

## AN OVERVIEW OF POPULATION TRENDS AND PATTERN OF NEPAL

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Population growth is increase in the number of individuals in a population. Nepal's trend of population growth shows a fluctuating rate till 2021 Population Census. It has sharply decreased during 2001 – 2021 census period remaining 0.92 percent per annum. As per the 2021 census, Nepal's population stood at 29.2 million, which is an increase of 2.8 million when compared to the 26.4 million population recorded in the 2011 census. The population has increased during the past decade, with an average annual growth rate of 0.92%, lower than the 1.35 % growth rate reported in the 2021 census. On the other hand of state population growth rate is unequal to each other.*

**Keywords:** Population, Size, Growth Rate, Distribution, Situation and Trend

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nepal has been experiencing very rapid demographic changes in the last few decades as a result of transition from a high-mortality, high-fertility society to a low mortality, low-fertility society within a relatively short span of time. This transition in itself is an extremely positive

outcome of the country's development and something to be really celebrated-an alternative scenario would have been that of a classical "population explosion," i.e. uncontrolled population growth with a persistently high prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment. At the same time, as in the life of an individual human being, achievements in one stage of a country's development often bring new challenges in the next.

Census operation started in Nepal since 1911. Initial censuses till 1952 were more or less head count based on household level information. The first census of Nepal (1911) yielded a population size of 5.6 million. Since then, census count has been conducted more or less at ten-year intervals. In the census of 1952/54, technical assistance in conducting the census was obtained from United Nations and in fact this census can be regarded as the first scientific census ever conducted in Nepal. Because of different reasons, this census was carried out at two points in time. For example, eastern part of the country was enumerated in 1952, while the western half was enumerated in 1954. Because the enumeration was carried out in two points in time, the 1961 census is generally accepted as the first scientific census in terms of international standard and comparisons. According to the latest census of 2021, Nepal's population was 2,91,64,578. The average annual growth rate of population during the last decade i.e. 2011-2021 was 0.92 percent (CBS, 2022). Nepal's population reached 29.2 million on 2021 with the slowest population growth rate at 1.32 per annum since 1961 ( MoPE, 2017) .

The analysis of Nepal's demographic data over the last several decades indicates that it has not only already experienced the onset of its demographic

transition, but that in fact it is experiencing rapid demographic change as a result of positive socioeconomic developments. Within a few decades, Nepal has achieved significant declines in mortality rates, fertility rates, and population growth rates, while experiencing rapid improvements in life expectancy. These are significant development achievements in their own right, as the alternative scenario could have been that of the classical “population explosion” with uncontrolled population growth and persistence of mass poverty. As Nepal has made this rapid transition, achievements along certain development dimensions have also brought about challenges in other dimensions.

Traditional demographic transition theory suggests that demographic changes occur in a certain sequence and in distinct phases. However, due to the nontraditional transition Nepal is undergoing, different aspects of Nepal's demographic changes have occurred simultaneously and outside of traditional transition theory parameters. In addition, Nepal is also experiencing these rapid demographic changes at relatively much lower levels of development. Although Nepal's fertility and mortality declines have reached levels comparable to many middle-income countries, Nepal continues to rank among the least developed countries in the world. As Nepal considers its policy and investment options to take advantage of its limited demographic window of opportunity, the country needs to make conscious decisions regarding adequate, strategic, and timely investments to reap a demographic dividend, and the stakes for appropriate resource mobilization are significant.

Until 2001, the fertility rate in Nepal was high, but the mortality rate was declining, resulting in a moderate rate of population growth. Despite declining fertility and mortality in recent years,

Nepal's population, which was 29.2 million as of 2021, is projected to grow to 33.6 million by 2031. In order to maintain social and economic developments that have so far been achieved, and to make greater progress in the years to come, Nepal needs to make preparations to meet the challenges arising from this dual situation.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to analysis the population trends and pattern of Nepal.

