

Urbanization Trend in Nepal

Suman Kumar Shrestha

suman.shrestha@sac.tu.edu.np

Sanothimi Campus Bhaktapur

Abstract

Nepal is a small and landlocked country, situated between Tibet (China) to its north, and India to its east, west and south. It is covered an area 26°22' -30°27' latitude and 80°4-' 88°12' longitude It is part of Asia and the northern hemisphere. There are two types of settlements in Nepal i.e. Urban and Rural settlements. Urbanization is the population shift from rural to urban areas, the decrease in the proportion of people living in rural areas, and change their ways of livelihood style.

Since the industrial revolution in the late 18th century, the urbanization process was led in England and then followed by many other countries. This paper has been written based on secondary / library data. Urbanization process is rapidly increasing in Nepal. In fifth scientific population census there were only 10 urban places with 2.9 percentage .Again, the criteria of municipality also gradually changed from 1952/54 to 2017. At a present time there are 293 municipalities including 6 metropolis municipalities and 11 sub- metropolis areas. After the implemented the new constitution 2072, the country is restructuring and divided 7 province. But there has not equally distribution the population due to the infrastructure development and difficulties of geographical condition. The highest 71.9 percentage and lowest 49.3 percentage respectively live in Province -2 and Karnali Pradesh (6). According to ecological region, there is no equal distribution of municipality. The highest municipality (109) and lowest municipality (15) are terai region and mountain region respectively.

It concluded that the urban population is rapidly increased but province wise such urban places/ municipalities are different. Especially terai is the highest municipalities/ urban centre due to development facilities.

Keywords: *Urban Center, Urban Population, Province, Ecological Zone, Urbanization, Municipalities*

Introduction

Nepal is a small and landlocked country of South Asia. It is situated in between Tibet, the Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China to its north, and India to its east, west and south. It is covered an area 26°22' -30°27' latitude and 80°4-' 88°12' longitude. The total area of the country is 147,516 km². The size of the population of Nepal according to the latest population census 2068 (2011) is 2,64,94,504. Among them, 1, 28, 49,041 and 1, 36, 45,463 numbers of people are male and female respectively. The annual population growth rate is 1.35 percent per annum (CBS, 2068). Population, 16.77 % living in urban areas. Nepal is topographically divided into three regions: the Himalaya to the north, the middle hills consisting of the Mahabharat range and the Churia Hills, and the Terai to the south. The Himalaya and its foothills make up the northern border of the country and represent 16% of the total land area. This is the least inhabited region of Nepal, with less than 8% of the population

living there. The middle hills cover about 65% of the total land area and are home to around 45% of the population of the country. This area is the home of the ancient ethnic people of Nepal. The Terai is the southern part of Nepal and is an extension of the Gangetic plains of India. It covers 17% of the total land area, providing excellent farming land as well as space for large industrial areas. There are two types of settlements in Nepal i.e. Urban and Rural settlements.

The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat 1996) has notably declared the advent of an “Urban Age” due to the world’s rapidly increasing urban population. The term “urbanization” describes an increase in human habitation linked with increased per capita energy and resource consumption, and extensive landscape modification (McDonnell and Pickett, 1990). Urbanization is the population shift from rural to urban areas, the decrease in the proportion of people living in rural areas, and the ways in which societies adapt to this change. Urbanization refers to a growth in the proportion of a country’s population living in urban centers of a particular size (Abercombie et al., 1988). Similarly urbanization is the process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities.

Thompson and Lewis express that urbanization refers to the process whereby an increasing country's population comes to live in cities. UNFPA (1996) defined 'Urban area as having administrative unit, population concentration, proportion of population in non-agricultural occupation and availability of infrastructural facilities. The city means the whole people who inhabit it, the entire collection of the houses the people live in shops which they work, the street on which they traverse and the places which they trade.

The town consists of which normally the main occupation is concerned with commerce and industry as opposed to agriculture pursuits. Mayhew, (1997) expressed that urbanization synonymous with the increasing of population in cities or towns through migration from rural areas because of social and economic changes, or in other words, a transformation from a rural to urban-based societies. Since the industrial revolution in the late 18th century, the urbanization process was led in England and then followed by many other countries. Overall some 37 per cent of the people of the Asian and Pacific Region live in urban areas (United Nations 1998), although there is considerable range in the extent of the urbanization, both across and within the sub-regions. For example, the higher degree of urbanization in Australia and New Zealand contrast markedly with the much less urbanized Pacific Island countries and is sufficiently high to ensure that the South Pacific sub-region is on average the most urbanized in the region, whilst South Asia is the least urbanized followed.

