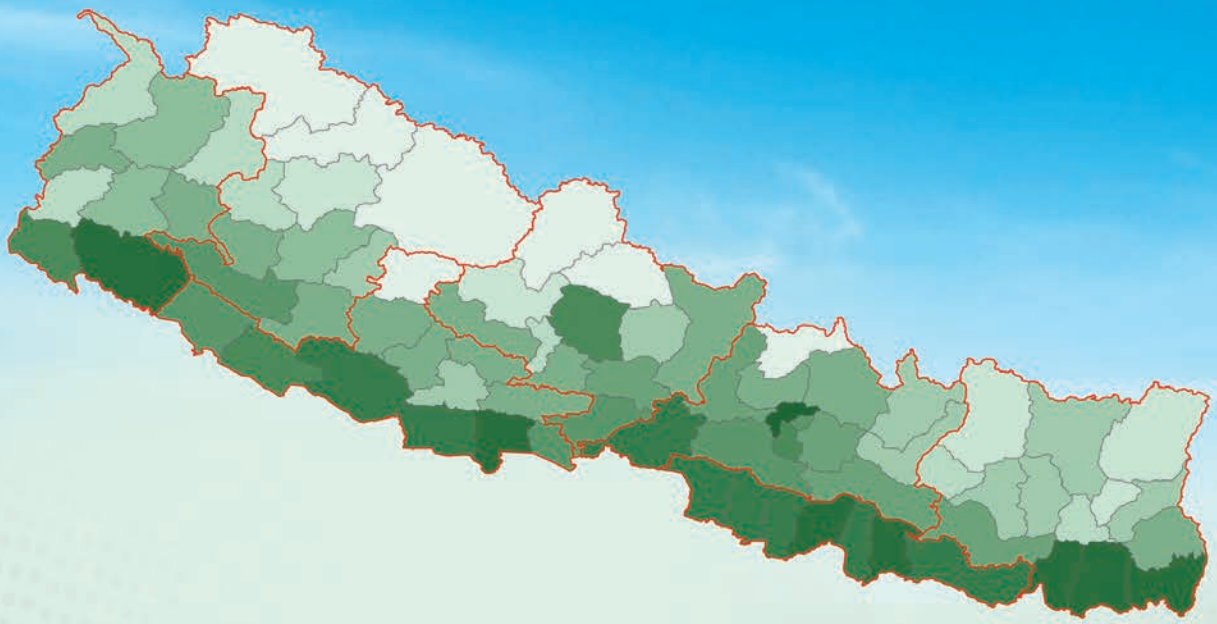
Thematic Report-V

National Population and Housing Census 2021

Internal Migration in Nepal



Government of Nepal
Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
National Statistics Office
Thapathali, Kathmandu

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Cover Map: Population distribution by district, NPHC 2021

Chief Secretary

Kathmandu, Nepal

Foreword

Government of Nepal has placed great emphasis on evidence-based policymaking, which depends on the availability of reliable and high-quality official data. The National Statistics Office (NSO) has consistently served this need by providing crucial data to inform government initiatives. As a key agency under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, the NSO plays a critical role in producing socio-economic and environmental statistics. These statistics are vital not only for federal, provincial, and local governments but also for a wide range of stakeholders across various sectors. Access to accurate and timely statistics is essential for implementing policies and plans at all levels of governance.

Migration has been a key factor in shaping Nepal's demographic and socioeconomic landscape. Over the decades, internal migration patterns have diversified, with people not only moving from rural to urban areas but also shifting within different regions of the country. While the movement from the Hills and Mountain regions to the Tarai has been a long-standing trend, recent indications of reverse migration suggest evolving dynamics influenced by economic opportunities, infrastructure development, and government policies. Furthermore, the restructuring of the state has played a significant role in reshaping internal migration flows.

This report, *Internal Migration in Nepal*, provides a comprehensive analysis of these migration trends, their causes, and their consequences. It highlights critical issues, including regional disparities, pressure on urban infrastructure, and the depopulation of certain areas. Without strategic policies, unchecked migration trends could lead to further imbalances, affecting economic development and social cohesion. It is important for the government to adopt well-planned migration policies to promote balanced development across all regions while making the most of the potential benefits of internal migration.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the authors and all the reviewers for their dedicated efforts in compiling and analyzing these crucial data. I also appreciate the untiring work of the NSO team in producing this highly technical report, which serves as a vital foundation for informed decision-making.

I am confident that this report will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners in shaping strategies that promote sustainable and equitable development in Nepal.

March 2025

Eaknarayan Aryal
Chief Secretary

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Foreword

The National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) is the only source that consistently provides demographic and housing data down to the lowest administrative unit, i.e., the Ward. To meet the needs of a broad range of users, we have included brief explanations of the data in our reports. Over the years, the National Statistics Office (NSO) has focused not just on statistical reports but also on valuable analytical ones that cater to a wide audience, both within and outside the country. The production and dissemination of quality statistics are not merely public goods but national resources in the data and information age.

Article 17 (Right to Freedom) of the Constitution of Nepal entitles Nepali citizens to practice any profession, carry on any occupation, and establish and operate any industry, trade, and business in any part of Nepal. Along with other socio-economic and environmental determining factors, the Right to Freedom has broadened the choices for migration available to every Nepali citizen.

I am pleased to present the report *Internal Migration in Nepal*. Internal migration plays a pivotal role in shaping Nepal's socio-economic landscape, with significant implications for the country's future development. It also influences population distribution, size, structure, and growth rates across ecological belts, provinces, districts, and local levels. This report, based on data from the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2021, provides a detailed analysis of internal migration trends in Nepal, with particular focus on their causes and future consequences.

This report provides valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders. I extend my sincere appreciation to all contributors for their dedication in bringing this important analysis to fruition. I am confident that these findings will serve as a guide for policymakers and planners in shaping development strategies for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Specifically, I commend the Population Section staff for their tireless efforts in generating data, providing support, and reviewing the report. The Head of the Social Statistics Division at NSO coordinated all activities, and I value his contributions. Special thanks to migration experts Prof. Dr. Yogendra Bahadur Gurung and Dr. Bidhya Shrestha for analyzing crucial data and presenting important findings, and to Mr. Uttam Narayan Malla, former Director General of the Central Bureau of Statistics, for reviewing it from a government perspective. I also appreciate the technical support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Additionally, I extend my gratitude to the British Embassy Kathmandu and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for their financial support at various stages of this report's development.

Lastly, I encourage constructive feedback from our users to improve future editions of this report.

March 2025

Maddhu Sudan Burlakoti
Chief Statistician

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Additional Support

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ABBRIVIATIONS

CANSA	Climate Action Network South Asia
CBS	Central bureau of statistics
CDPS	Central department of population studies
CNAS	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
DEGURBA	Degree of urbanization
DHS	Demographic and health survey
EAPS	European Association for Population Studies
ECD	Early child development
GDP	gross domestic product
IMR	In-migration rate
MER	Migration effectiveness ratio
MoHP	Ministry of health and population
MTR	Migration turnover
NMR	Net-migration rate
NPC	National planning commission
NPHC	National population and housing census
NSO	National statistics office
OMR	Out-migration rate
SDG	Sustainable Development goal
sq. km	Square kilometre
TU	Tribhuvan university
UN	United nations
UNESCO	United nations education, scientific and cultural organization
UNFPA	United nations population fund
VDC	Village development committee

कार्यकारी सारांश

परिचय

१. राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ ले नेपालको आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको प्रवृत्ति, आयतन र धार तथा यसको सामाजिक आर्थिक प्रभाववारे महत्वपूर्ण तथ्याङ्कहरू उपलब्ध गराएको छ । साथै विगतका गणनाहरूबाट प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कहरू समेत एकत्र गरी गरिएको तुलनात्मक अध्ययनले नेपालको बसाइँसराइको चित्र र पछिल्ला पाँच दशकमा भौगोलिक, प्रादेशिक र सहरी तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रहरूमा कसरी परिवर्तन आएको छ भन्ने सूचना उपलब्ध गराएको छ । हिमाली वा उच्च पहाडी क्षेत्रमा जनसङ्ख्या पातलिँदै गएको र पहाडी क्षेत्रमा पनि विशेषतः काठमाण्डौँ उपत्यका, चितवन, पोखरा लगायतका मुख्य सहरहरूबाहेक अन्यत्र जनसङ्ख्या तीव्र रूपले कमी आएको र तराईतिर झर्ने क्रममा वृद्धि भएको देखिएको छ । यद्यपि, पछिल्लो गणनाले तराईमा बसाइँ सर्ने प्रवृत्तिमा कमी आएको छ । वस्तुतः पहाडी क्षेत्रमा यातायातको पहुँच वृद्धि भए पनि नजिकको अर्धसहरी क्षेत्रमा बसाइँ सर्ने प्रवृत्ति बढ्दो छ र तराईबाट पनि काठमाडौँ, पोखरा लगायतका सहरी क्षेत्रमा बसाइँ सर्ने प्रवृत्ति बढ्दो छ । जनगणना २०७८ बाट प्राप्त बसाइँसराइसम्बन्धी सूचनाले महिलाकेन्द्रित बसाइँसराइको प्रवृत्ति, क्षेत्रीय असन्तुलन तथा जनसाङ्ख्यिक संरचनामा आएको परिवर्तनले दिएको अवसर र चुनौतीलाई सम्बोधन गर्न के कस्ता नीति तर्जुमा गर्न आवश्यक हुन्छ सोको लागि मार्ग निर्देशन गरेको छ ।

२. **स्थायी आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको धार तथा प्रवृत्ति (Lifetime migration stream and trends)**

राष्ट्रिय जनगणना, २०७८ ले स्थायी आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको दर अर्थात् नेपालभित्र आफ्नो मूलथलो छोडी बसाइँ सर्नेको अनुपात २९.२ प्रतिशत देखाएको छ । सबैभन्दा बढी स्थायी आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गर्ने अर्थात् मूलथलो छोड्ने जनसङ्ख्या पहाडमा देखिएको छ जहाँबाट ३२ प्रतिशत मानिसहरू सरेको देखिएको छ । यसपछि तराईबाट २८.९ प्रतिशत र हिमाली क्षेत्रबाट १३.८ प्रतिशत सरेको देखिएको छ । आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गर्ने अत्यधिक ३७.६ प्रतिशत महिला छन् र पुरूषको सो दर २०.६ प्रतिशत रहेको छ । तराईमा बसाइँ सर्ने सङ्ख्या सबैभन्दा बढी अर्थात् सन् १९७१ (वि.स.२०२८) मा ४,१०,०६४ बाट सन् २०२१ (वि.सं.२०७८) मा २०,८४,५०५ जना सरेको देखिएको छ । यद्यपि, कुल जनसङ्ख्याको तुलनामा प्रतिशतमा भने कमी आएको छ । हिमाली (उच्च पहाडी) क्षेत्रमा बसाइँ सरी जाने वि.सं. २०२८ मा ९,६९८ (२.२%) र २०७८ मा ७५,५४२ देखिएको छ । तर, त्यो क्षेत्रबाट अन्यत्र सरी जाने अत्यधिक देखिएकोले खुद बसाइँसराइ ५,४३,९६६ ले ऋणात्मक देखिएको छ । यसरी उच्च पहाडी क्षेत्रमा बसाइँ सरी आउनेभन्दा त्यस क्षेत्रबाट अन्यत्र सरेर जाने अधिक छ । पहाडी क्षेत्रमा वि.सं. २०२८ मा ६ प्रतिशतले बसाइँसराइ गरेको देखिएकोमा २०७८ मा ३० प्रतिशत देखिएको छ जुन अङ्क वास्तवमा पहाडी क्षेत्रको काठमाडौँ, पोखरा र चितवनमा सरी जानेका सङ्ख्याले प्रभावित भएको हो ।

३. **प्रदेश अनुसारको आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको आयतन**लाई अध्ययन गर्दा वि.सं. २०७८ मा कुल २१,४२,३६३ जनाले एक प्रदेशबाट अर्को प्रदेशमा बसाइँसराइ गरेको देखिएको छ । यसमा महिला ११,५४,९०९ र पुरूष ९८७,४५४ रहेका छन् । बागमती प्रदेशमा (Life time migration) बसाइँसराइ गरी आउने ११,५०,६२६ छ भने गण्डकीमा खुद ३४३,०५० जना बराबर ऋणात्मक र कोशी प्रदेशमा पनि ३,१८,७९६ जनाले गर्दा खुद बसाइँसराइ (Net-migration) ऋणात्मक भएको देखिन्छ । बागमती प्रदेशमा बसाइँसराइ गर्नेको सङ्ख्या थपिएको तर गण्डकी र कोशी प्रदेशमा खुद बसाइँसराइ गर्नेको सङ्ख्या ऋणात्मक देखिएको छ । कुल बसाइँसराइ गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूको प्रथम छनौट बागमती प्रदेश नै देखिएको छ जहाँ ५७.३ प्रतिशत पुरूष र ५०.६ प्रतिशत महिला सरेर गएका देखिन्छन् । बागमतीबाहेक अन्य छ प्रदेशहरूमा बसाइँ सर्नेको सङ्ख्यामा महिलाहरू अधिकतम रहेका छन् । एक प्रदेशबाट अर्को प्रदेशमा बसाइँ सर्नेमध्ये सबैभन्दा बढी गण्डकीमा देखिन्छन् जहाँबाट पुरूष २३.५ प्रतिशत र महिला २५.७ प्रतिशत गएका देखिन्छन् । कोशी प्रदेशबाट १७.६ प्रतिशत पुरूष र २० प्रतिशत महिला बसाइँ सरेर गएका देखिन्छन् ।

४. **अन्तरजिल्ला बसाइँसराइ**को तथ्याङ्क विश्लेषण गर्दा २०७८ मा मूलथलोका २० प्रतिशतले Lifetime migration अर्थात् स्थायी आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गरेको देखिएको छ । वि.सं. २०१८ मा यो मान ४.७ प्रतिशत मात्रै थियो ।

देशका ७७ ओटै जिल्लाको तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण गर्दा १८ ओटा जिल्लाहरूले आफ्नो जिल्लामा जन्मिएका २० प्रतिशत जनसङ्ख्या गुमाएको देखिन्छ । कुनै पनि जिल्लाबाट बाहिर बसाइँसराइ नगरेको भन्ने स्थिति छैन । बाह्र (१२) ओटा जिल्लाहरू पर्सा, रौतहट, नवलपरासी (पूर्व), भक्तपुर, नवलपरासी-पश्चिम), ललितपुर, कञ्चनपुर, काठमाडौँ, कैलाली, रूपन्देही, बाँके र कपिलस्तुबाट दश प्रतिशतभन्दा कम अन्यत्र जिल्लामा बसाइँसराइ गरी गएका भेटिन्छन् ।

वि.सं. २०७८ को जनगणनाअनुसार काठमाडौँमा ५७.२ प्रतिशत बसाइँसराइ गरी आएका छन् । भक्तपुरमा ५०.२ प्रतिशत र ललितपुरमा ४६.२ प्रतिशत छन् जुन Lifetime in-migration को सबैभन्दा उच्च दर हो । यी तीन जिल्लाबाहेक १६ जिल्लाहरूमा खुद बसाइँसराइदर (Net In-migration rate) धनात्मक देखिन्छ । तर, ५८ जिल्लाहरूको खुद आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइदर (Net in-migration rate) ऋणात्मक देखिन्छ अर्थात् बसाइँ सरी आउनेभन्दा जाने नै अधिक देखिन्छन् ।

५. **पछिल्लो बसाइँसराइ (Recent Migration)**

आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको प्रवृत्ति अध्ययन गर्दा आफ्नो जन्म जिल्ला छोडी अर्को जिल्लामा बसाइँ सरेपछि त्यसपछि पनि फेरि अर्को जिल्लामा सरी जाने प्रवृत्ति पनि हुन्छ । यस विषयमा पछिल्लोपटक उपस्थिति रहेको जिल्लामा बसाइँ सर्नेको सङ्ख्या वि.सं. २०७८ मा ८२,३९,५८९ अर्थात् कुल जनसङ्ख्याको २९.२ प्रतिशत रहेको छ ।

महिलाको पछिल्लो बसाइँसराइदर (Recent migration rate) ३८.२ प्रतिशत र पुरूषको १९.९ प्रतिशत रहेको छ । यसरी पछिल्लोपटकको बसाइँसराइदर पहाडी क्षेत्रमा ३१.९ प्रतिशत र हिमाली क्षेत्रमा १३.५ प्रतिशत रहेको छ । यस्तै नगरपालिकाहरूमा ३५.५ प्रतिशत र गाउँपालिकाहरूमा १७.१ प्रतिशत रहेको छ । पछिल्लोपटक बसाइँसराइ भएकाहरू बागमती प्रदेशमा सबैभन्दा बढी ४३.५ प्रतिशत, गण्डकी प्रदेशमा ३३.१ प्रतिशत र कर्णाली प्रदेशमा १४.५ प्रतिशत रहेका छन् ।