## DATA AND METHOD

The Secondary data are used in this study which is collected from different survey, PRB, National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics and others relevant data. Analytical and descriptive methods are applied in this study. The simple mathematical tools and techniques are used to make the study effective.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### Population Size and Growth Rate in Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country situated between India and China. Nepal, like many of the South Asian countries, has been undergoing rapid demographic changes during the last few decades. In recent years, in Nepal, fertility and mortality have been declining fast. Between 1961 and 2001, the average annual population growth rate was 2.25 percent. Since then, the population rate has declined. Between 2011 and 2021, the average annual growth rate was 0.92 percent (CBS, 2022).

The total population enumerated at various censuses (1911-2021), along with corresponding annual growth rates and the timeline over which the population doubled. The first Population Census in Nepal, conducted in the year 1911, showed a population of 5.6 million. A century after, the eleventh Population Census in Nepal, conducted in the year 2021, showed a population

of 29.2 million. This shows an annual growth rate of 0.92 percent during the intercensal period. Population growth rate, size and population

doubling time from 1911 to 2021 A.D are traced in table 1.

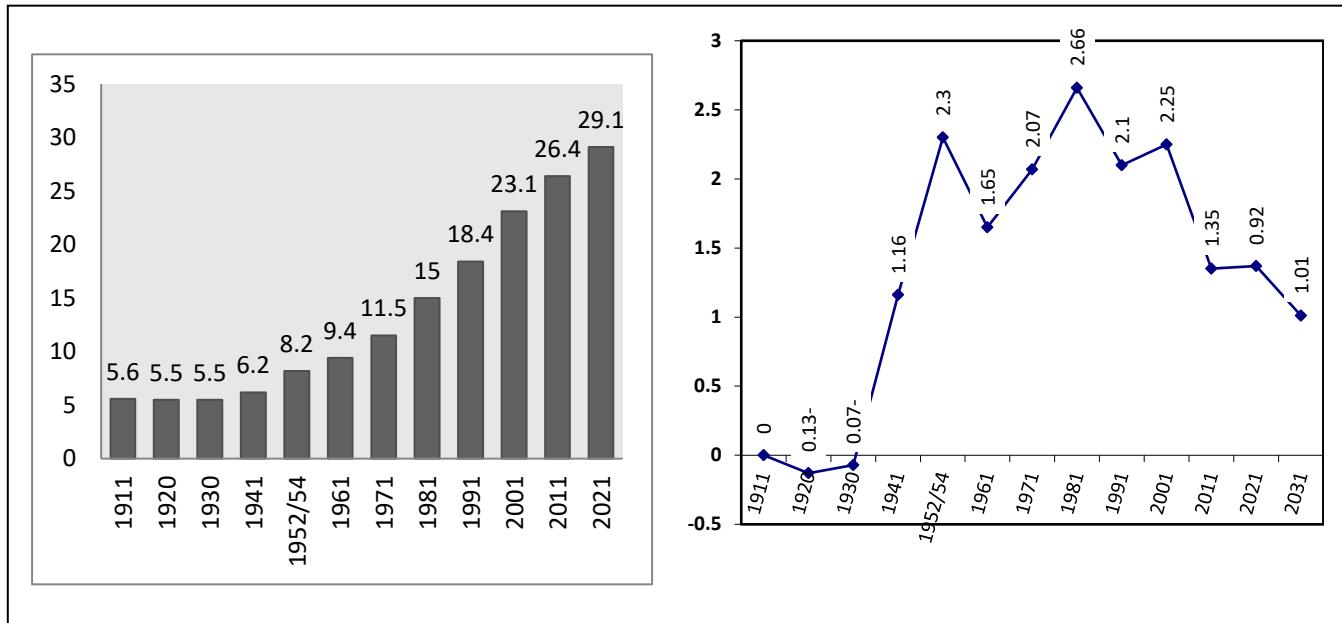
**Table No 1: Population Size, Change, Growth Rate and Doubling Time in Nepal, 1911 – 2021A.D.**