The urbanization in East and South of Asian countries is characterized by the blurred distinction between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ (Brennan, 1999; Hugo, 2006; McGee, 1991; 1994; 1995; McGee and Robinson, 1995). Some urban characteristics appear in rural areas, both physically and socioeconomically. Both agricultural and non-agricultural activities take place side by side in the adjacent areas of the urban centers, while the urban physical development extends beyond city administrative boundaries (Firman and Dharmapatni, 1994; Firman 1997; 2003; McGee, 1991; Swerts and Denis, 2014).

As Soja and Kanai (2006: 58) explain: Urbanism as a way of life, once confined to the historical central city, has been spreading outwards, creating urban densities and new “outer” and “edge” cities in what were formerly suburban fringes and green field or rural sites. In some areas,

urbanization has expanded on even larger regional scales, creating giant urban galaxies with population sizes and degrees of poly centricity far beyond anything imagined only a few decades ago. In some cases city regions are coalescing into even larger agglomerations in a process that can be called “extended region.

The trend towards urbanization is only accelerating and 96% of all urbanization by 2030 will occur in the developing world. Runde (2015) argue that this global shift towards a more global population has profound implications for a wide range of issues including food, water, and energy consumption. At present, 55% of the world’s population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is projected to increase to 68% by 2050. The World Urbanization Prospects produced by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) remarks that future increases in the size of the world’s urban population are expected to be highly concentrated in just a few countries. Together, India, China and Nigeria will account for 35% of the projected growth of the world’s urban population between 2018 and 2050 (UN DESA,2018). Today, the most urbanized regions include Northern America (with 82% of its population living in urban areas in 2018), Latin America and the Caribbean (81%), Europe (74%) and Oceania (68%). The level of urbanization in Asia is now approximating 50%. In contrast, Africa remains mostly rural, with 43% of its population living in urban areas (UN DESA,2018).

Nepal is a developing country and more than 50% people depend on the agriculture. Agriculture is the main source of income in Nepal. There is no long history of urbanization. After the restoration of democracy in Nepal then systematically started of urbanization. Actually, the fifth census in 1952/54 there were 10 urban places and only 2.9% was urban population. After that it is rapidly increasing and in 2015 reached to 217 urban places where 41.7 percentage population of the country. In this paper, it has attempted to review the state of urban places, population, their changing trend and pattern in Nepal.

Method and Materials

The research methodology is the process of doing research. Kitchen and Tate (2000) observes that it is a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate or way for solve the problem. There are two types of data. I.e. primary and secondary. It is based on secondary / library data are collected and reviewed. Secondary data refers to data that is collected by someone other than the primary user. Common sources of secondary data for social science include censuses, information collected by government departments, organizational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes. Similarly, related to the objectives of review of national and international papers, journal, books as well as official websites related to urbanization. Thus, the paper is more quantitative than qualitative nature.

.Discussions and Results: Historical Practices

Urbanization is the process by which rural communities grow to form cities, or urban centers, and, by extension, the growth and expansion of those cities. Urbanization began in ancient Mesopotamia in the Uruk Period (4300-3100 BC) for reasons scholars have not yet agreed on (Mark,nd.)Urbanization is the mass movement of populations from rural to urban settings and the consequent physical changes to urban settings. There are different criteria of urban area in country to country. For example A settlement with a population of 300 is called a city in Iceland, 30,000 in Japan, 25,000 in the USA, 20,000 in Neitherland and 2,500 in Denmark. Definition of urban area has been continuously changing present to past in Nepal.