अन्तर भौगोलिक–क्षेत्रको (Inter-zonal recent migration) को पछिल्लो बसाइँसराइको विश्लेषणअनुसार पहाडी क्षेत्रबाट ३ लाख ७० हजार बाहिर अर्थात् अन्यत्र जिल्लामा गएका देखिन्छन् । अन्यत्रबाट आएका (In-migration) को सङ्ख्या चाहिँ ३७.९ प्रतिशत अर्थात् दुई लाख छपन्न हजार देखिन्छ । यसअनुसार पहाडी क्षेत्रले करिब १,१४,००० जना गुमाएको देखिन्छ । यस्तै, तराई क्षेत्रका जिल्लाहरूमा यसप्रकृतिको खुद बसाइँसराइ ५९ प्रतिशत देखिन्छ अर्थात् तराईले अन्य दुई भौगोलिक क्षेत्रबाट खुद दुई लाख पच्चिस हजार प्राप्त (Net Gain) गरेको देखिन्छ । यस्तो प्रवृत्तिको बसाइँसराइ तराईबाट पहाड र उच्च पहाडतिरको धार उल्लेखनीय रहेको देखिन्छ । निसन्देह, सो बसाइँसराइको धार पहाडी क्षेत्रको काठमाडौँ उपत्यकालक्षित देखिन्छ ।

६. **लैङ्गिक दृष्टिकोण**बाट आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गर्ने पहाडी क्षेत्रमा महिला ५७.६ प्रतिशत र पुरूष ५१.३ प्रतिशत देखिन्छ । कुल बसाइँसराइ गर्नेमध्ये महिला ३१९ हजार र पुरूष २५१ हजार रहेका छन् । प्रदेशगत रूपमा विश्लेषण गर्दा बागमती र लुम्बिनी प्रदेश मात्रै खुद बसाइँसराइदर धनात्मक भएका प्रदेश हुन् बाँकी पाँचओटा प्रदेशहरूले आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइका कारण जनसङ्ख्या गुमाएका छन् । कोशी प्रदेश सबैभन्दा बढी जनसङ्ख्या गुमाउनेमा पर्दछ जसले ६८ हजार गुमाएको छ भने मधेस प्रदेशले ६४ हजार र सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशले १९ हजार गुमाएको देखिन्छ उपरोक्त अङ्कहरू खुद बसाइँसराइको अंक हुन् ।

७. **सहरी तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्र**अनुसार, आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको दर गाउँपालिकाहरूको हकमा औसत १७.१ प्रतिशत र सहरी नगरपालिकाहरूको हकमा औसत ३५.५ प्रतिशत रहेको छ ।

८. राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ अनुसार आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गर्ने जम्मा जनसङ्ख्या १९,९४,९९६ रहेको छ जुन मूलथलोस्थित जनसङ्ख्याको ७.१ प्रतिशत हुन आउँछ । यसमध्ये महिलाको सङ्ख्या (२५.४%) जुन पुरूषको (५.२%) भन्दा करिब पाँच गुणाले बढी छ ।

ग्रामीण क्षेत्रबाट सहरी क्षेत्रतर्फका बसाइँसराइ उल्लेख्य (५१.३%) छ । यस्तै ग्रामीण–सहरी बसाइँसराइ प्रवृत्ति भौगोलिक क्षेत्र र प्रदेशअनुसार फरक छन् । पहाड र तराईमा ग्रामीणबाट सहरी क्षेत्रतर्फको बसाइँसराइ उल्लेख्य (क्रमशः ४८.६% र ५५.५%) छन् । बागमती प्रदेशमाचाहिँ ग्रामीण क्षेत्रबाट सहरी क्षेत्रतर्फको र सहरी क्षेत्रबाट सहरी क्षेत्रतर्फकै बसाइँसराइको आयतन वा सङ्ख्या सबैभन्दा बढी छ । यस प्रदेशमा ग्रामीणबाट सहरी बसाइँसराइदर ४९.७% र सहरीबाट सहरी क्षेत्रतर्फकै दर ४४.९ प्रतिशत

रहेको छ । यसको खास कारणचाहिँ साना सहरबाट ठुला सहरतर्फ विशेषतः काठमाडौँ, ललितपुर र भक्तपुरमा प्रदेशकै अन्य सहरहरूबाट बसाइँसराइको सङ्ख्या अत्यधिक भएर हो ।

९. **उमेर समूहअनुसार विश्लेषण** गर्दा ग्रामीण–सहर बसाइँसराइको धार दर्शाउने चित्र U-Shaped देखिन्छ । उमेर समूह (१०-१४) बाट सङ्ख्या वृद्धि भएर उमेर समूह (२०-२९) मा उच्च भई फेरि क्रमशः अगाडिका प्रौढ उमेर समूहमा ओरालो लागेको देखिन्छ ।

भक्तपुर (१९%), ललितपुर (१४.५%) र काठमाडौँ (१४.०%) जिल्ला सबैभन्दा बढी बसाइँसराइ गरी आएका (प्रापक) जिल्लाहरूमा पर्दछन् भने ताप्लेजुङ र खोटाङ (क्रमशः १७.४% र १७.१%) जिल्ला छोडी जानेहरूको दुईओटा उच्चतम जिल्लाहरूमा पर्दछन् । मनाङ र मुस्ताङ जिल्लाको जनसङ्ख्या थोरै भएर पनि हुनसक्छ बाहिर जाने र भित्रिने दरका दृष्टिकोणले सबैभन्दा बसाइँसराइदर (In and Out) भएका जिल्लाहरूमा पर्दछन् । बसाइँसराइ गरेको जिल्लामा बसोबासको समयावधि (Duration of Stay in Current Place of Residence) राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ ले देखाएअनुसार आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गरेका कुल जनसङ्ख्यामध्ये ७३.८ प्रतिशत (झण्डै ३ चौथाइ) ५ वर्षभन्दा बढी समयदेखि हाल बसोबास गरिरहेको स्थानमा बसेका देखिन्छन् । त्यस्तै १ देखि ४ वर्षसम्म बसेका २१.५ प्रतिशत र एक वर्षभन्दा कम अवधिदेखि बसिरहेका ३ प्रतिशत छन् ।

विगतका ६ ओटा जनगणनाको तथ्याङ्कबाट देखिएको आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ तुलना गरेर हेर्दा त्यसको प्रवृत्तिमा अन्तर आएको देखिन्छ । वि.सं. २०२८ को जनगणनाले तराईमा सर्नेको दर ७१ प्रतिशत र पहाडमा सर्नेको दर २६.५ प्रतिशत देखाएको थियो जुन २०७८ मा आएर क्रमशः ४१.५ प्रतिशत र ५६.२ प्रतिशत हुन आएको छ । बसाइँसराइ प्रवृत्तिको यो अन्तर वास्तवमा राज्यको विकास योजनासँग सम्बन्धित देखिन आउँछ ।

१०. बसाइँसराइको कारण

वि.सं. २०७८ को जनगणनाले इङ्गित गरेअनुसार बसाइँ सरेकामध्ये २५.९ प्रतिशत आश्रित भएर गएका, २४.९ प्रतिशत विवाहको कारणले गर्दा बसाइँसराइ भएका, १९.२ प्रतिशत कामको अवसरका कारण र १४.१ प्रतिशत अध्ययन/तालिमका कारणले सरेका देखिन्छन् । तराईमा बसाइँ सरेकामध्ये ३१.३ प्रतिशत विवाह र २६.७ प्रतिशत आश्रित भएर गएको देखिन्छ । प्रदेशगत रूपमा विश्लेषण गर्दा बागमती र गण्डकीमा कामको अवसर प्रमुख कारण छन् भने बाँकी पाँच प्रदेशहरूमा विवाह नै प्रमुख कारण रहेको छ । वास्तवमा बसाइँसराइको कारण उमेर समूहअनुसार निकै नै भिन्न छन् । चार वर्षभन्दा मुनिका र ७५ वर्षभन्दा माथिका आश्रित भएकोले परिवारसँग बसाइँ सरेका छन् भने २०-२४ वर्षका महिलाहरू विवाहको कारणले र ३५-३९ वर्ष उमेर समूहमा अधिकतम कामको कारणले सरेको देखिएको छ । कम आम्दानी भएका वा गरिब समूहले विवाह र आश्रित हुनु (क्रमशः ५५.९% र १७.३%) प्रमुख कारण बताएका छन् जबकि आय समूह बढेअनुसार क्रमशः अध्ययन/तालिम र कामको अवसर (क्रमशः २०.२% र २२.९%) प्रमुख कारण बताइएका छन् ।

११. पछिल्लो बसाइँसराइको धारमा प्रभाव पारेका प्रमुख कारण

वास्तवमा, अहिलेको बसाइँसराइको प्रवृत्तिअनुसार ठुला सहरमा बसाइँसराइको दर उच्च रहेको छ। काठमाडौँ उपत्यकामा (मूलथलो छोडेका मध्येको) ६०.३ प्रतिशत रहेका छन्।

पछिल्ला दशकहरूमा भएका बसाइँसराइका मुख्य तीनओटा कारण देखिएका छन्।

१. राजनीतिक पुनर्संरचना र संघीय गणतान्त्रिक प्रणालीको प्रादुर्भाव

२. २०७२ को विनाशकारी भूकम्प

३. बढ्दो अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय प्रवासन।

वास्तवमा १० वर्षे द्वन्द, शान्ति प्रक्रिया र राजनीतिक प्रणालीको पुनर्संरचनापश्चात् ठुलो जनसङ्ख्या काठमाडौँ उपत्यका र अन्य सहरहरूमा स्थायी रूपले नै बसाइँ सरेको देखिन्छ। मूलतः सुरक्षा र कामको अवसरका कारण यो स्थिति सिर्जनाका कारक हुन्। दोस्रोमा, २०७२ को भूकम्पपश्चात् आएका पराकम्पनको त्रास र पहाडी क्षेत्रको बसोबासको स्थितिको अनिश्चयले उपत्यका र नजिकको सहरी क्षेत्रमा बसाइँसराइको प्रवृत्ति बढ्न पुग्यो। हिमाल तथा पहाडका ३४ जिल्लामा त जनसङ्ख्या वृद्धिदर नै ऋणात्मक देखिएको छ। तेस्रोमा, कामको अवसरको लागि काठमाडौँ उपत्यकामा आउने र तत्पश्चात् विदेश जाने अवसर (काम र अध्ययनको लागि) को खोजी गर्ने प्रवृत्तिमा व्यापकता आयो। परिणामतः जनसङ्ख्याको संरचनामा अभूतपूर्व परिवर्तन देखिन आयो।

१२. आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ गर्ने जनसङ्ख्याको लैङ्गिक अनुपात वि.सं. २०३८ मा ७२.२ बाट २०६८ मा ४२.३ र त्यसपछि २०७८ मा ४९.९ देखिएको छ। यसको अर्थ वि.सं. २०३८ मा १०० जना महिलामा ७२ जना पुरूष बसाइँसराइ गर्दथे, वि.सं. २०६८ मा घटेर ४२ जना र वि.सं. २०७८ मा पुनः करिब ५० जना देखिएको छ। यसले वि.सं. २०३८ मा भन्दा २०६८ मा महिला बढी बसाइँसराइ गर्नेमा पर्दथे भने वि.सं. २०६८ मा पुरूषको अनुपात पुनः बढ्दै गएको देखिन्छ। विवाहबाहेक महिला पनि काम र अध्ययनको लागि घर छोड्ने प्रवृत्ति २०६८ मा देखिएको थियो। यद्यपि, वि.सं. २०७८ मा यस प्रवृत्तिमा केही कमी आएको छ।

१३. सामाजिक परिवेशमा परिवर्तन

आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइको बढ्दो प्रवृत्तिले देशको जनसाङ्ख्यिक, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक र आर्थिक परिदृष्यमा ठुलो परिवर्तन ल्याएको छ। सहरी क्षेत्रको जनघनत्वमा वृद्धि, उच्च श्रमशक्ति सहभागिता देखिएको छ भने ग्रामीण क्षेत्रको जनसङ्ख्या सुक्दै गएको छ। यसले परिवारको औसत आकार सानो पारेको छ भने महिलाको भूमिकामा परिवर्तन ल्याएको छ र वृद्धवृद्धाको सङ्ख्या वृद्धि हुँदा सरकार र समुदायको सामाजिक दायित्वमा परिवर्तन ल्याएको छ। जातजाति अनुसारको तथ्याङ्क विश्लेषण गर्दा हालैका वर्षहरूमा ब्राह्मण क्षेत्रीभन्दा मगर, तामाङ, थारू समुदायका युवाहरूमाझ आफ्नो थातथलो छाड्ने दर बढेको छ।

१४. नीति सिफारिस

१४.१ नेपालको संविधानले मौलिक हकअन्तर्गत नागरिकलाई आफ्नो आर्थिक, सामाजिक र व्यक्तिगत क्षमता विकास र सुख-सुविधा उपभोगका लागि कुनै निश्चित स्थानमा निर्वाध रूपमा रहने, बसाइँ सर्ने, काम गर्ने आदि अधिकार दिएको छ। यसअनुसार विगत छ दशकदेखि क्षेत्र, प्रदेश, जिल्लाहरूबाट बसाइँसराइ गर्ने प्रवृत्ति बढेको छ। परिणामतः सकारात्मक एवं नकारात्मक असर देखिएका छन्। यसर्थ, नीति निर्माण तथा कार्यक्रम तर्जुमाको लागि गहन तथा थप अध्ययनहरू आवश्यक छन्।

१४.२ वास्तवमा, बसाइँसराइ प्रवृत्तिमा आर्थिक क्षमताको असर देखिएकोले सबैभन्दा गरिब र पछाडि परेका समुदाय थप पछाडि पर्ने जोखिम छ। यसर्थ, "Leave No one Behind" भनिएको विश्वव्यापी एजेन्डालाई ध्यानमा राखी पछाडि परेका र गाउँमा छोडिएका सीमान्तकृत समुदायलक्षित शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, रोजगारी र सामाजिक सुरक्षाजन्य अवसरको विस्तार आवश्यक छ।

१४.३ जनसङ्ख्याको उमेर संरचनामा आएको परिवर्तनले जनसाङ्ख्यिक लाभको अवसर खोलिदिएको छ र जनसाङ्ख्यिक लाभको सुन्दर प्रतिफल हासिल गर्ने अवसर उपलब्ध गराएको छ।

१४.४ समावेशी बसाइँसराइको नीति अवलम्बन गर्नु आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ व्यवस्थापनको प्रथम चासो हुनुपर्दछ।

१४.५ आन्तरिक बसाइँसराइ (जिल्लाहरूबाट जाने र जिल्लाहरूमा आउने) गर्ने समूहलाई व्यवस्थापन गर्न स्थानीय, प्रदेश तथा सङ्घीय सरकारको प्रयास आवश्यक छ। यसमा निजी क्षेत्र, राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय नागरिक समाज, रोजगारीप्रदायक प्रतिष्ठान समेतको सहभागितामा नीति निर्माण आवश्यक छ।

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of the report is to show a general analysis of internal migration dynamics in Nepal utilizing 2021 census data. The report elucidates major shifts in internal migration through examination according to ecological zones and provinces over the past 5 decades. The data shows the existence of a regional imbalance, with feminized migration and socioeconomic factors as the main driving forces for the accompanying migration trends.

Life-time internal migration: trends and patterns

According to 2021 census data, the lifetime migration rate is 29.2 percent of the native-born population. The highest rates are in Hill zone (32%) followed by Tarai zone (28.9%) and the lowest in Mountain zone (13.8%). Migration is higher among females (37.6%) than males (20.6%). Over the past five decades, inter-zonal migration increased from 8.2 percent in 2011 to 11 percent in 2021. Tarai zone has the highest in-migration, which increased from 410,064 in 1971 to about 2,084,505 in 2021, although the percentage share has since been on the decline. In the Mountain zone, in-migration increased from 9,698 (2.2%) in 1971 to 75,542 (2.4%) in 2021, but excess out-migration has resulted in a negative net-migration of -543,966 by 2021. In the Hill zone, in-migration increased from 6 percent in 1971 to 30 percent in 2021, driven by migration to urban areas like Kathmandu, Pokhara, and the Chitawan Valley.