Census Year	Population Size	Population Change	Population Growth	Population Doubling Time
1911	56,38,749	-	-	-
1920	55,76,788	-64961	-0.13	-
1930	55,32,574	7,51,075	-0.07	-
1941	62,83,649	7,51,075	1.16	60
1952/54	82,56,625	19,72,976	2.30	31
1961	94,12,996	11,56,371	1.65	42
1971	1,15,55,983	21,42,987	2.07	34
1981	1,50,22,839	34,66,856	2.66	26
1991	1,84,91,097	34,68,258	2.1	33
2001	2,31,51,423	46,60,326	2.25	31
2011	2,64,94,504	33,43,081	1.35	52
2021	2,91,64,578	26,70,074	0.92	51

Source: CBS, 2003 and 2022

Above table 1 illustrates that the population of Nepal declined up to 1930, and after this period started to increase. However, the population of the country did not increase at a uniform rate. In 1911, Nepal's total population was recorded at 5.6 million. At the time of the latest census 2021, the population of Nepal stood at 29164578, an increase of 2670074 (10.08%) from 2011. The population growth rate during the period 1941 to 1952/54 was surprisingly high when compared to the earlier period. Prior to the 1952/54 censuses, the overall census coverage was poor, which may have impacted on the high growth rate of the population reported in 1952/54. Although the population growth rate of Nepal was 1.64 percent per annum from 1952/54 to 1961, it was lower than the period

from 1941 to 1952/54, which was 2.27 percent per annum. However, population growth rates have increased by more than 2 percent per annum from the 1971 to 2001 censuses, even though growth rates do not follow a particular trend. The population growth rate observed during the period 1971 to 1981 is high (2.66 %) compared to the period from 1981 to 1991. A century after, the eleventh Population Census in Nepal, conducted in the year 2011, showed a population of 26.4 million similarly 29.1 million in 2021 census and population growth rate is 1.35 and 0.92 respectively (Figures1). The population is expected to continue increasing, but the growth rate is projected to decline further due to lower fertility rates.

**Figure 1: Population Size (Millions) and Growth Rate in Nepal, 1911 – 2021A.D.**

### Population Size and Growth Rate: Province Level

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal (Ministry of Law, Justice, Constitutional Assembly and Constitutional Affairs, September 2015) federated Nepal into 7 provinces; however, the existing population distribution is uneven. In

terms of population size, Growth and others. Bagmati Province is the largest, therefore its population provides the province with a large labour force, followed by Madhesh Province (Table2).

**Table 2: Population distribution of federal States based on 2011 and 2021 population census**

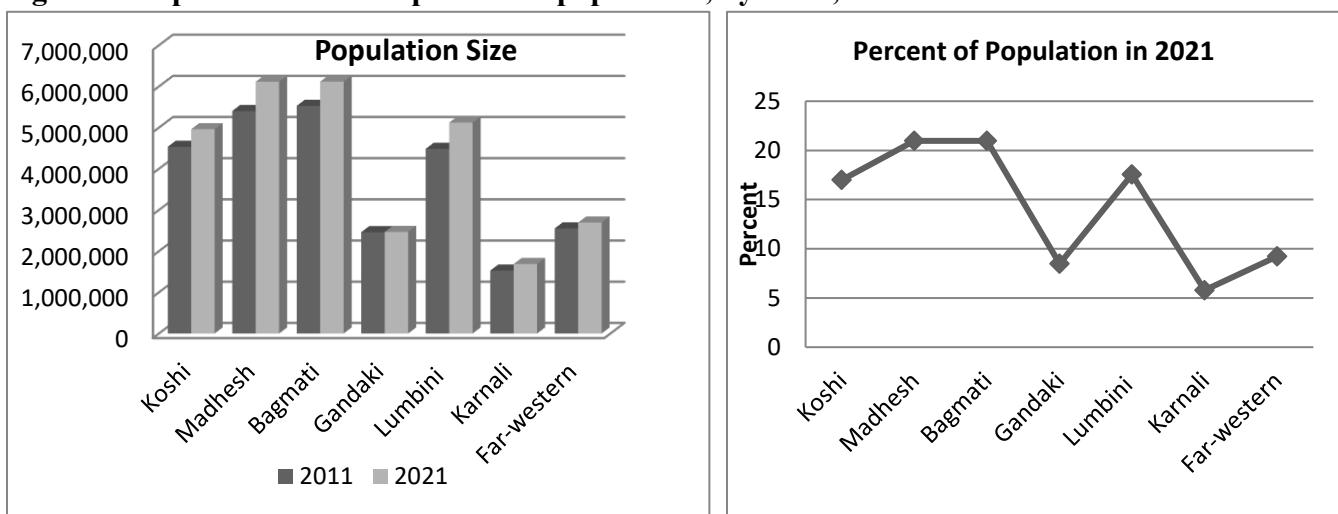
Province	Number of districts	2011			2021		
		Population Size	Percent of population	Population Density	Population Size	Percent of population	Population Density
Koshi	14	4,534,943	17.1	211	4961412	17.01	192
Madhesh	8	5,404,145	20.4	564	6114600	20.97	636
Bagmati	13	5,529,452	20.9	754	6116866	20.97	300
Gandaki	10	2,460,756	9.0	153	2466427	8.46	116
Lumbini	11	4,485,128	16.9	208	5122078	17.56	230
Karnali	10	1,527,563	5.9	79	1688412	5.79	61
Far-western	9	2,552,517	9.6	121	2694783	9.24	136
<b>Nepal</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>2,6494504</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>2,91,64,578</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>198</b>