Changing criteria of urban place/ centre

The fifth population census conducted in 2052/54 BS and established ten urban places named 'prominent settlement' with the basic of criteria of population size to 5000only.The 1961 census was internationally accepted scientific census which for the first time defined an urban as " an area with the population of 5000" and above and having other facilities like high school, college, judicial and administrative units, market, communication facilities, factories . In such a way, the definition of urban has changed in 1996 census pointed out the changing definition of urban that shown below:

Table 1: *Changing criteria of urbanization in Nepal*

Years	Criteria	Remarks
1952/54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population over 5000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un cleared criteria 'Prominent' settlement
1961: Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population over5000 • urban environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Sahar'
1962: Nagar Panchayat Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population at least 10,000 • Local urban administrative unit • Local government unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Nagarpalika '
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population size at least 9000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Nagar panchayat
1992: Municipal act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population size at least 9000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Nagarpalika
1992:Municipality act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poulation size 20000 • Basic urban infrastructures • Minimum one million annual revenue • semi- urban environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •'Nagarpalika
1999: Local Self Governance Act	Redefined the Urban Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population size 300000 • 400 million annual revenue • Urban environment • High education facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •'Mahanagarpalika' (Metropolitan City)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Population Size 100000 • 100 million annual revenue • Urban environment • Already received 'Municipality status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Upa-Mahanagarpalika (sub-Metropolitan City)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population with 20000 in Tarai and 10000 in mountain and hill area. • 5 million annual revenue in Tarai and 500000 in hill and mountain. Minimum urban facilities. 	•Nagarpalika(Municipality)
		• Minimum urban facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal (Local administrative unit). • Minimum requirement hasn't mentioned. • Existing Municipal unit are based on political decision
A Local Government Operation Act 2017		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 500,000+ • Annual Income (in NPR): 1,000,000,000+ • Infrastructures: Educational institute up to the higher level, medical services, hospitals, transportation facilities, <u>metalled road</u>, communication services, Museum, stadium, assembly hall and exhibition area of international standard. Sufficient recreation places for children and elderly people, Basic water supply and sanitation services. Garbage treatment and management system, Shopping mall, vegetable and fruit market, hotels of international standards. Urban greenery and scenic beauty as prescribed by government. 	Metropolitan Municipality
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 200,000+ • Annual Income (in NPR): 250,000,000+ • Infrastructures: higher level education, medical services, hospitals, transportation facilities, <u>metalled road</u>, basic communication services, Public garden, assembly hall, stadium, gym hall and covered hall of national standard, Basic water supply and sanitation services. Garbage 	Sub-Metropolitan Municipality

	<p>treatment and management system, Market place, animal slaughter houses, human corpses disposal place. Hotel, motel and resorts of tourism standards. Disable friendly and physically accessible infrastructures.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher mountainous area Population must be 10,000 or more and Annual Income should be 10,000,000 and basic infrastructure and services such as basic services of education, hospitals, road with footpaths, bus station, public toilet, rest rooms, basic services of communication, play ground, meeting hall, basic water supply, sanitation. • Lower mountainous and hilly area Population must be 40,000+ and annual income should be 30,000,000+ and basic infrastructures and services. • Inner Terai Population must be 50,000+ and annual income should be 30,000,000+ and basic infrastructures and services. • Outer Tera Population must be 75,000+ and annual income should be 30,000,000+ and basic infrastructures and services. • Inside Kathmandu valley Population must be 1,000,000+ and annual income should be 30,000,000+ and basic infrastructures and services 	Municipality

Source: Chapagain, 2008,CBS,2018

Table.1 shows that the Changing criteria of definition of urban centre of Nepal. The fifth scientific census did not clear definition of the urban centre but only mention of population 5000 But census of 1961 has clear criteria of urban places such as: population size, annual income and minimum facilities has considered as fundamental basis to declare locations as urban area or municipality. However, such type of criteria changing in one census to another census and other times. The municipality's boundary has extended by merging adjoining area or it has merged two or more than two rural areas and municipality having small market centers and thereby declared a new municipality. Local self-government act, 1999 categorized the existing urban location into municipality (sub-metropolitan and metropolitan) city but the criteria of classification were general.

After restructuring the nation the classification there are two types of local administrative units as a Municipality (Nagarpalika) and Rural Municipality (Gaupalika). At a present time merged the 3915 local units and made 753 local units. According to the new administrative structure, district is further divided to Gaupalika and Nagarpalika. Both are to some extent similar character as there are large rural areas and agricultural based population in Nagarpalika as well. However, Nagarpalika still consists of market centers, and is little advanced area (Jnawali, 2004).