The volume of total inter-provincial migration is at a figure of more than 2,142,363 in 2021, with females (1,154,909) considerably higher than males (987,454). Bagmati province shows the highest lifetime figure of in-migration (1,150,626), while Gandaki (with net-migration of -343,050) and Koshi (net-migration of -318,796) show the highest figures of out-migration. Bagmati is the highest preferred destination for both males (57.3%) and females (50.6%). Female in-migrants outnumber males in all the provinces, except Bagmati where male in-migrants exceed females by six percentage points. On the other hand, Gandaki shows the highest out-migration rates for both males (23.5%) and females (25.7%), followed by Koshi which loses 17.6 percent of its males and 20 percent of its females due to migration in 2021.

At the district level, 2021 census data recorded an inter-district lifetime internal migration rate as 20 percent of the total native-born population. Comparatively, the figure for inter-district lifetime internal migration stood at a rate of 4.7 percent in 1961. Among all inter-district lifetime migrants, the data shows that 18 districts have lost more than half of the total native population as a result of out-migration. No districts have experienced zero out-migration. There are 12 districts including: Parsa, Rautahat, Nawalparasi (East); Bhaktapur, Nawalparasi (West); Lalitpur; Kanchanpur; Kathmandu; Kailali; Rupandehi; Banke, and Kapilbastu which show figures of less than 10 percent of out-migration. Kathmandu (57.2%), Bhaktapur (50.2%) and Lalitpur (46.2%) have the highest rates of lifetime in-migration in 2021 and are among the most urbanized areas in the Kathmandu Valley capital city. Along

with these 3 districts, there are an additional 16 districts which show the highest rate of net-migration in 2021. In contrast, the remaining 58 districts show negative net-migration rates.

Recent migration (last prior residence): trends and patterns

Recent migration, defined here by changes against the last registered prior residence, is represented at the figure of 8,239,589 in 2021, or 29.2 percent of the native-born population. The rate of recent migration shares the same percentage rate as the lifetime migration data. As a percentage of native-born population, the recent migration rate for females (38.2%) is almost double of males (19.9%). Among ecological zones, the migration rate is highest in Hill (31.9%) and the lowest in Mountain (13.5%). The migration rate in urban municipalities (35.5%) is more than double the rate of rural municipalities (17.1%). Among provinces, Bagmati has the highest migration rate (43.5%), followed by Gandaki (33.1%). The lowest migration rate is seen in Karnali (14.5%).

When addressing inter-zonal recent migration, Hill zone has the highest figure of out-migration (370 thousand) which is -54.8% of total inter-zonal migrants. In-migration stands at a figure of 256 thousand (37.9%), leading to a net-loss of -114 thousand. Tarai received approximately 59 percent of total inter-zonal migrants, with a net-gain of 225 thousand. However, a significant volume of migration is recorded from Tarai to Mountain and Hill zones, with this reverse migration stream driven by various factors. In Mountain, migration is largely driven by economic and employment factors, such as searching of opportunities of business in tourism sector and construction works. Migration from Tarai to Hill zones is overwhelmingly targeted towards the Kathmandu Valley.

Gender specific trends shows that both males and females have the highest out-migration rates within the Hill zone, with females at 57.6 percent and males at 51.3 percent. The Mountain zone shows almost equal out-migration rates for both sexes, at a rate of 19-20 percent. However, Tarai shows positive net-migration with more female in-migrants (61.5%) than males (55.6%). Similarly, gross migration is also higher for females (319 thousand) than males (251 thousand) in Tarai.

With regard to provincial migration, Bagmati (222 thousand) and Lumbini (20 thousand) are the only provinces with positive figures of net migration. Koshi shows the highest negative net-migration (-68 thousand) followed by Madhesh (-64 thousand). The lowest negative net-migration rate is seen in Sudurpashchim (-19 thousand). Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces show the lowest rate of in-migration for both males and females. Madhesh exhibits a significant gender disparity, showing a much higher volume of female migration than male migration. Bagmati shows the highest rate of male in-migration, with data showing both receiving and sending migration patterns to Koshi, Madhesh and Gandaki provinces. The data notably indicates that Gandaki contains the highest rate of female in-migrants.

When comparing the data between rural and urban settings, the internal migration rate is 17.1 percent for rural municipalities and 35.5 percent for urban municipalities. According to 2021 census data, internal migrants are recorded at a figure of 1,994,996, constituting a rate of 7.1 percent of the native-born population. Female migration is five-times higher (25.4%) than that of males (5.2%), particularly in rural-urban migration streams. Rural-urban migration is most common (51.3%), followed by urban-urban migration (32.8%).

Rural-urban migration (51.3%) is dominant in the national context. Rural-urban migration shows significant variation across ecological zones and provinces. In Mountain zone, rural-rural (37.6%) and rural-urban (37.3%) migration streams are predominant. The Hill and Tarai zones are dominant in rural-urban migration streams (48.6% and 55.5% respectively). Bagmati province exhibits high rates of both rural-urban (49.7%) and urban-urban (44.9%) migration, likely due to the fact that migration from small cities and towns to large urban cities, and from large cities to small emerging cities, are much pronounced in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. Regarding the age structure, the rural-urban migration stream shows a U -shaped data distribution, with a sharp incline beginning post 10-14 years age group and peaking at 20-29 age groups, followed by onward decline. Bhaktapur (19%), Lalitpur (14.5%), and Kathmandu (14.0%) districts have the highest in-migration rates, whereas Taplejung and Khotang municipalities have the highest out-migration rates at 17.4 percent and 17.1 percent respectively. Remarkably, Manang and Mustang districts both show high in- and out-migration and positive net-migration rates.

Regarding duration of stay, the 2021 census data shows that around one-fourth of migrants have stayed at a current place of residence for less than five years, with the highest proportion seen in Hill zone (30.5%) and urban areas (30.4%). In most of these cases, migrants have remained at the place of residence for 10 years and above, except in Hill zone and urban areas. Around 73.8 percent of migrants have stayed for five years and above, whereas the figure decreases to 21.5 percent for 1-4 years, and only 3 percent for less than one year. Recent migrants are more likely to be males (3.7%) than females (2.6%) and are relatively younger, meaning that a large proportion of most recent migrants fall among children and youth; children aged 0-14 years are at a rate of 21.4 percent and those aged 15-24 at a rate of 6.2 percent.

Data regarding caste and ethnicity shows that recent migrants are more likely to be from Hill groups, including Hill Caste (3%), Hill Janajati (3.4%) and Hill Dalit (3.4%). The proportion of recent migrants is slightly higher amongst persons with disability (3%) than those without disabilities (2%). Educational level is also a driving factor for migration. 8.4% of recent migrants have attended early child development and around three percent have basic, secondary and higher levels of education.

Census data provides a duration of up to 60 years (0-59 years) and is linked with Nepal's development plans. Over the years, A shifting trend in migration has been seen in Hill and Tarai zones. Initially, Tarai had significantly higher migration rates than Hill, with the widest gap seen in 1971 to which the rate stood at 71 percent in Tarai versus 26.5 percent in Hill. By 2015, migration rates in both zones equated to 48.7 percent, yet since then the rate has become dominant in Hill zone, rising to a rate of 56.2 percent compared to 41.5 percent for Tarai in 2021.

The 2021 census identifies eight reasons for internal migration, among which the most prevalent reasons for migration are stated as dependent family member (25.9%) and marriage (24.9%), followed by work or job opportunities (19.2%) and study/training (14.1%). Dependency on family members is the most common reason in urban areas, with marriage being the most common reason in rural areas. Marriage (42.3%) and work or job opportunities (20.1%) are the most prevalent reason in Mountain zone, whereas reasons for migration in the Hill zone are dominated largely by work or job opportunities (23.2%) and marriage (18.7%). In Tarai, marriage (31.3%) and dependent family members (26.7%) are the primary reasons. Across provinces, marriage is the leading reason in five provinces, except in Bagmati and Gandaki where work or job opportunities are stated as significant reasons for migration.

Reasons for migration also differ by age and sex. For males, the data shows presents work/job (31.8%), family dependency (28.3%), and study/training (18.9%) as the primary reasons for migration, whereas female migration is shown to largely be due to marriage (40.4%), family dependency (24.4%), and work or job (11.1%). Children (0-4 years) and senior citizens (75+) are shown to migrate largely due to dependency. Marriage (53.0%) is the leading cause of migration for females within the 20-24 age group. Work-related migration is largely prevalent in the 35-39 age group. Reasons for migration based on wealth quintile are observable and distinct. Among the lowest quintile, marriage (55.9%) is the main reason for migration, followed by family dependency (17.3%). Conversely, more reasons emerge when addressing the increasing wealth quintile, where study/training (20.2%) and work or job (22.9%) reasons are more prominent. Amongst the highest quintile, family dependency (29.9%) and study/training (15.3%) are the most represented reasons for migration.

Internal migration and socio-demographic change

Population redistribution

Internal migration stands as an influential factor in population redistribution in Nepal. Net-migration and population growth have a strong positive relationship. Internal migration patterns in Nepal have resulted in different growth rates and population densities across various ecological zones. While the Mountain zone has negative growth with high out-migration and low population density, the Hill zone has also high out-migration with declining growth but increasing density, and the Tarai zone has the most significant increase in population and the highest density. Both Mountain and Hill zones

show negative net-migration, with Tarai region demonstrating positive net-migration. Among the provinces, only the two provinces of Madhesh and Lumbini show high population growth (>1), and five provinces show less than one. On the other hand, only Bagmati and Lumbini provinces have high positive net-migration. However, all provinces have increased population density compared to previous census data. At the district level, 34 districts from both Mountain and Hill zones experienced decreases in both net-migration and population, often due to economic challenges, lack of job opportunities and impact of natural disasters such as earthquakes. Among these, nine districts are shown to have been severely impacted by earthquakes. Twenty-four districts from all zones and provinces, and all eight districts from Madhesh province, show net-migration loss and population growth. Nineteen districts, including Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kaski, Surkhet, show both gains in net-migration and population, indicating their status as key migration destinations.

Effectiveness of migration on population redistribution varies significantly across the ecological zone. Tarai shows a positive migration effectiveness rate (MER) of 39.5, indicating effective population redistribution, yet seems to demonstrate a more stable population figure (MTR=3.8). In contrast, Mountain zone faces a negative migration effectiveness rate (-72.2) and high migration turnover (MTR=8.8), suggesting that migration is contributing significantly to high population movement and instability. Bagmati province shows the highest positive MER (60.9), emerged as a most preferred destination while other provinces such as Karnali and Gandaki faced population loss due to high levels of out-migration. Gandaki (MTR=6.6%) and Bagmati (6.3%) provinces have relatively higher level of population movement than other provinces.

The pattern of current internal migration is somewhat complicated when examined across different subnational areas – ecological zones, provinces and districts. However, linking migration with rural and urban residence to the subnational disaggregation provides a much clearer pattern. The current pattern of internal migration leans more towards large urban areas, towards Hill ecological zone, and towards Bagmati province. Further, when classifying the Kathmandu Valley separately, it is much clearer that Kathmandu Valley urban area is the main attraction hub of internal migration for all over the country. The evidence illustrates that Kathmandu Valley has the highest migration rate (60.3% of native born population) among rural/urban residence, among ecological zones, and among provinces. It holds a share of 20 percent out of the total of rural/urban migrants, 40 percent out of ecological zonal migrants, and 52 percent out of provincial migrants. This is largely due to the fact that Kathmandu Valley is the capital city of the country, belonging to Hill ecological zone and Bagmati province, and a main receiver of migrants. It alone has three districts with 17 urban municipalities, including two metropolitical cities (Kathmandu and Lalitpur). Outside of Kathmandu Valley, Chitawan is another metropolitan city also belonging to Bagmati province which receives a larger volume of migrants. Hetauda, an emerging sub-metropolitan city also belonging to Hill zone and Bagmati province, receives a significant number of migrants. Within Hill zone and in addition to Bagmati province, Gandaki is

also a prominent province for receiving migrants largely as it contains Pokhara metropolitan city. In Tarai ecological zone, Lumbini Province has four sub-metropolitan cities (Nepalgunj, Tulsipur, Gorahi and Butwal) and Koshi province has one metropolitan city (Biratnagar), two sub-metropolitan cities (Itahari and Dharan) and a number of other newly merging cities.

Population movement within the country has shown to have experienced recent increase through a scale of redistributing population size across each region of residence such as rural/urban, ecological zones, provinces and districts. The traditional migration trend towards Tarai has been changing over the years and reciprocity in internal migration among all zones, provinces, rural/urban areas and districts are shown to be equally emerging. Significant trends are seen in migration from urban to rural areas, Tarai to Hill and Mountain zones, and particularly from Kathmandu Valley to other parts of the country. This evidence provides an insight into diversification of migration destinations and an emerging tendency of reverse migration in the country. In this sense, increased population movement along with diversified migration destination is an indication of increased, widened and diversified economic opportunities in the country.

The recent accelerated trajectory of internal migration within urban demographics may be due to three main reasons: political restructuring of the country in 2015, earthquake devastation experienced in 2015, and increased international migration seen largely in the form of foreign labour migration. Firstly, as a result of a 10-year long Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006 and its ending peace process, political restructuring of the country was instigated via the promulgation of a new Constitution in 2015, transforming the country with a new inclusive democratic political and administrative structure. During the Maoist insurgency and its aftermath, increases in mass population migration was seen to urban areas, especially to Kathmandu Valley where security was relatively guaranteed, and livelihood and prosperous opportunities are more readily available. After the conclusion of peace processes, in-migrants to Kathmandu Valley cities and other large urban areas settled permanently. Secondly, the devastating earthquake of 2015 and its continuous aftershocks further contributed to population dispersal from the affected districts to mostly Kathmandu Valley cities and other large urban areas where individuals were able to establish safety and prosperity. The 34 districts with negative growth trends are from Hill and Mountain zones, with some districts being the most affected areas following the 2015 earthquake. Finally, with increased opportunity for foreign labour and work and study in the foreign countries, internal migration to larger urban areas has also shown to have increased.

Feminization of migration

The declining sex ratio of migrant data indicates that more females are migrating than males. From 1981 to 2021, the sex ratio of in-migrants decreased across all ecological zones. Mountain zone recorded the most significant decline in sex ratio from 72.2 in 1981 to 42.3 till 2011 and but slightly increased to 49.9 males per 100 females in 2021. This shift suggests a move from male-dominated

to female-dominated migration. Data from Madhesh and Sudurpashchim provinces demonstrates significant gender imbalances. The rural-urban migration stream demonstrates a pattern in which females migrate at higher rates than males, likely due to factors such as marriage, employment, and education.

The characteristics of migrants have changed dramatically since 1981. Economic migration increased among males from 22.8 percent in 1981 to 36.6 percent in 2021, whereas agricultural migration dropped drastically for both genders across the same period. Education has become a more important factor for migration, rising from 4.0 to 18.9 percent for males and from 1.6 to 10.9 percent for females. Marriage remains a major factor influencing female migration, increasing from 30.3 in 1981 to 40.3 percent in 2021. The educational landscape and occupational trends have also shifted significantly among migrants. For instance, the percentage of male migrants with no schooling dropped from 25.4 percent in 1981 to 12.2 percent in 2021. However, the percentage of female migrants with no education increased from 24 percent in 1981 to 34 percent in 2021, suggesting challenges in rural-to-rural migration for marriage or family reasons. Occupation trends show a shift from farming and fishing to skilled agriculture, forestry and elementary occupations. When looking at the age, females are considerably high within the 15 to 34 years, indicating the increasing role of working-age, economically active women in internal migration. These data trends suggests the feminization of internal migration in Nepal.

Migration and social change

Internal migration in Nepal is one factor which is changing and reshaping the country's demographic and socio-cultural dynamics, as well as economic development. The mobility of individuals has altered the distribution of Nepal's population, leading to increased urban density and higher labour force participation, as well as depopulation in rural areas. This shift has further shown to influence changes in family structure and gender roles in economic activities. Data shows that young people during life transition periods regarding education, employment and family formation are more likely to migrate than older people. Migrants contribute positively to the labor force by bringing new skill and perspective to their destination. Evidence of increased population movement within the country along with diversified migration destinations is an indication of increased, widened and diversified economic opportunities within the country. On the other hand, these migration trends can also be responsible for burdening existing social services and infrastructure, requiring adjustments in healthcare, education, and housing to accommodate for changing population.

The age selective nature of migrants and lower dependency ratio compared to non-migrants underlines the economic potential of this group and the need for policies that support their integration and maximize their contributions, ensuring that benefits of migration are fully realized for both the migrants and the communities which they join. Likewise, Nepal's caste/ethnic diversity also impacts

migration patterns. Data shows a decline in migration for Brahman (Hill) and Kshetri groups, particularly among females. Conversely, groups like Magar, Tamang, and Tharu show increased mobility. Muslim/Musalman and Yadav/Ahir groups exhibit significant fluctuations, reflecting changing dynamics within the communities.