Source: Karki, Y. B. 2016 and CBS, 2022.

As evident from the data, provinces with unfavorable environments tend to be sparsely populated whereas provinces with favorable environments tend to be densely populated. Therefore sparse and dense population density is affected by geographical obstacles, economic barriers, and even sometimes political decisions.

Although, the size and density of population is uneven but it is increasing trend in all provinces in Nepal. Although population density varies significantly between different provinces and some provinces continue to experience increasing trend.

**Figure 2: Population size and percent of population, by State, 2011-2021.**



### Demographic Transition

The population of a country generally passes through a series of stages during which it transitions from a situation where both mortality and fertility are high, to a position where both mortality and fertility are low. Both before and

The population of Nepal is approaching 'Stage III' of a demographic transition. This is characterized by low fertility and low mortality. However, currently it is in the lower end of 'Stage II' where death rate and birth rate are

after the transition population growth tends to be very slow. During the transition, population growth is very rapid, especially because the decline in mortality tends to occur before the decline in fertility.

low, but birth rate remains slightly higher than the death rate. Recent data, available as of 2011, indicates that the CBR is about 24 per 1,000 population but the CDR is only about 7 per 1,000 population (table 3)

Table 3: Demographic Transition in Nepal, 1961-2031 ( Per 1000) .

Year	CBR	CDR
1961	47	27
1971	43	21
1981	45	19
1991	39	13
2001	34	10
2011	24	7
2021	21	7
2031	15	7

Projected CBRs and CDRs up to 2031 also show that Nepal's population will still be in late Stage II of a demographic transition as birth and death rates, as indicated by the medium variant projection<sup>6</sup>, will by 2031 not be very low. As mentioned, Nepal is going through a demographic transition and there are different

## CONCLUSION

It is important to study the history of population growth rate to find out how the growth of population varies in different parts of the Nepal. Nepal has been experiencing very rapid demographic changes in the last few decades as a result of transition from a high-mortality, high-fertility society to a low-mortality, low-fertility society within a relatively short span of time. This transition in itself is an extremely positive outcome of the country's development and something to be really celebrated an alternative

Source: UNFPA , 2017 and CBS,2022

ways of calculating the 'window of opportunity'. However, the important issue is that Nepal is in the middle of this window and in order to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend Nepal must be prepared to invest in education, empowerment, and employment of young people (UNFPA, 2017).

scenario would have been that of a classical "population explosion," i.e. uncontrolled population growth with a persistently high prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment. It does set clear and strong parameters within which countries need to make conscious decisions and take actions in a time-bound manner to make the best of the given situation in one demographic stage and be prepared for opportunities and challenges in the next.

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