 1952/54-61. During 1961-71, Western Development Region had highest rate of growth of urban population (18.4 percent), whereas Central Development Region had lowest (1.4) percent. Similarly, Mid-western Development Region had highest (11.3 per-

Table 5
 Percentage Distribution and Rates of Growth of Urban Population by Development
 Regions 1952/54-87

Development Regions**	Year	Urban population of the region	% of total urban population	% of Region's urban population	Geometric growth rate of urban population %	No. of urban areas
Eastern Development Region	1952/54	8,060	3.4	-	-	1
	1961	54,585	16.2	-	27.0	3
	1971	88,233	19.1	3.2	4.9	5
	1981	1,99,279	20.8	5.4	8.5	7
	1987*	3,15,405	21.6	-	8.0	9
Central Development Region	1952/54	2,19,402	92.1	-	-	8
	1961	2,55,271	75.9	-	1.9	10
	1971	2,93,050	63.4	7.6	1.4	6
	1981	5,04,383	52.7	10.3	5.6	7
	1987*	7,73,699	53.0	-	7.4	13
Western Development Region	1961	10,549	3.1	-	-	2
	1971	57,132	12.4	2.3	18.4	4
	1981	1,13,469	11.9	3.6	7.1	4
	1987*	1,69,752	11.6	-	6.9	5
Mid-Western Development Region	1952/54	10,813	4.5	-	-	1
	1961	15,817	4.7	-	4.9	1
	1971	23,523	5.1	1.6	4.0	1
	1981	68,482	7.2	3.5	11.3	3
	1987*	92,319	6.3	-	5.1	3
Far-western Development Region	1981	71,108	7.4	5.4	-	2
	1987*	1,08,974	7.5	-	7.4	3

Note: *Estimated.

**The Development Regions are for each year as per 1981 Population Census.

Source: Same as in Table 3.

cent) rate of growth of urban population followed by Eastern (8.5 percent), Western (7.1 percent) and Central (5.6 percent) Development Regions during the intercensal period 1971/81. The urban growth rate during 1981/87 is estimated to be 8 percent, 7.4 percent, 6.9 percent, 5.1 percent and 7.4 percent in Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-western and Far-western Development Regions respectively.

If the level of urbanisation is measured with respect to urban areas, CDR occupies the first place followed by EDR, WDR, and MWDR during the period 1952/54-71. Out of 23 urban areas, only 30.4 percent was located in CDR in 1981, whereas it was 80 percent in 1952/54. Considerable increment of urban areas is found in EDR. In this region, only 10 percent urban area was located in 1952/54 which increased to 30.4 percent (i.e. equal to CDR) in 1981. Likewise, 17.4 percent, 13.0 percent and 8.7 percent urban areas were located in WDR, MWDR and FWDR respectively in 1981. The reduction of urban areas in CDR was mainly due to increase of these areas in other regions of the country.

At present, out of 33 urban areas, Central Development Region occupied the first place (39.4 percent) followed by CDR (27.3 percent), WDR (15.2 percent), MWDR and FWDR each (9.1 percent). Compared to 1981 census data, the percentage of urban areas in 1987 increased by 9 percent in CDR and 0.4 percent in FWDR, while the percentage decreased by about 3 percent in EDR, 2.2 percent in WDR, and about 4 percent in MWDR.

DISTRIBUTION AND GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATION BY URBAN AREAS

1952/54 population census recorded 2.9 percent urban population from 10 urban areas called Shahar. Of the total urban population 44.7 percent was accounted by Kathmandu alone. Lalitpur and Bhaktapur were the second and third largest urban areas and 13.5 percent of the total urban population respectively. Malangwa (2.3 percent) was the smallest urban area followed by Janakpur and Kirtipur as recorded in that census.

In 1961, the number of urban areas (Shahar) increased by 60 percent and reached 16. Kathmandu and Lalitpur again came to the first and second largest urban areas, though the proportion of urban population of these areas to the total urban population declined by 8.7 and 3.5 percent respectively. Biratnagar occupied the third position from seventh in 1952/54, while Tansen and Matihani, newly emerged urban areas, were the least populous urban areas of the country.