Policy recommendations

Migration management is the main principle utilized to address the contemporary issues and expected future effects of internal migration, employed in hand with the Constitution of Nepal which guarantees all citizens the fundamental right to freely move, live, work, and settle anywhere within the country without restriction. In order to address this principle, sufficient evidence needs to be generated through the scientific analysis of available data and through collecting required in-depth information regarding internal migration indicated by the current study. This helps to inform proper policies and plans to address vulnerability of migrants, especially women, poor and marginalized groups. This is aligned with and highlighted by the 'leave no one behind' agenda which urges to consider the serious concern amongst left behind migrants' children and older populations. In addition, the current demographic shift clearly displays that the country is entering into the demographic window of opportunity, or demographic power. Capitalization of current demographic power by addressing existing policy challenges is the only way to achieve potential economic development by harnessing the demographic dividend in Nepal. The key policy indicator is to plan systematic urban planning and infrastructure in all ecological zones and provinces which will help current migration flow either to stop, to divert, or to reverse from major mega cities like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitawan. In order to successfully implement this key policy, some specific recommendations are made.

- Inclusive migration policy should be the primary concern to address contemporary internal migration patterns which must be sensitive to gender roles and vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Education, health and employment are key services which people from all demographic and social compositions, economic classes, and geographic residences require at any cost and in any place and time. Increasing the availability and affordability of these services across all regions will appropriately support a decrease in the rising tendency of internal migration at the national level.

In order to appropriately implement migration management policy, all three hierarchical levels of government (National, Province, and Local level) should engage with equal effort. These levels of government are required to further work in close coordination with national and international civil society and the private sector. By doing this, regional balance in population distribution could be maintained and minimized intensive pressure of population in a migration hotspot.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Migration concerns the mobility of individuals. It is a recurring process with varying temporal and spatial patterns, unlike fertility and mortality, which describe singular events associated with specific times and locations (Bell et al., 2014). Migration involves various aspects regarding where individuals move from, where they move to, and at which time or period they move. Individuals migrate for feasible livelihood opportunities. This movement is driven by various factors, including economic opportunities, environmental condition, social and cultural dynamics, and government policies. Consequently, migration significantly affects the population size and distribution of specific locations. Different theories can assist in understanding these migration patterns. For instance, Ravenstein's Laws of Migration (1985) highlight the age and gender selectivity of migration. According to this framework, young adults – particularly males – are more likely to migrate for economic opportunities, aligning with the idea that individuals move to enhance their livelihoods. Similarly, Lee's 'push-pull' model (1966) suggests that individuals migrate due to economic disparities between their current place of residence and their potential destinations, reflecting the economic opportunities and conditions which often drive migration. Additionally, Zelinsky's mobility transition theory posits that as societies develop, their migration patterns change predictably, with significant rural-to-urban migration in later stages (Zelinsky, 1971). This theory underscores how migration patterns evolve with societal development, further influencing population distribution.

Over time, migration routes and causes have changed and shifted. Current migration patterns originate from and settle in distinct locations similar to those in previous periods, which prompts us to consider which indicators are the most pertinent for comparing migrants of today with those of the past (Schrover, 2022). Migrant movement is diverse, without a typical migrant profile or a typical area of origin or destination (World Bank, 2023). Migrants differ by their intention to move, skills and demographic characteristics, and their circumstances. Migration brings benefits and challenges for migrants, both at place of origin and their destination. Both outcomes are influenced by the migrants' personal attributes, the conditions surrounding their migration, and the policies they encounter.

Nepal, with its diverse geography ranging from the Mountain and Hill to the Tarai zones, presents unique challenges and opportunities for internal migration. Historically, internal migration in Nepal has been under-researched compared to fertility and mortality. The 1961 census was the first to collect data on internal migration, yet it was not until the 2001 census that a more detailed examination of internal migration patterns was conducted (KC, 2003). Data from the 2021 census further highlighted the significant impact of internal migration on population distribution, with 34 districts experiencing

negative growth of population, all of which are from the Mountain and Hill zones (NSO, 2024b). Out-migration increased substantially, leading to a growing number of districts with negative growth rates between 2011 and 2021. The population growth rate is uneven between Mountain and Hill zones combined at 0.25 percent, with Tarai at 1.54 percent. At this rate, population in Tarai can be expected to double in the next 45 years, whereas it can be expected to take 276 years for the Mountains and Hill zones. Similarly, the trend of rural-to-urban migration has been particularly pronounced, with cities like Kathmandu, Pokhara, Bharatpur and Dhangadhi experiencing population increase (NSO, 2024b).

The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed fundamental right to move freely, reside, and pursue a livelihood in any part of the country. However, this freedom has led to gaps in consistent and detailed data on internal migration, as there are not any official records of people changing their place of birth over the decades. This lack of data posed challenges in fully understanding and addressing the dynamics of internal migration in Nepal.

Understanding the patterns and impact of internal migration is crucial for policymakers and planners to develop strategies which address the root causes of migration, manage its effects, and harness its potential benefits. Studying internal migration in depth is essential as it provides insights into demographic and socio-economic changes within a country and helps identify areas of growth and decline, informs infrastructure and service planning, and supports the policies to promote balanced regional development. In this regard, this report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of internal migration in Nepal based on census data, examining its levels, trends and patterns and its impact on population and society. The report will also explore the policy responses, as well as interventions needed to manage migration effectively and promote sustainable development across the country.

1.2. Internal migration in Nepal: Data and research

This section deals with the previous research in terms of definition/concept, measurement and analysis. Migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many poor groups across the world, and Nepal is not an exception. Population and housing censuses are vital and primary sources of data on migration, which collect demographic and socioeconomic information on population and housing characteristics of the country at every 10 years as, recommended by the United Nations (UN). The UN has established many principles and recommendations to guide the collection and use of migration data, ensuring that migration policies are informed by accurate and comprehensive information. Regarding migration, the UN's 'Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses' emphasizes the importance of collecting data on place of birth, duration of residence, and place of previous residence to understand migration patterns (UN, 2017). This document provides detailed guidelines for measuring different indicators including internal migration, defining internal migrants as individuals residing in a different civil division from their previous residence. Place of birth, duration of residence, and place of previous residence are the key core topic that the document emphasizes to

measure internal migration. It further stresses the importance of distinguishing between native-born and foreign-born populations for accurate migration analysis.

These principles align with the migration questions included in Nepal's censuses (Table 1.1), which have evolved to capture detailed information on internal and international migration. When addressing the history of data collection on migration in previous censuses, the data only focused on absentee populations and their destinations. Table 1.1 shows a clear picture of migration questions which the census collected. The first census was conducted in 1911, with information on migration related information included since 1920 (Kansakar, 2003). According to Kansakar, Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher established the population census for the first time in 1911. However, the information on the census of 1911 is not available. Despite containing a chapter on migration, census reports from 1920 and 1930 recorded only headcounts of male emigrants. The 1942 census continued collecting data on migration, yet through non-scientific means as it was based only on the headcount of individuals and did not make use of either statistical or scientific methods of data analysis. In the 1952/54 census, data was confined to international migration only. However, for the first time in census history, it collected both internal and international migration data based on place of birth and citizenship. Since this point, census reports have continued to record both internal and international migration information and most of the migration related information is common since the 2001 census. However, there are a few variations in type of information collected by different censuses. For example, in case of migrant's prior residence, the 2011 census collected place of fixed prior date (5 years), whereas the 2021 census collected place of last prior residence. Table 1.1 shows a brief history of collecting migration data in Nepal's censuses. It shows a progressive alignment with UN principles and enhances the quality of the data collected. However, the census data is limited by its decennial collection, offering only a snapshot of migration trends.

Table 1.1: Migration questions 1954-2021 censuses, Nepal

Question	1954	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Place of birth (core topic)								
- Native born	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
- Foreign born	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Duration of residence (core topic)								
- Duration of residence in Nepal (foreign born)	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	-
- Duration of residence in present place	-	-	-	√		√	√	√
Place of residence at fixed prior date (core topic)	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-
Place of last prior residence (core topic)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	√
Reason for residence in present place	-	-	-	√	√	√	√	√

Question	1954	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Absentee population	√	√	-	√	√	√	√	√
VDC/municipality	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	√
Duration of absence	-	-	-	-	√	√	√	√
Reason for absence	-	-	-	√	-	√	√	√
Destination abroad	√	√	-	√	√	√	√	√
Age at time of absence	-	-	-	-	√	√	√	√

Source: KC (2020); NSO (2023a)

The totality of this information is vital for comprehensive data collection in order to inform policies on service delivery, economic planning, and social security schemes for migrants. It also ensures that internal migration trends are effectively monitored and addressed. Moreover, Xu-Doewe (2006) urges that when data on previous residence combines with information on duration of residence, it provides a highly flexible framework. This enables researchers to define the migration interval analytically. The author recommended that internal migration is most suitably measured by a question on the unbroken duration of residences in the current place of usual residence, supplemented by question on the previous place of usual residence (if the unbroken duration is less than the current exact age).

Supporting this, Bell and Muhidin (2009) discuss measurement of migration in terms of event and transition. Events are associated with population registration whereas transition is associated with population census. According to the authors, each measure has its own advantages and limitations. Transitions measured over a fixed interval are most straightforward to analyze and interpret and are most readily comparable from one country to the next. Within this category, data measured over a single year best reflects respondent characteristics at the time of migration, and hence are most effective in capturing migrant selectivity; five year data best reflects contemporary spatial patterns of redistribution, free from the influence of short term period effects which tend to distort patterns over a single year; ten year data risks greater errors in recall and suffers greater data loss – for example, lacking data on movements of the under 10 age group, and depleted by mortality at older ages.

Bell et al. (2014) highlight lifetime migration data as the most common statistics, which is collected by 122 nations globally. Similarly, 52 countries recorded migration as a 5-year transition, whereas 29 countries used a 1-year interval. Additionally, 32 countries employed some other fixed interval that is 2 and 10 years, but 12 countries used the last census as the reference point, whereas others referred to important national events. Many countries measured migration over a fixed interval, but there was wide variation in the choice of reference date.

There is also debate on tracking the internal migration data from censuses due to the defined territory and the time frame. Many countries like Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Rwanda have adopted almost the same methodologies to measure internal migration in census recordings, fitted to

their specific needs and contexts. In this regard, Zimbabwe census measures the migration based on three timeframes: lifetime, inter-censal, and recent migration. Lifetime migration is traced by linking an individual's current place of residence with their place of birth. Inter-censal migration is recorded based on their mobility between the last census and the current census. Likewise, recent migration is recorded based on changes in residence within the last 12 months preceding the census (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2023).

Similarly, in Myanmar, internal migration is measured in the 2014 census through individuals' movements between Townships. Internal migration is recorded as lifetime migration, whereby an individual is considered to be a migrant if he/she has moved at any point in their life, and recent migration, which covers movement within the last five years prior to the census. The census covers migration streams (urban-urban, urban-rural, rural-urban, and rural-rural) with comparisons made between migrants and non-migrants based on social, economic, and housing characteristics (Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, 2016).

Bhutan, on the other hand, has explored internal migration with the reference to both lifetime and recent migration in the National Statistics Bureau's report 'Rural-Urban Migration and Urbanization in Bhutan'. Lifetime migration is here defined as the movement across two points of time from the place of birth to one's current place of residence, which could mean long-term distribution of population. Similarly, the report defines recent migration by mobility within the five years prior to the census, which has reflections on more recent trends and patterns. In addition, the report summarizes the main cause of migration as employment and educational opportunities, and family reasons, followed by further discussion on the impacts on urban growth and rural depopulation. Thus, to achieve a balanced urban development and better rural infrastructure, appropriate management is needed to monitor existing flows of migration patterns along with development of sustainable development throughout the country (National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan, 2018).

The Migration and Spatial Mobility Report 2022 of the Fifth Rwanda Population and Housing Census also gives a comprehensive analysis of migration patterns in Rwanda highlighting both lifetime (movement from place of birth to a different current residence) and recent (movement within the last five years) migration. Both of these migration groups show much higher activity from urban areas than rural areas, largely for the sake of economic opportunities and urban planning strategies. The report noted a substantial level of internal migration, especially from the densely populated areas such as the Northern Province to depopulated regions such as the Eastern Province (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2023).

Wang and Charles-Edwards (2024) adapted three approaches to internal migration: place of enumeration, multilocality, and administrative measures. The place of enumeration approach includes temporary migration based on enumeration of persons on the census night, including

visitors and those absent temporarily from their usual residence. Multilocality deals with people who have held more than one residence or travel back and forth between places, primarily focusing on the duration and frequency of stays. Definition of temporary migrants by their registration status can also include administrative measures, as in the case of China's Hukou system. These measures show the complexity and diversity in the definition and measurement of internal migration and the further need for consensual definitions and measurement for enabling cross-national comparisons and improvement in data quality.

Nonetheless, there is debate on the best way to record the internal migration. Dutta and Shaw (2015) state that use of lifetime migration methods in analyzing migration patterns in India is ineffective. They believe this method fails to capture recent trends and socio-economic factors influencing migration. Their study, using data from the National Sample Survey (1983 to 2007-08), reveals that the lifetime method tends to underestimate more recent migration regarding employment and education, especially for women, whilst overestimating marriage. Current information about migration may therefore help in providing more accurate insights. Comparatively, in Nepal, there is a high prevalence of marriage migration among women. This data suffices to support Dutta and Shaw's statement that recent migration information is more useful in obtaining accurate migration information.

Kitsul and Philipov (1980) further mention that comparison of migration data collected for different time intervals, such as one-year and five-year periods, lack validity. They explain that one-year data are mostly available from registration statistics whereas five-year data are from censuses; thus, they reflect different views on migration patterns to give a more accurate view due to the differences of purpose. They propose to build a mathematical model to bridge these differences and suggest that one-year data can overestimate migration due to the repetitive nature of migration events, which are not captured in five-year data.

On this discussion, Bell et al. (2014) critically review the available data on worldwide practices on internal migration, which refers to the notable variation presenting challenges for cross-national comparison. According to the authors, a five-year transition interval loses occupation most likely to change between the time of migration and census. They reviewed the three main sources of data on internal migration – censuses, surveys, and population registers/administrative records – demonstrating pros and cons of each. The authors state that there should be proper comparable definition and measurement intervals when taking into consideration all changes of usual residence, using a fine-grained spatial method. They note that good migration data are crucial for policy-making and infrastructure planning and advocate for rigorous data collection to enable improved understanding of migration dynamics.

Internal migration has become a major source of demographic change, now exceeding fertility and mortality in many parts of the world. Using data from the IMAGE project, Bell et al. (2015) highlights

the differences in internal migration intensities among different countries. They emphasize the importance of standardized data collection and further research into cause of internal migration to form a clearer view of how it contributes to development. Similarly, Singh (2019) explores how migration reshapes household structures and livelihoods in South India, offering insights relevant to Nepal. The study identifies key migration drivers such as environmental change, economic factors, social networks, and gender dynamics. These drivers are similarly significant in Nepal, where environmental challenges, unprofitable agriculture, and limited job opportunities push individuals to migrate. Migration influences family structures through the emergence of multi-local households and affects risk management due to diversified sources of income through remittances. It acts as an adaptation strategy to economic and environmental challenges, despite potential social fragmentation and increased vulnerability for those left behind. Due to these factors, Nepal needs to understand these links and develop policies that support migrant households and strengthen local adaptation strategies.

Beyond internal migration, international migration is often observed. In Nepal, internal migration to urban areas is the first observed step most individuals choose in order to perform their daily activities, yet afterwards a common thought process shifts towards international migration as an additional step to contribute to economic success. According to Cirillo et al. (2022), individuals who have moved within the country are more likely leave the country. The findings assert that internal migration, with a particular eye to migration to cities, act as a stepping-stone for international migration. Furthermore, the study argues that initial internal migration must be involved in international migration incentives and demonstrates that internal migration can influence decisions to migrate internationally.

By connecting these studies, it is possible to produce a clear map of how to understand and track internal migration. It is important to use internal migration data cautiously in order to make the process easier and more reliable. The studies underline the value of robust migration data for policy -making and infrastructure planning effectively. However, the lifetime migration method provides a snapshot of individuals who have ever migrated from their birthplace to the place of the current residence and misses the dynamics of more recent moves, along with the socio-economic factors influencing them. For reasons that this report will account for, internal migration in terms of recent migration will be utilized for a more realistic and broader outlook of the pattern of internal migration patterns.

Theoretical perspectives on internal migration

This review explores different theoretical perspectives that explain internal migration. It deals with key theories, including Ravenstein's Laws of Migration (1885, 1889), Lee's 'push-pull' theory (1966), and mobility transition theory (Zelinsky, 1971) to provide a comprehensive understanding of internal migration and influencing factors. The theoretical perspectives on internal migration discussed below can be linked to the migration patterns observed in Nepal.