Trend and Level of Urban Population and Size

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal 2046/47 the urban places rapidly increase. According to record of census 1952/54 to 2011 and after restructuring of nation the urban centre has changed. The proportion of urban population in the country has increased from 2.9 percent in 1952/54 to 42 percent in 2015. Trend and level of urban population is given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Trends and level of urban number and population*

Census year	Number of urban places	Total Urban population	Urban population (%)	Growth rate of population (%)	
				Urban	National
1952/54	10	2,38,275	2.9	-	-
1961	16	3,36,222	3.6	3.4	1.65
1971	16	4,61,938	4.0	3.1	2.07
1981	23	9,56,721	6.4	7.3	2.66
1919	33	16,95,719	9.2	5.7	2.08
2001	58	32,27,879	13.9	6.4	2.25
2011	58	45,23,820	17.1	3.8	1.35
2014 May 8	130	71,01677	27.6	8.0	1.35
2014 Dec.	191	9403977	35.5		
2015	217	11041504	41.7	-	-
2017	293	-	-	-	-

Source: CBS, 2003, 2014, 2018

Table 2: shows that the trend and level of urban population and size of Nepal. In the fifth census only 10 urban centre and 2.9 percentages urban population and most of the people live in rural area. After the restructuring of nation there are 217 urban places and 41.7 percentage urban people in 2015. It is rapidly increasing and reached to 293 urban centres now. At a present time, some of the districts are total urban places such as Kathmandu, Bhaktapur.

Distribution of District, Municipalities and Total Urban Population by Province

After the people movement 2062/63 in Nepal and new constitution has implemented in 2072. According to new constitution, Nepal is divided into 7 provinces and districts. There are not equally distributions of population in the province, due to the facilities of infrastructure development. The number of urban centers of certain political area has represented the level of development and state off farm population of that area. The distribution of districts, urban areas and total population of urban area by province is given in Table 3.

Table 3: *District, Urban centers and total urban population by province*

Province	Districts	Number of Urban			Total Municipality	Total population(percentage)
		Municipality	Sub-metropolitants	Metro politants		
Province-1	14	46	2	1	42	58.5
Province-2	8	73	3	1	36	71.9
Bagmati-3	13	41	1	3	45	71.5
Gandaki-4	11	26	-	1	24	60.1
Province-5	12	32	4	0	33	51.7
Karnali-6	10	25	0	0	12	49.3
Sudurpashchim pradesh-7	9	34	1	0	25	58.9

Source: CBS, 2020

Table 3 Shows the district, Urban centers and total urban population by province. There are 7 provinces in Nepal. The highest urban population 71.9 percentage in province-2 and lowest urban population 49.3 percentage in Karnali Pradesh (6). Especially, Pradesh-2 lies in terai region and available of infrastructure development as well as fertile land. Like this, most of the industries also established and the people get the employment opportunity. Therefore, province 2 is the highest urban population but lack of the infrastructure development and extreme type of climate and red and sandy soil in province-6. So, that there is lowest urban population. Number of Local Government of Nepal has given below in the map:

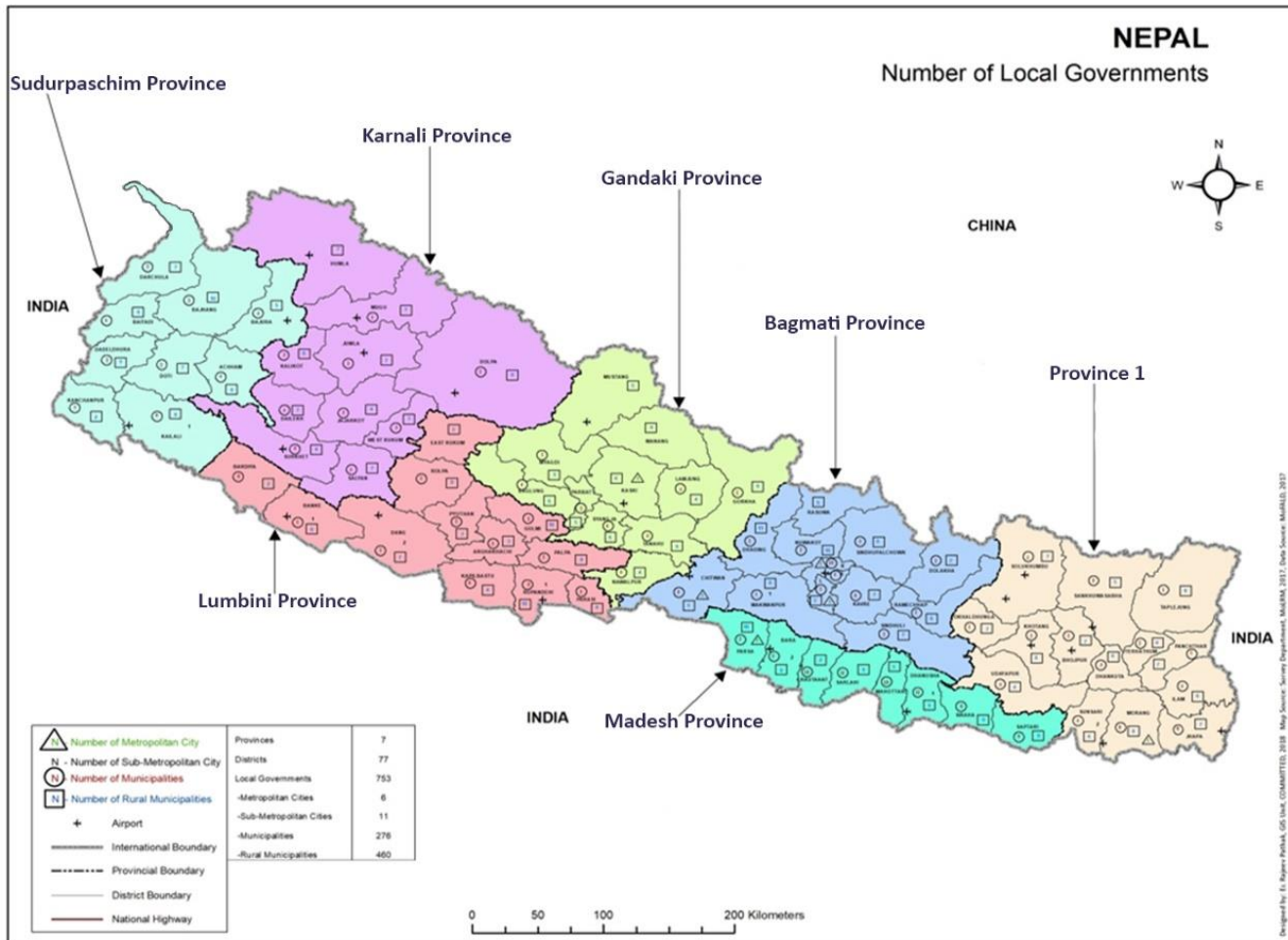


Fig.: District, Urban centers and total urban population by province

Distribution of Urban Center by Ecological Region

There is uneven distribution of municipalities by ecological region. The Mountain region has a few urban centers due to low population size, scatter settlement and vertical migration trend from Mountain to Hill and Tarai. Secondly, the major criteria of population and annual income are inadequate for being the municipality in Mountain and Hilly regions. Nearly half of the total municipalities are located in Tarai region (Table 4).

Table 4: *Distribution of municipalities by ecological region*

Ecological zone	Municipality by census year							
	1952/54	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2015
Mountain	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	15
Hill	5	8	7	9	13	27	27	95
Tarai	5	8	9	14	20	29	29	109
Total	10	16	16	23	33	58	58	217

Source: CBS, 1995, 2001, 2011; MoFALD 2015

Table 4 shows the distribution of municipalities by ecological region of Nepal. In 2001 only that were 2 municipality in Mountain region 27 Hill region and 29 Terai region. But the ratio of urban centre are rapidly increasing and reached to 15,95 and 109 respectively Mountain, Hill and Terai in 2015. It means rapidly increase of infrastructure development in ecological region of Nepal.

Urban growth trends

According to the 2011 census, the urban growth rate is 3.4 per cent (MoUD, 2015; Pradhan, 2015). Urban growth rates have remained above overall population growth rates since census reporting began in 1952 .