1971 population census also recorded 16 urban areas (town panchayats), Bhadrapur, Siddharthanagar (Bhairahawa), Butwal, Hetauda and Ilam were new urban areas included in this census. But Thimi, Kirtipur, Malangwa, Banepa and Matihani, which were regarded as urban areas in 1952/54 and 1961 censuses, were not recognised as urban area, because they did not meet the criteria of urban area as defined by 1971 census. Similarly, in 1971 census Kathmandu occupied the first place accounting 32.6 percent of the total urban population of the country. Lalitpur (12.8 percent) and Biratnagar (9.8 percent) were the second and third largest urban areas, while Tansen, Bhadrapur and Ilam were the smallest urban areas. Keeping in view the

the urban population, these latter group of smallest urban areas have accounted 1.4 percent, 1.6 percent and 1.6 percent respectively.

Though the concentration of urban population to the total population declined again in Kathmandu it was still the largest one (24.6 percent) among the 23 urban areas (town panchayats) in 1981. The percentage of Biratnagar (9.8 percent), equal to the 1971 census occupied the second place and Lalitpur comes to be the third populous urban area. Bhadrapur and Ilam had the lowest (1.0 percent) urban population to the total. The newly declared town panchayats (urban areas) as recorded in 1981 census were Dhankuta, Lahan, Bharatpur, Tribhuvannagar, Birendranagar, Dhangadhi and Mahendranagar which constitute 1.4, 1.4, 2.9, 2.2, 1.4, 2.8 and 4.6 percent of the total urban population respectively. Ten urban areas (town panchayats) have been emerged after 1981 census and now the total number of urban areas has reached 33. The absolute number of urban population from 1952/54 to 1987 is shown in Appendix.

The urban population of the country has increased not only due to natural rate of growth and migration, but also due to the increase in the number and size of the urban areas. Table 6 shows the annual growth rate of urban population by urban areas. The urban population of Kathmandu increased by 1.6 percent during 1952/54-61, 2.2 percent in 1961-71 and 4.6 percent in 1971-81. Biratnagar has the highest (20.3 percent) annual rate of growth of urban population during 1952/54-61, Pokhara in 1961-71 (14.3 percent) and Birgunj in 1971-81 (12.9 percent) while Bhaktapur has the lowest rate of growth (1.5 percent per annum) of urban population during 1952/54-81.

CONCLUSION

The term 'urbanisation' does not have a universal meaning. The definition of urban and rural areas differs country to country. However, urbanisation generally refers to the growth of cities or towns. It is natural concomitant of industrialisation, better transport facilities, better banking and financing facilities, marketing facilities, educational facilities, growth of industries, job opportunities in the cities, etc. are some factors which are responsible for urbanisation in the developing countries.

Bhutan and Nepal are the least urbanised countries among the SAARC countries. The process of urbanisation in Nepal started only after 1950. For the first time, urban population was recorded in 1952/54 population census for few urban areas called Shahar. After that period urban population is increasing. This increment is not only due to natural increment and rural-urban migration, but also due to the emergence of new cities as well as change in the size of the urban areas. The number of urban areas increased about three times during 1952/54 to 1987. During the same period, absolute number of urban population increased by more than six times. The annual rate of growth of urban population is also faster than the growth rate of total population. Urban areas as well as their population are not evenly distributed between hills and Terai development regions moreover, the density of urban population varies considerably among urban areas of the country.

Table 6.
Percentage Distribution and Rate of Growth of Urban Population by Urban
Area 1952/54-81

Urban Areas	1952/54	1961	1971	1981
Kathmandu	44.7	36.0 (1.6)	32.6 (2.2)	24.6 (4.6)
Lalitpur	17.7	14.2 (1.6)	12.8 (2.2)	8.3 (3.1)
Bhaktapur	13.6	10.1 (0.6)	8.7 (1.7)	5.1 (1.9)
Nepalgunj	4.5	4.7 (5.8)	5.1 (4.0)	3.6 (3.8)
Birgunj	4.2	3.2 (0.9)	2.8 (1.9)	4.6 (12.9)
Thimi	3.6	2.9 (1.5)	-	-
Biratnagar	3.4	10.5 (20.3)	9.8 (2.5)	9.8 (7.6)
Kirtipur	3.0	1.7 (2.5)	-	-
Janakpur	3.0	2.7 (3.0)	3.1 (4.8)	3.6 (9.3)
Malangwa	2.3	2.0 (2.4)	-	-
Dharan	-	4.2	4.4 (3.9)	4.4 (7.5)
Tansen	-	1.5	1.4 (2.3)	1.4 (7.4)
Banepa	-	1.7	-	-
Pokhara	-	1.6	4.5 (14.3)	4.9 (8.5)
Rajbiraj	-	1.6	1.7 (4.1)	1.7 (7.7)
Matihani	-	1.5	-	-
Bhadrapur	-	-	1.6	1.0 (2.7)
Siddharthanagar (Bhairahawa)	-	-	3.7	3.3 (6.1)
Butwal	-	-	2.8	2.4 (5.8)
Hetauda	-	-	3.5	3.6 (7.9)
Ilam	-	-	1.6	1.0 (3.0)
Dhankuta	-	-	-	1.4
Lahan	-	-	-	1.4
Bharatpur	-	-	-	2.9
Tribhuvannagar	-	-	-	2.2
Birendranagar	-	-	-	1.4
Dhangadhi	-	-	-	2.8
Mahendranagar	-	-	-	4.6
No. of Urban Areas	10	16	16	23