Ravenstein's Laws of Migration

Ravenstein's Laws of Migration were formulated in the late 19th century to explain trends and patterns of human migration. This law highlights that most migrants travel short distances, moving from one rural area to another urban area because of economic opportunities and conditions of life. Adopting the notion of chain migration, migration by the individual comprises moving to a nearby town and reaching an even farther city. Ravenstein also observed that women are more likely to migrate internally than men, while men tend to migrate internationally. Each migration flow creates a counter flow as for every population that migrates towards a new location, there is most likely a population that will migrate away from it. Additionally, Ravenstein observed that young adults are more likely to migrate than older adults, with this age also changing with sex and life stage. There is a remarkable movement of people from rural areas to cities because of better employment opportunities and living conditions, such as Kathmandu. Similarly, there is also age-selective migration in Nepal which generally results in younger individuals moving to cities to provide better opportunities for employment while older members remain behind in rural communities. Given these observations, Ravenstein's law seems pertinent to Nepal.

Everett S. Lee's 'A Theory of Migration'

By presenting a theory of internal migration, Everett S. Lee's paper entitled 'A Theory of Migration' elaborates much more than Ravenstein's theory alone (Lee, 1966). Lee explains why individuals migrate and also introduced a more comprehensive framework which includes factors at the migration origin and destination. Lee highlights the role of intervening obstacles, such as distance and physical barriers, in shaping migration patterns which may significantly affect the efficiency of migration streams. His theory usually credited with the development of the push-pull migration theory. According to this theory, factors that influence migration can be divided into two factors – push (negative aspects of the origin) and pull (positive aspects of the destination) – which drive migration. This framework has served as a cornerstone to several hypotheses and further studies in migration.

Lee's 'push-pull' model can adequately be applied to this national context as it adequately explains the internal migration patterns in Nepal. The main push factors of rural areas – such as limited opportunities and lower living standards – drive many young Nepalese people to migrate to urban centers like Kathmandu. Pull factors, such as better employment prospects and improved living conditions in cities, entice migrants to those urban areas. This very pattern is also evident in the huge rural-urban migration in Nepal. However, it is not so surprising to understand that the most represented age group in such migration patterns is the younger population of Nepal who migrate usually to cities for economic opportunities, while their older generations show to mostly remain in rural areas.

Wilbur Zelinsky's 'The Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition'

Wilbur Zelinsky's (1971) paper, 'The Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition' also discussed migration patterns and processes. Zelinsky further provides a detailed framework linking migration patterns to the stages of the Demographic Transition Model (DTM). Zelinsky posits that, as societies progress through different stages of development, their migration patterns change predictably. In pre-modern traditional societies, mobility is high, but migration is low. According to Zelinsky, rural-to-urban migration occurs as societies have developed. This rural-urban migration pattern is then followed by increasing rates of urban-to-urban migration at more advanced development stages. In highly industrialized societies one sees high amounts of urban-to-suburban migration which are then followed by inter-urban and intra-urban mobility flows in hyper-advanced societies. In addition to this, Zelinsky further gives attention to the role of economic development and technological and social changes in migration. As such, this theory also fits within the Nepalese context because it provides a complete, predictive model of understanding how mobility and migration evident changes with economic development, technological change, and social change.

These theories are helpful to understand the diverse nature of migration exhibited within Nepal, such as through the interrelation between economic factors with social and developmental aspects in shaping migration behaviour patterns which are driven by a combination of push versus pull factors, opportunities in the economic realm, and the stage of development reached by society.

1.3. Policies related to internal migration in Nepal

Policies on internal migration are designed to address the challenges and opportunities associated with the movement of people within a country. These policies can vary greatly depending on the specific context and priorities of each country, but they generally aim to promote sustainable development, social cohesion, and economic growth. In Nepal, there is a lack of a comprehensive migration policy that specifically addresses internal migration within the country. However, the government has implemented various initiatives to support internal migration in its five-year development plans. Nepal's internal migration policies have evolved significantly over time, influenced by various socio-economic, political, and environmental factors. They are discussed briefly in the following section.

1.3.1. Periodic plan

The history of internal migration in Nepal has taken various turns whilst changing its course. This is reflected in the country's periodic plans, which have shifted focus from resettlement programs to various, including rural development, urbanization, and regional balance. This section analyzes Nepal's periodic plans based on three distinct phases: before 1990, after the restoration of democracy in 1990, and post 2015 (see detail in Annex 1).

Before 1990: Nepal's periodic plans did not explicitly prioritize internal migration before 1990. Instead, policies mainly focused on population redistribution through resettlement programs aiming to alleviate population pressure in the hills and mountains by relocating people to the fertile Tarai zone. Consequently, some plans indirectly addressed internal migration issues by emphasizing rural development, infrastructure, and employment opportunities.

After 1990: After restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepal's periodic plans started to explicitly address internal migration through strategies focused on rural development and urbanization. There was a strong emphasis on decentralization and local governance to better manage internal migration. Additionally, policies during this period also concentrated on the rehabilitation and reintegration of internally displaced persons.

After 2015: After restructuring and federalization of the country in 2015, the policies were focused to balance regional/provincial development, reducing urban-rural disparities, and promoting sustainable urbanization. These objectives align well with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 global goals established by the United Nations in 2015. In particular, the 16th periodic plan features a separate chapter regarding issues concerning the SDGs.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, yet a priority recommended action concerns the management of the population through a change in negative narratives on migration. With the limited window of opportunity, policies should be focused on creating an enabling environment for opportunities at the place of origin. These policies must be developed with the involvement of stakeholders as government agencies, civil society organizations, and affected populations, and aimed at the well-being of all people, regardless of their migration status.

According to the World Bank (2023), there are three types of refugees which align with migrants. Firstly, migrants with a better match tend to be less mobile and contribute no less to the destination society than non-migrants. Secondly, migrants with a weaker match tend to be more mobile and often choose a destination based on immediate safety needs rather than labor market considerations. Finally, distressed migrants usually move irregularly and in unsafe ways, which poses severe challenges for the migration destination. Therefore, both the place of destination and the place of origin can design and implement policies which maximize benefits and address the negatives in order to accommodate for the systematic facilitation of migration whilst maximizing the benefit of migration for sustainable development.

1.3.2. Population policy

2014 oversaw the endorsement of the Population Policy by the Cabinet for the first time in Nepal. Prior to this, population related issues were incorporated into national periodic plans. This policy had marked an important milestone by providing a clear framework to address and advocate the demographic challenges and integrate such within development planning. At its current stage, the policy is currently in the process for revision and re-drafting. Regarding internal migration, the following key points related to internal migration issues are addressed in Population Policy 2014:

1. Balanced Regional Development: The policy contains a focus on balanced regional development as a means of dealing with internal migration effectively through redirecting the population to low density areas and establishment of new urban cities. It further advocated for reducing the disparities between urban and rural areas. Similarly, the policy promoted equitable access to resources, infrastructure, and services across all regions.
2. Urbanization and infrastructure: The policy has aimed at the management of urban growth in a sustainable manner, with a focal approach towards rapid urbanization and imbalanced regional distribution. This encompasses the provision of housing, infrastructure, and services for the inflow of migrants in the urban areas.
3. Rural development: To address the root causes of internal migration, the policy set measures to improve living conditions of rural population by increasing agricultural productivity, job opportunities, education and health facilities.
4. Decentralization and local governance: The policy was supportive of decentralization for the strengthening of local governance to manage internal migration. Through empowering local governments, the policy aims to ensure that issues related to migration are addressed at the community level, with local solutions to specific needs.
5. Data and research: The policy has prioritized the need for reliable data and research on internal migration patterns. It calls for regular population censuses and surveys to gather accurate information on migration trends, which can guide planning and policy decisions.
6. Social inclusion and equity: The policy promoted social inclusion and equity for all migrants regardless of their place of origin, through the promotion of access to basic services and opportunities for all. It also addressed the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups among the migrants, who are disproportionately affected due to migration.

Overall, policies on internal migration should be comprehensive, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all sects of population in the country, including migrants, host communities, vulnerable groups, and so on. Policies should be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and affected populations, and should be designed to promote the well-being and rights of all individuals, regardless of their migration status.

1.3.3. Internal migration and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	
1.1	By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day
1.2	By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
1.3	Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
	Policy link: Migration is one of the livelihood strategies which diversifies opportunities. It has been observed that international migration has contributed largely to alleviating poverty in rural areas, which also applies to internal migration. In this sense, increased mobility is a sign of development, however planned regulation of population mobility through population redistribution policy is required for sustainable and balanced development of the country.
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
	Policy link: Policies promoting access to education in origin, especially in rural areas, can reduce the need for migration by providing local opportunities. As of 2021 census data, 14 percent reported the reason of migration as study/training. Thus, ensuring educational continuity for migrant is essential for both in origin and at destination.
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	
5.4	Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
	Policy link: Feminization of internal migration can offer women new opportunities but also expose them to risks. They often face challenges such as exploitation and lack of access of services. Therefore, policies must ensure safe migration pathways and support for women migrants.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth	
8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro small and medium sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
8.5	Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
8.8	Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.
	Policy link: Migration can contribute to labour market imbalances and exploitation of migrant workers. About 22 percent cited work/job related factors as reasons for migration. Development oriented policies that create jobs and support entrepreneurship can reduce the need for migration by providing local opportunities.
Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	
10.7	Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	
11.3	By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
11.a	Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban2 and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.
	Policy link: High concentration in urban and peri-urban areas invites consideration regarding urban planning and development policies. Both must accommodate the needs of migrants and ensure sustainable urbanization.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

17.8 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states. This will significantly increase the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Policy link: Accurate data on internal migration patterns can help design better policies to manage and support internal migration.

1.4. Organization of the report

This report contains six chapters. Chapter two deals with methods and materials used in the current thematic report. Chapter three concerns lifetime migration which discusses levels, trends and patterns at national, provincial, and district level. Recent migration based on last prior residence is addressed in Chapter four. It covers levels, trends and patterns of recent migration at national, provincial, and district levels. It also discusses rural-urban stream and reasons for recent migration. Chapter five provides details about migration and socio-demographic change and describes population redistribution, migration and age-sex structure and the migration and social change. It further examines the relationship between internal and international migration in terms of recent migration and absentees living abroad. Finally, chapter six concludes the findings and provides policy recommendation suggestions.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This section deals with the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data on internal migration. This study aims to examine the patterns and dynamics of internal migration, covering both lifetime and recent migration. It seeks to map the distribution of internal migration across the country and to compare the characteristics of internal migration with those from the previous census, providing insights for potential policy implications. The methodological part adopted for this report consisted of mainly five activities that include preparatory activities, desk review, assessment and analysis of the 2021 NPHC data, assessment quality of data, and methods and process of analysis. There are two additional sections to highlight the limitation of data and its uses and definition, concepts and methods for calculation of various migration related rates and ratios used in the report.

2.1. Preparatory activities

The preparatory activities include the overall study design and conceptual framework, which were collaboratively developed and finalized among National Statistics Office (NSO), Central Department of Population Studies (CDPS), and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). During the inception phase, the thematic report team was involved to define the study's objectives, outputs, deliverables, and working framework. An orientation session was conducted by NSO, CDPS, and UNFPA to familiarize authors with the guidelines and standards for thematic report production, ensuring clarity, consistency, and coherence throughout the report.

In order to monitor the progress of the thematic report writing, two workshops were conducted in support of the UNFPA during the report writing phase. The workshops involved assessing the completeness of data, data analysis and writing of the report and providing feedbacks to the authors. Census data were checked, rechecked and edited with the help of data experts from NSO. The NSO provided required data in Excel files, which facilitated detailed analysis. During the detail analysis, additional inconsistencies and errors were identified and resolved with the help of NSO. This was crucial because some census data used in this report were not publicly available. Consequently, this report presents new findings from the 2021 NPHC.

2.2. Desk review

Desk review involves mainly in two activities – review of literature and the review of data from the censuses. Review of literature involves review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature as well as policy documents that largely helped conceptualize and operationalize the thematic analysis and report writing. It also helped to contextualize the concepts and methods to data on internal migration

in Nepal produced by Census 2021. It involved assessing trends, policy impacts, and socio-economic effects of internal migration. This process was continuous from the inception phase to finalizing the report.

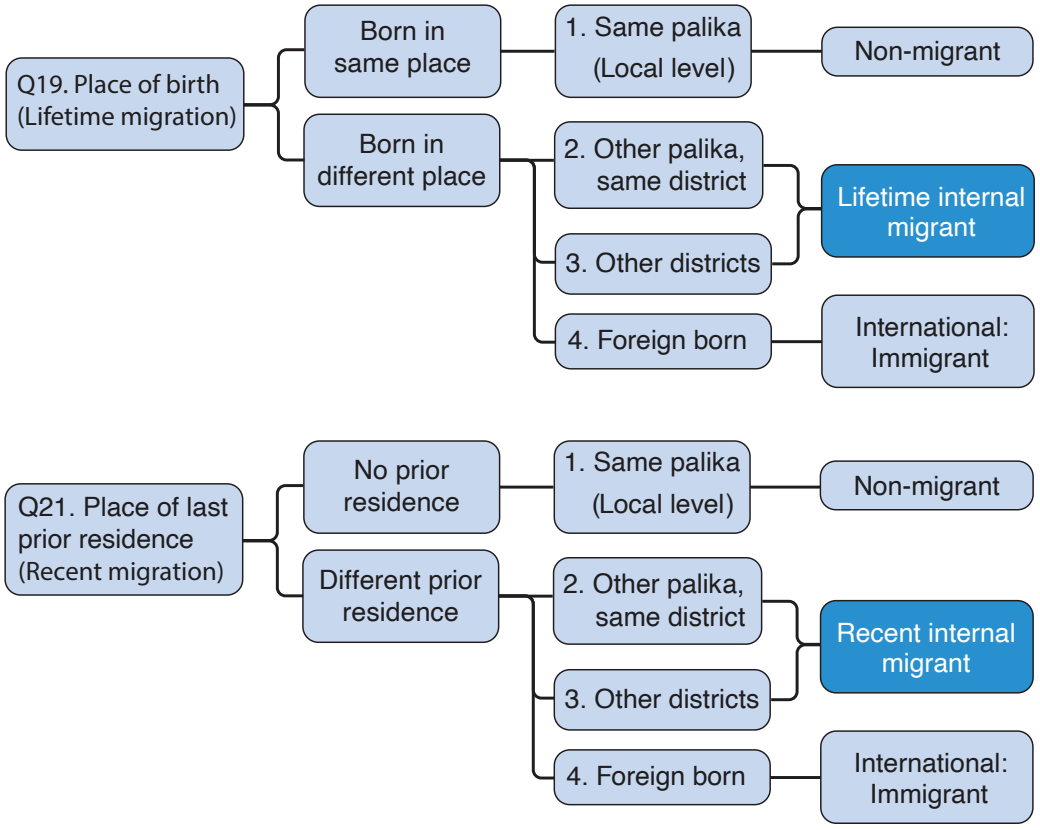
The data were gathered and compiled from existing census and the previous census reports, research papers, government reports, statistical data, and previous studies on internal migration. A review was made by focusing on key themes such as migration patterns, demographic changes, economic impacts, and policy responses. The key findings were synthesized by summarizing major trends, and insights.

2.3. Understanding data for internal migration

Section 1.2 of the first chapter has discussed about the history of data collection for internal migration. Until the date of NPHC 2021, five topics of internal migration data have been collected by the censuses. They include place of birth, duration of residence, place of residence at fixed prior date, place of last prior residence and the reasons for migration (see Table 1.1). The census is continuously collecting the place of birth data since 1961. Data on duration of residence was collected for the first time in 1981 census but not collected in 1991 census. Since 2001, however, censuses have been continuously collecting the duration of residence data. Data on place residence at fixed prior date was collected first time in 2011, but it has not been included in Census 2021. For the first time in the history of Nepal's census, data on place of last prior residence has been collected by the 2021 census. Reasons for migration is not a core topic which has been collected continuously since 1981. In this way, data on place of birth is the only internal migration data the census is collecting consistently since 1961.

This report is primarily based on National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2021 data provided by the NSO. The analysis of NPHC 2021 data is further supported by both previously published sources mainly focusing on census data to inform trend and patterns of internal migration for comparative purposes. The migration data in this study is based on the place of birth and place of prior residence. Internal migration status was determined by comparing the current residence at the time of the census with the place of birth and the last prior residence. Lifetime migration data was obtained by comparing the current residence with the place of birth, while recent migration data was derived by comparing the current residence with the last prior residence. This study focuses only on internal migration by analyzing both lifetime and recent migration indicated in the shadowed box in Figure 2.1. The data on duration of residence (or stay) and reasons for migration are subsequent information for both lifetime and recent migration and its use is made accordingly.