Table 5: *Urban growth patterns in Nepal*

Parameters	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2014
Urban population (000)	336	462	957	1696	3228	4523 *	5130 **
Number of urban areas	16	16	23	33	58	58 *	191 **
Urban population%	3.6	4.0	6.4	9.2	13.9	17 *	18.2 *
Urban growth rate(%)	4.40	3.23	7.55	5.89	6.65	3.4 ***	N/A

National population growth rate (%)	1.65	2.07	2.66	2.10	2.27	1.35 *	
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Source: Adapted from Choe and Pradhan (2010: p.7)

* CBS (2012) ** UN DESA (2014) *** , Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD, 2015)

Table 5, shows Urbanization trend in Nepal. The number of growth trends 1961 to 2014 of urban population, number of urban areas, urban population in percentages, urban growth rate, and national population growth rate of Nepal are respectively, 336000-5130000, 16-191, 3.6-18.2, 4.40-3.4 and 1.65-1.35. The different population has been gradually increased. Due to infrastructure development all the urban sectors are gradually increased. But the people have been complaining about the lack of available facilities.

Facts about Urbanization in Nepal

- I. A natural population increase is one of the main reasons for the regular change from rural to urbanization. Natural population increase occurs when the infant mortality rate decreases and when people bear more healthy children. It can as well occur as more people move from small villages to larger cities.
- II. People in mainly rural countries, such as Nepal, are choosing to move to more urban areas for many different reasons. For example, wars may force many to move to places with better access to food, water and shelter for the safety of themselves and their families.
- III. City and rural areas in Nepal are seeing urbanization increase between 5 and 7 percent every year. This is even more than the country's capital, Kathmandu, with a 4 percent increase every year, and Pokhara, with an increasing urbanization rate of 5 percent per year.
- IV. The most inhabited urban region of the country is Kathmandu Valley, consisting of 24 percent of Nepal's urban population. In addition, Kathmandu Metropolitan City consists of 9.7 percent of the urban population.
- V. There is three physical regions in Nepal. Of them, the hill region has the highest percentage of urbanization at 21.7 percent, followed by the Terai region at 15.1 percent and the mountain region at 2.8 percent.
- VI. Whereas the push for urbanization comes with benefits in efforts to create a higher standard of living for people, it is not without challenges. For example, slums populate many urban cities, which have very low-quality living conditions. Overcrowding, limited sanitation and limited access to clean water cause these poor conditions. This results in people having to use open sewers to use the bathroom, leading to other issues (*Shea, 2019*).

. CONCLUSION

Urbanization refers to a growth in the proportion of a country's population living in urban centers of a particular size. Due to the increase in infrastructure development and interest of the Nepalese population after the restoration of democracy the urbanization process is gradually increased in Nepal. Actually, people movement 2062/63 the level of urbanization has been rapidly increasing.

. Migration and industrial development are the causes of urbanization.. Similarly, people are migrating from fewer facilities to more facilities for the consumption of facilities. Therefore, Nepalese population has emigrated Mountain to Hill and Hill to Terai. Similarly Terai to abroad or facilities places of urban area. It is depends on their affordable capacities. Due to the changes in administrative boundary and the minimum number of population criteria has met to declare the area as municipal area. Although, population, annual income, and level of infrastructure development are set as the basic criteria to declare municipality, the political decision and the population criteria has been adopted in practice. Thus urbanization has increased from 2.9 in 2052/54 to 14 percent in 2001, 2 percent in 2015 and 62 percent in 2016. The urbanization does not have temporal variability it has also spatial variability in terms of distribution. The Mountain region has least (15 out of 217) urban centers where as Tarai has the highest number (109 out of 217)of urban centers. Similarly by province, province no 3, province no 1 and province no 2 have higher number of urban centers compared to other provinces.

This paper concludes that due to development of infrastructure today, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is projected to increase to 68% by 2050. The people move from agriculture to non- agriculture, the area seems to have gone through the process of urbanization. In Nepal too, the process of urbanization has accelerated after the people's movement of 2062/2063, but the people have been complaining about the lack of facilities. But the tax has increased and it seems to have a big impact on living standards.

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