Figures in Parenthesis refers Annual Growth Rate.

Source: Same as in Table 3.

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APPENDIX
Number of Urban Population by Urban Area and Sex 1952/54-81

Urban Area (Town Panchayat/Shahar)	Urban Population											
	1952/54			1961			1971			1981		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Kathmandu	106,579	-	-	121,019	63,510	57,509	150,402	81,484	68,918	235,160	129,526	105,634
Lalitpur	42,183	-	-	47,713	24,509	23,204	59,049	30,375	28,674	79,875	43,467	36,408
Bhaktapur	32,320	-	-	33,877	17,294	16,583	40,112	20,834	19,278	48,472	24,756	23,716
Nepalgunj	10,813	-	-	15,817	8,495	7,322	23,523	12,852	10,671	34,015	18,007	16,008
Birgunj	10,037	-	-	10,769	6,273	4,496	12,999	7,442	5,557	43,642	22,994	20,648
Thimi	8,657	-	-	9,719	5,043	4,676	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biratnagar	8,060	-	-	35,355	20,857	14,498	45,100	26,025	19,075	93,544	50,889	42,655
Kirtipur	7,038	-	-	5,764	2,977	2,787	-	-	-	-	-	-
Janakpur	-	-	-	8,928	4,620	4,308	14,294	7,814	6,480	34,840	18,887	15,953
Malangwa	5,551	-	-	6,721	3,378	3,343	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dharan	-	-	-	13,998	7,316	6,682	20,503	10,995	9,508	42,146	22,019	20,127
Tansen	-	-	-	5,136	2,670	2,466	6,434	3,393	3,041	13,125	6,941	6,184
Banepa	-	-	-	5,688	2,851	2,837	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pokhara	-	-	-	5,413	2,502	2,911	20,611	9,993	10,618	46,642	24,260	22,382
Rajbiraj	-	-	-	5,232	3,114	2,118	7,832	4,502	3,330	16,444	9,145	7,299
Matihani	-	-	-	5,073	2,587	2,486	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhadrapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,499	4,429	3,070	9,761	5,289	4,472
Bhairahawa (Siddharthanagar)	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,272	9,299	7,973	31,119	16,353	14,766
Butwal	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,815	6,915	5,900	22,583	11,828	10,755
Hetauda	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,194	8,546	7,648	34,792	18,041	16,751
Ilan	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,299	3,753	3,546	9,773	5,123	4,650
Dhankuta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,836	7,095	6,741
Lahan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,775	7,303	6,472
Bharatpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,602	14,407	13,195
Tribhubannagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20,608	10,343	10,260
Birendranagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,859	6,860	6,999
Dhangadhi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,274	14,987	12,287
Mahendranagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,834	23,711	20,123
Damak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,081*	12,922	12,159
Kalैया	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,047*	7,955	6,092
Taulihawa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,112*	6,345	5,767
Jaleshwar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,000*	9,000	7,000
Banepa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,540	5,285	5,255
Dipayal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,462	4,782	4,680
Bidur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,000@	-	-
Inaruwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,000@	-	-
Dhulikhel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000@	-	-
Malangwa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,000@	-	-
Total	238,275	(10)		336,222	(16)		461,938	(16)		956,721	(23)	

*The Respective Town Panchayats, 1984.

@Panchayat and Local Development Ministry, 1987.

Figures in Parenthesis indicate number of urban areas.