Figure 2.1: Data on internal migration from census 2021 questions, Nepal



Despite the absence of continuous tracking of internal migrants, the census remains the primary source for internal migration data because it provides a comprehensive snapshot of migration patterns. There were two main questions used to collect the data on internal migration in NPHC 2021: question no. 19 was devoted to collect lifetime migration and the question no. 21 to collect the recent migration (Figure 2.1). Both questions have equal scope and importance in the study of internal migration. As the lifetime migration data is available for all the censuses since 1961, migration trend can be analyzed by comparing the present to the past censuses. Recent migration, on the other hand, cannot be analyzed to inform the migration trend because the data on recent migration is not available in the past censuses. The migration data were collected at urban/rural palika level. These two questions were followed by the questions related to duration of residence and the reasons for migration. Internal migration defined in the figure is used for the analysis. It is to note here that lifetime migration includes both origin and destination, However, recent migration does not have information on place of origin which is the main limitation in recent migration data.

Previous research suggests that lifetime migration is not appropriate to capture recent trends and changes in migration patterns, leading to outdated and potentially misleading conclusions. For instance, it overlooks short-term or temporary migrations and recent socio-economic factors influencing migration decisions. Study findings, such as those by Dutta and Shaw (2015), highlight that lifetime migration data do not reflect the recent flow in women's migration for employment and education, resulting in an incomplete understanding of contemporary migration dynamics. Levy and Wadycki (1972) also emphasize the importance of recent migration data to accurately capture the effects of economic incentives and other factors driving migration. Recent migration data provide a more current and dynamic picture, essential for developing effective policies and understanding modern migration trends. Therefore, in this report, analysis of lifetime is in brief only to focus on migration trend comparing with past data. The report is solely based on the in-depth analysis of recent migration.

2.4. Migration data quality

The census process doesn't end when the counting stops. After data collection, there is a meticulous and detailed process to clean and improve the information, which is essential for ensuring data quality and providing accurate and reliable insights. The NSO conducted three main activities related to the census: pre-census activities, enumeration, and post-census activities.

To ensure data quality, the NSO recruited enumerators and supervisors through open competition, specifying the required qualifications and, for the first time in census history opened an online application process. Additionally, they conducted a series of questionnaire tests, training sessions, fieldwork supervision, key verification during data entry, and expert data analysis. Several steps were taken to enhance data quality, including the formation of various committees such as the Population Census Advisory committee, Technical Committee, Thematic Committee, and Questionnaires and Manual Preparation Committee, all coordinated by the Director General of the NSO. Furthermore, census publicity was carried out through mass media, workshops, and seminars from the beginning to improve census coverage. During the census, the quality of the census enumeration process has been effectively supported by the observation committees of different organizations, one of which was the Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University. Dedicated teams worked with great efficiency to make sure that data was collected accurately and in efficient ways. Preparing thematic reports is one of the post-census activities. These reports go in-depth into the data collected to give detailed insights on various demographic, social, and economic trends. Of the themes, internal migration is an important area of focus that provides valuable information on how and why people move within the country. Among the 193 UN member states, 179 collect data on internal migration. However, the nature of this data varies widely, with differences in the types of data collected, and the intervals at which migration is tracked (Bell et al., 2014).

Census data represents the gold standard in data collection on these migration patterns, since it is the only data source that asks the question: "One year ago, what was your usual address?" of an entire population (Lomax, 2022). Census data offers a once-in-a-decade opportunity to comprehensively assess population mobility. Other data sources capture these patterns outside of census years, but they rely on administrative data or sample surveys, neither of which are designed to measure patterns across an entire population. The main challenge for census data is undercounting, yet this problem is compounded for migration analysis because the most mobile groups are those most likely to be overlooked. Due to the chances of multiple moves, it is difficult to track their mobility (transition). Population registers, therefore, provide the occurrences of moves (events), while censuses record the individuals who move (transitions).

In the context of Nepal, this issue is particularly relevant. Nepal's political/administrative structures, including its seven provinces, 77 districts, and 753 municipalities and its 6,743 wards, play a significant role in how migration data is recorded and interpreted. The diverse topography (ecological geography) and varying socio-economic conditions across these units can complicate the accurate recording and analysis of migration patterns. This complexity underscores the need for a robust and detailed migration recording system to better understand and address the migration dynamics within the country.

Internal migration needs to be understood since the process impacts the size and composition of regional populations. Data on migration have been collected since 1954, initially with just three questions. Over time, these have been expanded and refined in subsequent censuses. The latest census now includes core topics recommended by the UN, making it comparable to those of other countries. For the 2021 census, data on an individual's place of birth, residence at a particular time in the past (commonly one or five years ago), and previous residence regardless of when the move occurred are gathered as core topics, as recommended by the United Nations Principles and Recommendations. This greatly influences the quality of the collected data and its international comparability. The major aspects the definition covers are space, time, type, and the form. Having consistent definitions across countries allows for more accurate comparisons of migration patterns, trends, and impacts on various populations. This comparability is essential for policymakers, researchers, and organizations to understand migration dynamics globally and to develop effective strategies to address related issues.

The spatial framework within which migration is recorded is another important issue relevant to comparative research and the analysis of trends over time. Generally, migration is tracked between a set of predetermined existing administrative units, which may poorly reflect the underlying socio-economic conditions of local areas. Methodologically, the number and size of these geographical units significantly influence the recorded level of migration: more units result in higher recorded

migration levels, and fewer units result in lower levels (Courgeau, 1973 cited in Bernard, 2022). Overall, it is important to critically evaluate the quality of migration data based on the census by considering these factors and using multiple sources of data to corroborate findings. Migration data collected through censuses can be a valuable source of information for understanding population movements and trends. However, it is important to recognize the limitations of this data and supplement it with additional sources, such as administrative records or surveys, to provide a more comprehensive picture of migration patterns. Moreover, the shifting methodologies and approaches used in conducting censuses over time can raise questions about the consistency and quality of the resulting data. Various dimensions of quality, such as coverage, relevancy, timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and consistency, play a vital role in assessing the effectiveness of census data.

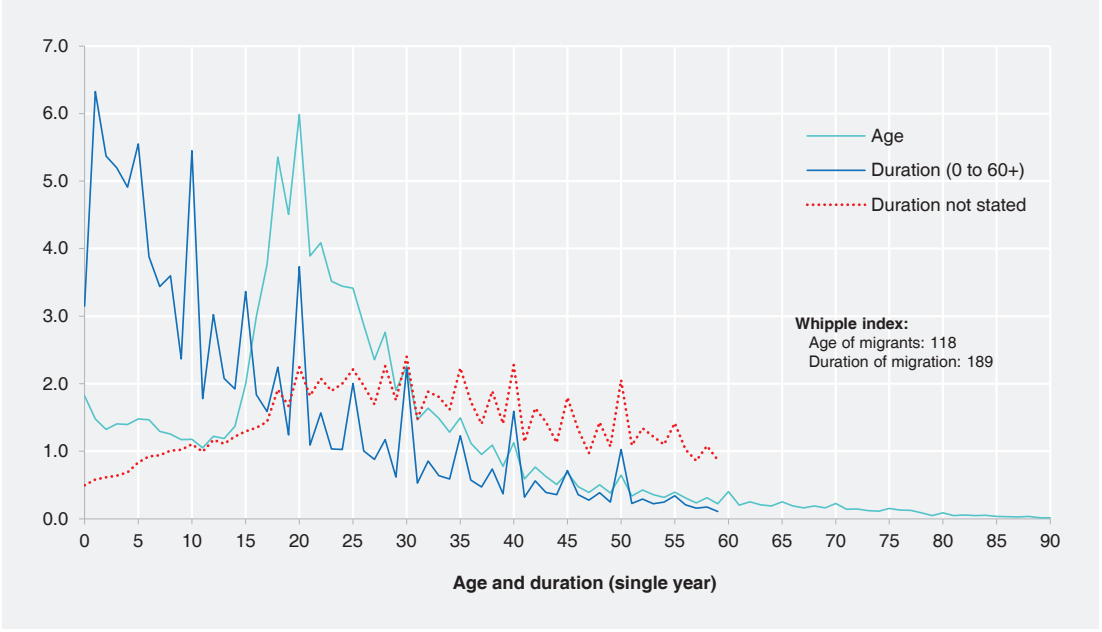
Internal migration is well-represented in the 2021 census through questions on place of birth, prior residence, and duration of stay; it would be even better with detailed local-level in-migration data. Underreporting and misreporting, despite the use of technology and observation teams, challenge accuracy. Timeliness is restricted by the very fact that this is a decennial census, which creates huge gaps between the periods of actual data collection. Accessibility is generally good, with online access, but can be improved through more user-friendly digital interfaces. Regarding consistency through standardized methodologies, changes must be clearly documented, and regular updating of practices should be enacted in the future to make provision for reliable and comparable data across time. Recommendations are focused toward enhancing relevance, improvement of accuracy through better training and technology, integration of continuous data collection toward timeliness, and the development of user-friendly digital access (see detail in Annex 2).

Age and sex reporting in internal migration data

When migration data is age and sex selective (Ravenstein, 1889), the quality of data becomes even more critical. Accurate data on the age and sex of migrants help in understanding the specific needs and impacts of different demographic groups which are essential for planning and policy making. For instance, migration propensities are generally high among children and young adults that they are the most mobile group in any population (Ravenstein, 1889; Castro & Rogers, 1983). Migration of children is significant as most of the migration involves family migration in internal migration. Regarding sex, female migrates more inside country, whereas males migrate more internationally (Grigg, 1977). Moreover, accurate age and sex data help in analyzing the economic contributions and social integration of migrants, which can vary significantly across different groups. The age pattern of internal migration in Nepal closely follows Ravenstein's Laws of Migration, indicating that most internal migration occurs between the age of 15 to 40 (Figure 2.2). The figures begin to rise from around age 15 and picking up in age 20 to 30 into further ages, illustrating the accuracy of recording of census data on internal migration. The evidence in the figure suggests that there are high fluctuations in reporting of age, high in reporting of "0" and "5" digits. This may not influence coverage of migration

data, yet it still indicates inaccuracy in reporting of age, evident by the digit preference in age reporting. The Whipple index of age distribution of internal migrants is 118 (Figure 2.2), which qualifies that the data is "approximate" and is far less than the national aggregate of 149 (NSO, 2024b), which is much higher than national aggregate.

Figure 2.2: Age of migrants and duration of migration in single year – most recent migration, NPHC 2021



Source: NPHC, 2021.

Duration of migration in a single year may also be of interest in informing reporting errors as it involves number and digit preference, especially "0" and "5", which is the most common in Nepal. As shown in Figure 2.2, digit preference of a higher degree in duration of migration in whole ranges up to 60 years and above (lumped). Line graph data and the Whipple index illustrates the reporting of the duration as 189, which indicates the data is "very rough". Data quality in both age and duration may not have direct influence on the coverage of data, but they have relationship with reporting tendency in migration and other variables. Proportion of 'duration not stated' is also displayed against age. Digit preference in duration 'not stated' also exists, which is quite higher in ages after 15 up to 50, but the degree of error is compared to duration of migration. In addition, 'not stated' data on place of birth and prior residence were checked against rural-urban, ecological zone and province (not shown in table). Proportions of 'not stated' in all categories are far less than one percent for both ecological zone and province and it is around one percent for rural-urban residence, which may indicate the response rate is considerably high in migration data.

The post enumeration survey (PES) of Nepal's 2021 National Population and Housing Census is another essential activity of post census process. It provides a detailed assessment of the accuracy of the census data (NSO, 2023b). The PES aimed to measure both coverage and content errors, which include undercounting, over-counting, and inaccuracies in reported characteristics such as age and place of birth. This report also highlights the importance of continuous improvement in census methodologies to ensure accurate and reliable data. These findings are crucial for understanding internal migration patterns in Nepal and for making informed decisions in policy making and development planning.

Quality migration data must necessarily form the basis for precise demographic studies and effective policy implementation. Comprehensive age and sex data, together with the application of rigorous methods such as the PES, will further enhance the dependability of migration statistics. Two continuous improvements in the practice of census-taking involve technology use and intensive training for the enumerators to limit the occurrences of errors, making data more accurate. Trustworthy migration data underpins informed judgments on development planning, social services, and resource allocation, and ultimately furthers our understanding of population dynamics and the needs of migrant populations.

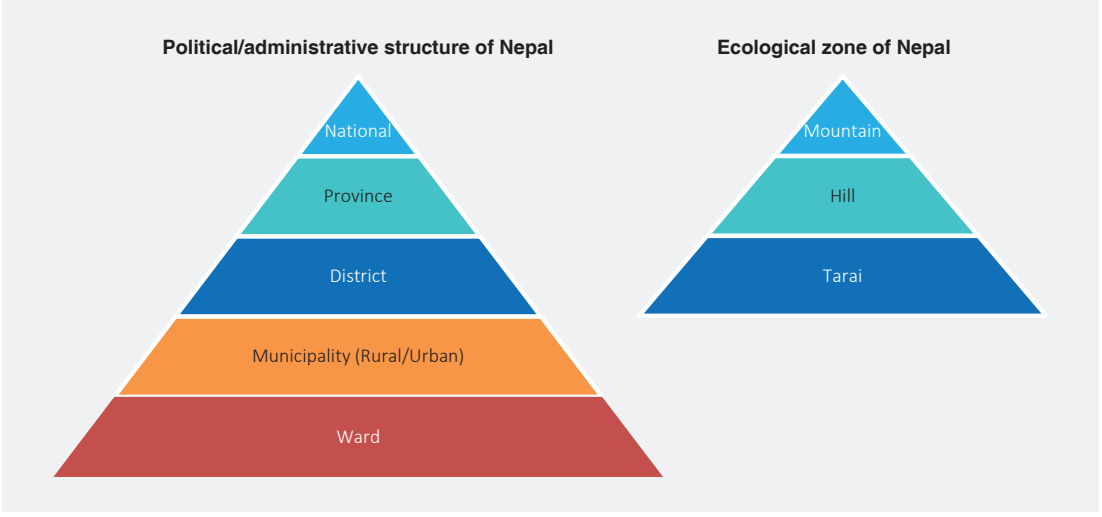
2.5. Methods and process of analysis

Internal migration data from the NPHC 2021 was reviewed with potential challenges identified and solutions proposed. The report adheres to the UNFPA House Style, as outlined during the orientation organized by UNFPA and CDPS at the NSO Hall. Additionally, the study has tried to incorporate data from relevant literatures to enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the analysis. Since then, data derived from the dummy tables submitted to the NSO were precisely analyzed thematically using content analysis techniques.

Internal migration was not a subject of cross-national census inquiry 'until 1850 when the national state of birth was asked for, and it was not until 1940 that questions were carried on residence at a fixed date in the past (Siegel & Swanson, 2004). Migration can indeed be measured using different methods, each with its own set of advantages and limitations. The most common method to measure migration is based on events (moves) which track individual movement events through population registration or administrative datasets. Another method is based on transition (movers) where migration is measured using population census. This method compares the place of residence at the time of the census with the place of birth and prior residence at a specified point in the past. Basically, three approaches have been used – (i) place of birth, (ii) place of residence at some fixed point in the past (one or five years ago), and (iii) place of previous residence, irrespective of when the move occurred (lifetime migration). While some countries such as Australia and Canada collect data on place of residence at three points in time, at the census and one and five years prior, they still miss prior migrations (Bernard, 2022). Both methods contribute valuable insights into migration pattern and can be used to inform policy and planning. However, this report utilized the census data to interpreting the migration data.

Migration involves territory and the level of territory may vary with the country context depending upon the given political and administrative structure. This is the first census under the federal structure. In Nepal there are five hierarchical levels of political/administrative structure – national, province, district, and municipality and its wards (Figure 2.3). NPHC 2021 collected data on both lifetime and recent migration based on residential change of municipality. However, for recent migration, place of origin municipality is not identified and the migration accounts only the in-migration in a given municipality. On the other hand, there is also three different ecological zones varied with topography in Nepal – Mountain, Hill and Tarai. It signifies a vast diversity in geological and related components such as altitude and geophysical situation, climate, and all types of development infrastructure. Since beginning of the history of migration in Nepal, ecological zone has been a main area of migration that changes the residence of people. It is important to understand residential variation in population that differentiate social and cultural identity. Analysis in this study follows both structures, but it goes only up to three levels of political/administrative structure – national, ecological, province and district levels (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Political/administrative structure and ecological zone of Nepal



With the new Constitution of Nepal 2015, targeted efforts to restructure have been actioned and the country has since been designated as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. According to the new federal constitution, there are three tiers of government – the central federal government, seven provincial governments and 753 local governments. The local government is designated as municipality, with 753 municipalities in the country, which is formed of 6,743 wards. In 2017, the government classified the 753 local governments into two specific regions: rural and urban municipalities. The new municipalities were formed by merging and remerging of previous 3,276 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and 191 Municipalities (Nagarpalikas) and their wards.

Many rural VDCs were transformed into urban municipalities. Reclassifying such rural VDCs as urban areas has had a substantial impact on the increase in size of local units and the number of urban units. Of the total local units, there are 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 urban municipalities and 460 rural municipalities.

Constitutionally, there is no districts at any level of the governments, but the previous districts continue in practice. Prior to this, there were 75 districts and the new structure has added two more districts by splitting Rukum and Nawalparasi, now added up to a total of 77 districts. Districts are the main basis of division of seven provinces: (1) Koshi is formed of 14 districts of the eastern part the country; (2) Madhesh covers eight districts of the central Tarai; (3) Bagmati covers 13 districts of central hill and mountain ecological zone; (4) Gandaki has 11 districts of west of Bagmati and Madhesh provinces; (5) Lumbini has 12 districts of hill and Tarai zones; (6) Karnali is mid-western part of the country, covering 10 mountain and hill districts; and (7) Sudurpashchim province lies in the far-western part of the country, covering nine Hill and Tarai districts.

Migration involves changes in residence in terms of geographical or administrative territory. In order to inform residential variation in the state of internal migration, three types of classifications are used in the analysis – ecological zone, administrative territory and the type of place of residence. As discussed above, Mountain, Hill and Tarai are the categories for ecological zone. National, provincial and districts are the three levels of administrative territories that are used in the analysis. Finally, type of place of residence includes rural and urban. In case of rural and urban residences, there are two different types of classification availed by the National Statistical Office for Census 2021 data – rural and urban based on municipalities and rural, peri-urban and urban residence classified based on degree of urbanization (DEGURBA) (NSO, 2024a). Both types of rural and urban classifications are used in the analysis depending upon its relevancy. In case of municipality level analysis, rural and urban municipalities are used and DGURBA classification of rural and urban is used to inform variation in residence.

Official classification of ecological zone and province are further classified by adding one more category, Kathmandu Valley, in the analysis. It is important, especially, to inform volume and relative magnitude of recent migration. This is due to the fact that migration flow has been significantly seen towards Kathmandu Valley in recent years. The reason behind this trend can be due to the fact that the Kathmandu Valley is the capital city, formed of three districts, which holds a share of 10.4 percent of the total population. It contains 18 urban and three rural municipalities as follows:

- Kathmandu – 11 (one metropolitan city and 10 urban municipalities);
- Lalitpur – 6 (one metropolitan city, two urban and three rural municipalities); and
- Bhaktapur – four urban municipalities.

The category of Kathmandu Valley applies to both ecological zone and province. It lies among both the Hill ecological zone and within Bagmati province. However, it is important to note here that the coverage of Kathmandu Valley is the same for both ecological zone and province.

In addition, the report is based on descriptive analysis to illustrate patterns of internal migration using tables, graphs, maps, and charts. Bivariate analysis is conducted to explore the relationship between internal migration and various demographic and socio-economic factors, such as place of residence, education, and wealth, with gender being a cross-cutting issue included in most analyses. Trend analysis is utilized to track changes in internal migration over time, allowing for comparisons between different groups of migrants and non-migrants.

2.6. Definition, concept and methods

This study has utilized a number of terms and techniques to measure migration levels, trends and patterns. This section deals with definition, concepts and methods of the terms and techniques used in the report in the following paragraphs.

Native-born population: Population of a specified migration defining area who were born in the country (Nepal) irrespective of migration status.

Place of birth: This is the core topic for internal migration. In this study, place of birth refers to a location or migration unit where a person's mother usually resided at the time of their birth but not necessarily related to citizenship. It is used to identify the lifetime migration.

Place of origin: A migration defining area where a migrant was born (place of birth for lifetime migration) or where a migrant resided before migrating to the current place of residence (place last prior residence for recent migration).

Place of destination: A migration defining area where a migrant is currently living at the time of census enumeration who migrated from her/his place of birth or last prior residence.

Usual place of residence: The usual place of residence is defined as the location where a person has lived continuously for the majority of the last 12 months (at least six months and one day), excluding temporary absence for holidays or work assignments, or where they intend to live for at least six months (UN, 2017). This aligns with the census definition, which states that a person should be counted based on where they have lived for at least six months in the past year or where they plan to live for at least six months in the future.

Migration: Migration is defined as a move from one migration defining area to another (or a move of some specified minimum distance) that was made during a given migration interval and that involved a change of residence (UN, 1970). In this study, migration is defined as a move from one local unit to another local unit in a specified time.

Migrant: A migrant is a person who has changed his usual place of residence from one migration-defining area to another (or who moved some specified minimum distance) at least once during the migration interval (UN, 1970).

Internal migrant: An internal migrant is a person who has changed his usual place of residence from one migration-defining area to another (or who moved some specified minimum distance) at least once during the migration interval (UN, 1970).

Duration of residence (or duration of stay, duration of migration): It is defined as the number of complete years that a person has lived in their locality of usual residence or in the civil division in which such locality is situated (UN, 2017).

In migration study, duration of residence, duration of stay or duration of migration are synonymously used which is the duration of migrant's stay (length of stay) in the current place of residence in which the person lived until the date of the census enumeration, in completed years.

Non-migrant: A person who have enumerated in the place where s/he was born. In other words, a person who has never migrated or has not changed her/his place of residence until the date of the census enumeration.

Lifetime migration/lifetime migrant: Lifetime migration is designated if the place of usual residence at the time of enumeration is different from the place of birth. A person is a lifetime migrant if his/her current place of usual residence is different from his/her place of birth.

In this study, lifetime migration is calculated as number of lifetime migrants as a percentage of total native-born population for a given area.

Recent migration/migrants: NPHC 2021 collected information on migration as a core topic based on place of last prior residence. Accordingly, this study has used this information as recent migration which is defined if the last prior residence is different from the current place of residence at the time census date. Thus, a recent migrant is a person whose place of last prior residence is different from the current place of residence where s/he is residing until the date census enumeration.

Recent migration does not consider the place of birth in the definition. However, it also includes the lifetime migration for those whose last prior residence is their place of birth. To avoid reporting inaccuracy, especially due to recall lapse error, this study tries to capture the most recent migration by limiting duration of migration in less than five years in the analysis. The analysis is focused on the recent migration without limiting duration in chapter four and in chapter five the duration is limited to less than five years.

The recent migration rate is calculated as the number of recent migrants as a percentage of native-born population (excluding population from institutional households).

Absentees abroad: Absentee is the family member(s) who are absent from the household at the time of enumeration living abroad for six months and above or who intend to live abroad for six months and above.

In-migrants/out-migrants: In-migrants are individuals who move into a migration defining area from another part of the same country. Out-migrants are individuals who leave a migration defining area to move to another area of the country.

In- and out-migration rate: Number of people who moved into a migration defining area from another area of the country as a percentage of native-born population of the same area of the country. On the other hand, number of people who moved out from a migration defining area to another area of the country as a percentage of native-born population of the same area of the country.

Net-migration rate (NMR): It refers to the difference between number of people moving into (in-migrants) and out (out-migrants) of a migration defining area. It is the balance between in- and out-migration and provides a measure of population gain or loss due to migration. Net-migration rate is defined as balance between in- and out-migration as a percentage of native-born population. A positive NMR indicates a net gain, and a negative NMR indicates a net loss.

Inter- and intra-migration: Migration considers two places, migration defining areas, for origin and destination within the country. They may be region, ecological zone, province and district in case of Nepal. When the migration occurs from one ecological zone, province, or district to the other, it is designated as inter-zonal, inter-provincial, or inter-district migration. On the other hand, as the Census 2021 collected migration data considering the urban/rural municipality as a migration unit, data also provides

intra migration. Accordingly, if the migration is within an ecological zone, province or district, it is designated as intra-zonal, intra-provincial or intra-district migration.

Migration stream: Migration stream is termed for internal migration from and to rural and urban areas. Rural and urban designation defined by DEGURBA (NSO), according to which there are three categories of rural/urban classifications – rural, semi-urban and urban. These categories were reclassified into two, rural (rural and semi-urban) and urban, for the analysis of migration stream. With these two categories, four migration streams are used in the study, they are rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban migration.

Migration rate: This study utilizes migration rate relative to native-born population. The migration rate for a migration defining area (e.g., national, ecological zonal, provincial, district) is defined as number of people who are designated as migrant (place of current residence is different from place of origin) as a percentage of native-born population for the same area. It includes both inter- and intra- migration.

Gross-migration/migration turnover rate (MTR): Gross migration refers to the total number of people moving into and out of a specific migration defining area such as ecological zone, province and district in this study. It is the sum of in-migrants and out-migrants. Similarly, MTR measures the turnover of population through in-migration and out-migration over a specific period as a percentage of native-born population. It indicates the level of population mobility and stability (UN, 1970). In this study, both gross-migration and migration turnover are used synonymously.

Migration effectiveness ratio (MER): According to Stillwell et al (2000), migration effectiveness essentially measures the degree of imbalance, or asymmetry, between a pair, set, or system of migration flow. It indicates how effective internal migration is in redistributing population. Migration effectiveness ratio (MER) is the ratio of net-migration to the gross-migration, expressed as a percentage, and produces values between minus –100 to +100. Generally, MER less than 15 indicates relatively ineffective population redistribution due to migration, and values greater than 15 indicate that migration has a significantly increasing effect in redistributing population in an area.

Feminization of migration: Feminization of migration refers to the increasing participation of women in migration flows.

Sex ratio: Sex ratio is the ratio of males to females in a population, which is calculated as the number of males per 100 females, expressed as a percentage.

Dependency ratio: Dependency ratio is a form of age structure analysis. There are two types of dependency ratios. First, child dependency ratio is a ratio of children aged 0-14 years to the working age population aged 15-64 years, expressed as a percentage. Old-age dependency ratio is a ratio of old-age population aged 64 years and above to the working age population aged 15-64 years. The sum of the child dependency and old-age dependency ratios constitutes the total dependency ratio.

Wealth index (WI): The worldwide Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) computes a composite wealth index to measure the status of household living standard based on household assets, housing services, and amenities (Rutstein & Staveteig, 2014; MoHP et al. 2023).

NSO has computed a wealth index with Census 2021 data using seventeen criteria, which included nine household assets, four services, and four indicators of dwelling quality (see NSO, 2024a, Table 1.2). To create wealth quintiles, each household member was assigned their household's score. The entire population was then ranked based on these scores and divided into five equal groups, with each group representing 20 percent of the total population.

2.7. Data limitation

There are some limitations to migration data collected through censuses. For instance, since censuses are conducted every 10 years, the data may not always reflect the most current migration trends. Additionally, census data relies on self-reported information, which can be prone to inaccuracies, biases, and recall lapses. According to Lomax (2022), census data uniquely captures the migration activities of an entire population, providing invaluable insights into how population distribution and mobility shape societal and economic dynamics. However, as Bernard (2022) points out, census data is cross-sectional and does not record the sequence of migrations. This limitation prevents the analysis of incremental migration behavior and understanding the migration trajectories of different birth cohorts. In contrast, civil registration and administrative records provide longitudinal data for the entire population, offering a more detailed view of migration patterns over time. Unfortunately, in Nepal, these comprehensive records of vital and civil registration and administrative records are not fully available, which limits the ability to thoroughly analyze and understand migration patterns and trajectories within the country.

The most important limitation of internal migration data in Nepal concerns the lack of uniformity in use of terms and definitions. Each census has collected different types of migration data, however only the lifetime migration data has been continuously and consistently collected since 1961 census. Lifetime migration data does not capture recent trends and changes in migration patterns by overlooking short-term or temporary migrations and recent socio-economic factors influencing

migration decisions. Therefore, it does not appropriately inform contemporary migration dynamics, especially with regard to recent flow in women's migration for employment and education.

Recent migration in terms of 'place of last prior residence' is a new categorization in population census recording in Nepal and has not been collected in the past censuses. Thus, analysis of recent migration lacks ability for comparison with past trends. Finally, the unit of both lifetime and recent migration is by urban/rural municipality. Despite the census identifying whether the place of origin is 'place of birth' or 'place of last prior residence' and whether this is different from the current place of residence where he or she is enumerated, the census does not identify which urban/rural municipality was the 'place of origin'. Therefore, both lifetime and recent migration can be measured in terms of 'in-migration', but not adequately in terms of 'out-migration', and accordingly the analysis of inter-area migration is not possible at municipality level.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE-TIME INTERNAL MIGRATION: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Internal migration is assessed in terms of three measures – lifetime migration, recent migration, and absentee population. This chapter deals with lifetime migration and the other two measures are discussed in following chapters. Lifetime migration is measured in terms of place of birth among total native-born population residing in all kind of households including institutional household. Institutional households are included in the analysis to make the lifetime migration comparable to the previous censuses. If a person's place of birth is different from her/his current place of residence, place of enumeration, s/he is designated as a lifetime migrant, regardless of any moves made in between. This approach is the most common measure of migration that has been used continuously in various censuses. The methods and procedures used in this study has also been applied to other countries in the world like in Ghana, Myanmar and Rwanda where place of birth and place of enumeration is collected in its censuses.

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the levels, trends and patterns of lifetime migration. It provides in-migration, out migration, net-migration, gross-migration according to the ecological zone, province, and district level to portray the trend and patterns of lifetime migration. The following chapters will focus more in detail on trend and patterns including socio-economic characteristics of internal migration. The reason for fewer details on lifetime migration is to minimize the redundancy of recent internal migration which also includes lifetime internal migrants whose place of birth was the last recent prior residence. At all levels and measurements, lifetime migration is measured in relation to native born population to ensure that it is comparable with previous censuses.

3.1. Population and lifetime internal migration

Trends in lifetime migration in relation to total and native-born population from census 1961 to 2021 are to be discussed in this section. Two levels of lifetime migration – inter-district and inter-zonal lifetime migration – are assessed based on Table 3.1 data. Data shows about a threefold increase in the total population over the past 60 years. The lifetime migrants in terms of inter-district migration were 4.7 percent in 1961, which increased by five times in 2021 (20%). The increment is accelerated in migration than in population, suggesting that more people are relocating their residence during this period. The increment in inter-zonal migration appears to be slow until 2011 (8.2%), yet afterward the rate increased by three percentage points in 2021 (11%)

Table 3.1: Trends in lifetime migration and total and native-born population, 1961-2021 Censuses

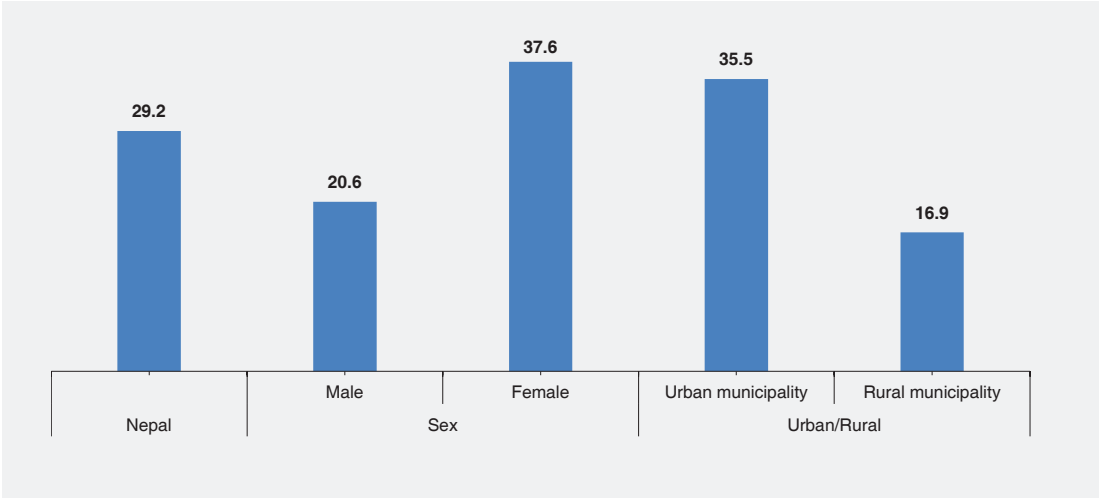
Census year	Native born population	Lifetime migrants as percent of native-born population	
		Inter-district	Inter-zonal
1961	9,075,376	4.7	-
1971	11,218,535	-	4.0
1981	14,788,800	8.6	6.3
1991	18,046,302	9.6	6.8
2001	22,128,842	13.2	7.8
2011	25,524,611	14.8	8.2
2021*	28,420,333	20.0	11.0

**Excluded not stated/place of birth not stated; in-migrants/native born.*

Source: Suwal (2014), *Table 10.2;* NSO (2023a), *Table 28.*

According to NPHC 2021, total lifetime internal migrants are at a figure of 8,302,938 and the total native born population stands at 28,420,333. With this record, lifetime internal migration rate is 29.2 as a percent of total native-born population (Figure 3.1). As Grigg (1977) suggests, lifetime internal migration is much higher among females (37.6%) than males (20.6%) at a rate of around a double. Lifetime internal migration in urban municipalities (35.5%) is more than double of rural municipalities (16.9%). This indicates that the migration pattern towards urban municipalities is high. It is also pertinent to note that the urban/rural municipality is different from the urban/rural place of residence which has been defined by DEGURBA 2023 as urban, peri-urban and rural areas (NSO, 2024a). The municipalities are newly structured local units by Nepal's 2015 Constitution, and it is solely an administrative unit. On this basis, there are 293 urban municipalities which cover 38.9 percent of total local units (753). However, the urban/rural municipality designation also covers some part of the urban or rural characteristics based on socio-economic and infrastructure development. Therefore, lifetime migration in urban municipalities is mainly due to in search of basic opportunities and services.

Figure 3.1: Lifetime migration as a percentage of native-born population by sex and rural/urban municipality, NPHC 2021



Source: NPHC, 2021.

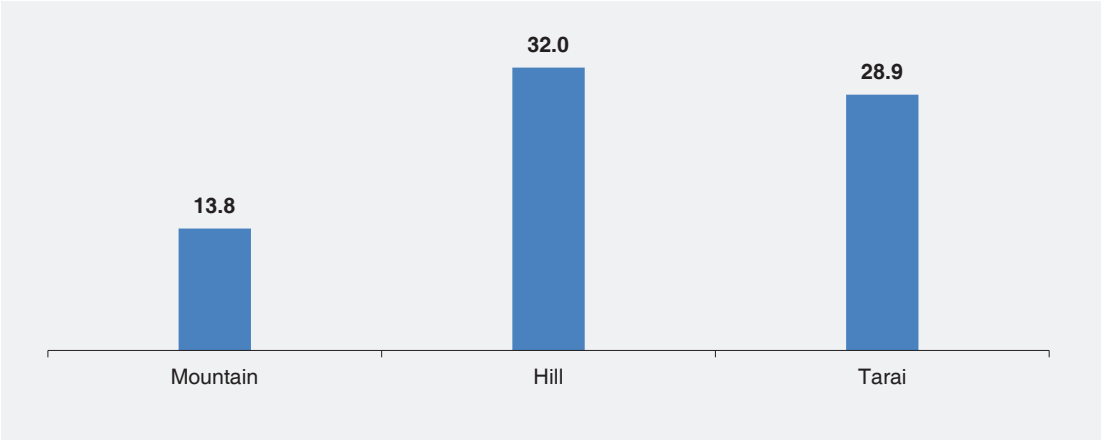
3.2. Inter-zonal lifetime migration

Ecological zone poses an important residential factor for internal migration. Inter-zonal migration affects the inter-zonal population distribution. Population in Mountain zone is at a rate of only around 6 percent of the country's total, whereas it occupies more than 35 percent of Nepal's total land (NSO, 2024b). In contrast, Tarai has a population rate of 54 percent with an occupancy of only 23 percent of the country's land. According to the Census 2021, out of 77 districts, 34 Mountain and Hill districts have negative population growth rates. This is seen due to the fact that population moved out of these areas to Tarai zone and to other districts, further demonstrated by Tarai ecological zone demonstrating the highest amount of migrants received (Table 3.2). Inter-zonal lifetime internal migration is discussed in two sub-sections. Firstly, it discusses about the levels and trends in inter-zonal lifetime internal migration and, secondly, it deals with gender differences in inter-zonal lifetime migration and its trends.

3.2.1. Levels and trends in inter-zonal lifetime migration

The 2021 census shows that the lifetime internal migration rate as a percentage of native-born population is highest in Hill (32%), followed by Tarai (28.9%), and with Mountain showing the lowest lifetime migrants at a rate of 13.8 percent of the total native population, whose place of birth was different local units/districts (Figure 3.2). The data shows that internal migration in Hill has exceeded Tarai in the recent period, mainly due to the fact that Hill includes places such as the Kathmandu and Pokhara Valleys which are the main destinations for migrants in the country.

Figure 3.2: Lifetime migration as a percentage of native-born population by ecological zone, NPHC 2021

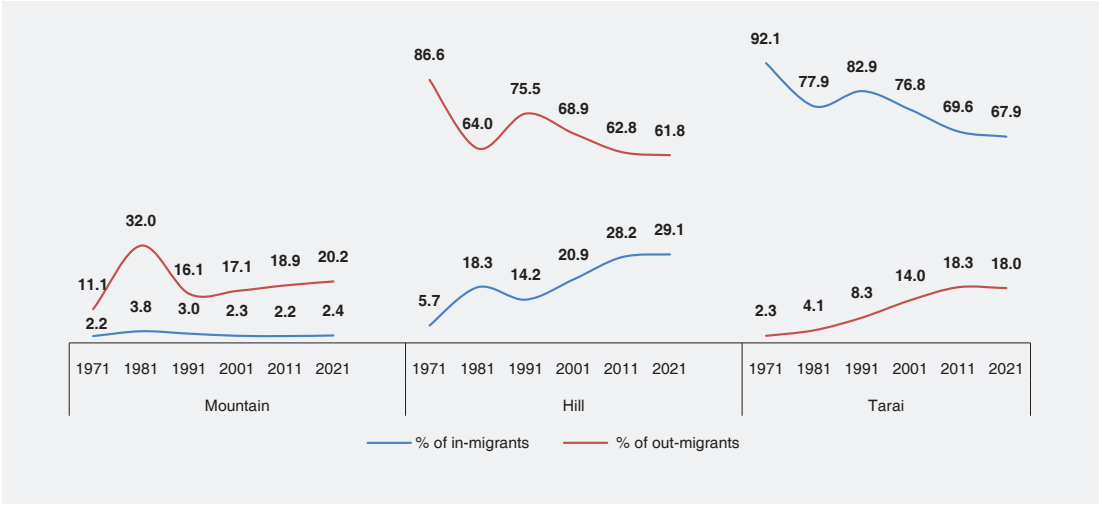


Trends in inter-zonal lifetime migration, based on ecological zone as the migration unit and as a percentage of total lifetime migration in ecological zone, has changed significantly throughout the last five decades, from 1971-2021 (Figure 3.3 and Table 3.2). In 1971, there were 445 thousand inter-zonal migrants, which was only four percent of total native population. In this period, Hill observed the highest level of out-migration, with a net loss of about 360 thousand people, whereas the Tarai experienced a significant increase, resulting in a net gain of about 400 thousand people. This pattern can be seen in all census years, except with some fluctuation in 1981. The percentage of in-migrants to Hill increased from 5.7 in 1971 to 29.7 in 2021, indicating a growing preference for this ecological zone as a migration destination, whereas Mountain depicts a consistent negative net-migration, reflecting a steady outflow of people.

Consistent out-flow from Mountain can be both voluntary and through forced mobility due to social or rural vulnerability in the Mountain zone, since rural vulnerability is a place-based and multi-dimensional concept (Chen et al., 2021). Mountain areas are almost all rural and remote areas, from where out-migration is mainly due to a search of livelihood opportunities in other areas, such as urban areas in Hill and Tarai zones. An additional factor concerns the reality that Mountain areas have been facing the increasing effects of climate change each year. Many Mountain districts are vulnerable to drought and disasters like floods and landslides every year, which may be main drivers for out-migration. Such migration trends relocates the population and the lead to a change in the ecological distribution of population. These migration flows have additionally resulted in depopulation in mountainous areas (NSO, 2024b). For example, there are 34 Mountain and Hill districts which demonstrate negative population growth rates, and Tarai contains more than half of the total population, whereas Mountain zone has only 6 percent.

Gross migration is also equally important in indicating total movement of the population (in, out and intra) per ecological zone. Population movement has been continuously increasing across all ecological zones over previous census years. Among three ecological zones, Tarai showed the highest population movement in the past censuses until 1991. However, Hill slightly exceeds Tarai in movement of population in the last two censuses, 2011 and 2021 respectively, which is due to increased intra-zonal migration within Hill zone.

Figure 3.3: Inter-zonal lifetime migration by sex, 2001-2021 Censuses



Source: Table 3.3.

Table 3.2: Inter zonal lifetime migration, 1971-2021 Censuses

Place of birth	Place of enumeration				% out-migration	Net-migration	Gross migration
	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Total (Out)			
1971							
Mountain	-	15,667	33,990	49,657	11.1	-39,959	59,355
Hill	9,258	-	376,074	385,332	86.6	-359,966	410,698
Tarai	440	9,699	-	10,139	2.3	399,925	420,203
Total (In)	**9,698**	**25,366**	**410,064**	**445,128**	**100.0**		
% In-migration	**2.2**	**5.7**	**92.1**	**100.0**			
1981							
Mountain	-	134,254	162,832	297,086	32.0	-261,467	332,705
Hill	33,423	-	561,211	594,634	64.0	-424,711	764,557
Tarai	2,196	561,211	-	37,865	4.1	686,178	761,908

Place of birth	Place of enumeration				% out-migration	Net-migration	Gross migration
	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Total (Out)			
Total (In)	**35,619**	**169,923**	**724,043**	**929,585**	**100.0**		
% In-migration	**3.8**	**18.3**	**77.9**	**100.0**			
1991							
Mountain	-	76,503	121,826	198,329	16.1	-161,655	235,003
Hill	32,003	-	895,888	927,891	75.5	-753,923	1,101,859
Tarai	4,671	97,465	-	102,136	8.3	915,578	1,119,850
Total (In)	**36,674**	**173,968**	**1,017,714**	**1,228,356**	**100**		
% In-migrant	**3.0**	**14.2**	**82.9**	**100.0**			
2001							
Mountain	-	125,597	169,825	295,422	17.1	-255,103	335,741
Hill	33,895	-	1,157,035	1,190,930	68.9	-830,759	1,551,101
Tarai	6,424	234,574	-	240,998	14.0	1,085,862	1,567,858
Total (In)	**40,319**	**360,171**	**1,326,860**	**1,727,350**	**100.0**		
% In-migrant	**2.3**	**20.9**	**76.8**	**100.0**			
2011							
Mountain	-	213,714	180,587	394,301	18.9	-349,132	439,470
Hill	37,672	-	1,273,599	1,311,271	62.8	-722,456	1,900,086
Tarai	7,497	375,101	-	382,598	18.3	1,071,588	1,836,784
Total (In)	**45,169**	**588,815**	**1,454,186**	**2,088,170**	**100.0**		
% In-migrant	**2.2**	**28.2**	**69.6**	**100.0**			
2021*							
Mountain	-	369,577	249,931	619,509	20.2	-543,966	695,051
Hill	63,079	-	1,834,573	1,897,652	61.8	-9,86,371	28,08,933
Tarai	12,463	541,704	-	554,167	18.0	15,30,338	26,38,672
Total (In)	**75,542**	**911,281**	**2,084,505**	**30,71,328**	**100.0**		
% In-migrant	**2.5**	**29.7**	**67.9**	**100.0**			

Source: KC (2003), *Table 15.6-15.9*; Suwal (2014), *Table 10.3.*

*Note: * NPHC 2021, place of birth not stated excluded.*

Table 3.2 and Figure 3.3 presents a summary trend of internal migration by ecological zone in Nepal from 1971 to 2021. In terms of lifetime in-migration, Mountain zone recorded a slight increase in in-migrants, rising from about 9.7 thousand (2.2%) in 1971 to about 36.7 thousand (3.0%) in 1991 and then decreasing to about 75.5 thousand (2.5%) in 2021. On the other hand, the out-migration from the same zone has also increased from about 49.7 thousand (11.1%) in 1971 to about 619.5 thousand (20.2%) in 2021, resulting in a consistently negative net-migration (-543,966).

Likewise, in the Hill zone in-migrants rose gradually from 25.4 thousand (5.7%) in 1971 to 911.3 thousand (29.7%) in 2021, which is much higher than in Mountain and much lower than in Tarai zones. The volume of Hill out-migrants considerably increased from 385.3 thousand in 1971 to about 1.9 million in 2021. However, the percentage of out-migrants is in a decreasing trend from 86.6 in 1971 to 61.8 in 2021. Despite high out-migration, in-migration is gradually increasing in Hill over the years, to which it was recorded at around six percent in 1971 and reached to 29.7 percent in 2021. Among the three ecological zones, Tarai experienced the highest in-migration, with a figure increasing from 410 thousand in 1971 to 2.1 million in 2021, however the percentage of in-migration in Tarai is shown to be decreasing over the years. However, the proportion of out-migration is increasing, yet slows from 2.3 percent in 1971 to 18 percent in 2021. The main reasons for the upward trajectory of Tarai as a migration destination was the control of malaria which led to the transformation of the lowlands from one of the marginalities to a viable settlement area, with the opening of the lowlands creating a new frontier for large-scale, rural-to-rural migration within the country (Gurung, 1988).

Overall, the data highlights the dynamic nature of internal migration in Nepal, with significant increases in both in-migration and out-migration across all regions. The Mountain and Hill zones continue to experience a higher out-migration, while Tarai show a higher rate of in-migration (Table 3.2 and Figure 3.3). In other words, Tarai is the only zone which shows population gain and both Mountain and Hill experienced population loss due to out-migration. However, gross migration reflects that population movement is growing in a higher volume in the Hill zone than in Tarai and Mountain in last two censuses, 2011 and 2021. This demonstrates that the country has experienced a slight shift in migration trajectory from Tarai to Hill zones. For example, as shown in Figure 3.3, in Hill, the out-migration is in a decreasing trend, yet the in-migration follows an increasing trend. In contrast, in Tarai, in-migration follows a decreasing trend, yet the out-migration is in an increasing trend. Shifting migration trajectory to Hill zone is largely due to migration to large urban areas, such as Kathmandu and Pokhara Valley cities that bear about 12 percent of the total population.

3.2.2. Gender differential in inter-zonal lifetime migration

Table 3.3 shows gender differences in lifetime internal migration patterns in Nepal from 2001 to 2021. In all three censuses, Hill has considerably high out-migration, which is above 60 percent, compared to Mountain and Tarai for both sexes, but slightly higher among females than males. However, the trend in out-migration from Hill is decreasing over the census years for both sexes. In contrast, out-migration from Mountain is increasing over the census years for both sexes but the increment is nominal. On the other hand, the proportion of in-migration in Tarai is considerably high compared to Mountain and Hill with a decreasing trend during last 20 years. However, the trend in decrease in in-migration is quite sharper among males than females. The male in-migrants in Tarai has decreased by almost 10 percentage points since 2001. For the same period, it has decreased by 8 percentage points for females. An interesting observation is found in Mountain that in-migration of females is consistently higher

than males in the last two decades. This may be largely due the fact that female migration mostly involves in-marriage migration and Mountain men usually marry women from adjoining Hill districts.

Overall, similar pattern of net and gross lifetime inter-zonal migration is found for both males and females over the census years. Mountain and Hill have negative net lifetime migration, whereas the rate is positive in Tarai over the census years. Similarly, gross lifetime migration has been increasing for both males and females over the census years. However, gross migration is much lower among females than that among males.

Table 3.3: Inter-zonal lifetime migration by sex, 2001-2021 Censuses

Ecological zone by census year	Male				Female			
	%	%	Net migration	Gross migration	%	%	Net migration	Gross migration
2001								
Mountain	1.7	16.8	-127,610	156,296	2.9	17.4	-127,511	179,425
Hill	21.1	68.4	-400,001	756,669	20.6	69.4	-430,746	794,432
Tarai	77.2	14.8	527,611	776,981	76.4	13.2	558,257	790,879
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	-	-	100.0	100.0	-	-
Total (No.)	844,973		-	-	882,368		-	-
2011								
Mountain	1.4	19.4	-171,541	198,407	2.8	18.4	-177,593	241,061
Hill	30.0	60.5	-290,606	863,240	26.7	64.7	-431,849	734,350
Tarai	68.6	20.1	462,147	845,471	70.5	16.8	609,442	192,956
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	-	-	100.0	100.0	-	-
Total (No.)	953,559		-	-	1,134,609		-	-
2021								
Mountain	1.8	20.7	-259,904	310,194	3.0	19.8	-284,063	384,857
Hill	30.9	60.1	-402,326	1,255,554	28.6	63.1	-584,045	1,553,379
Tarai	67.2	19.2	662,230	1,191,810	68.4	17.1	868,108	1,446,862
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	-	-	100.0	100.0	-	-
Total (No.)	927,020		-	-	1,692,549		-	-

Source: KC (2003), *Table 15,9;* Suwal (2014), *Table 10.3;* NSO(2023a).

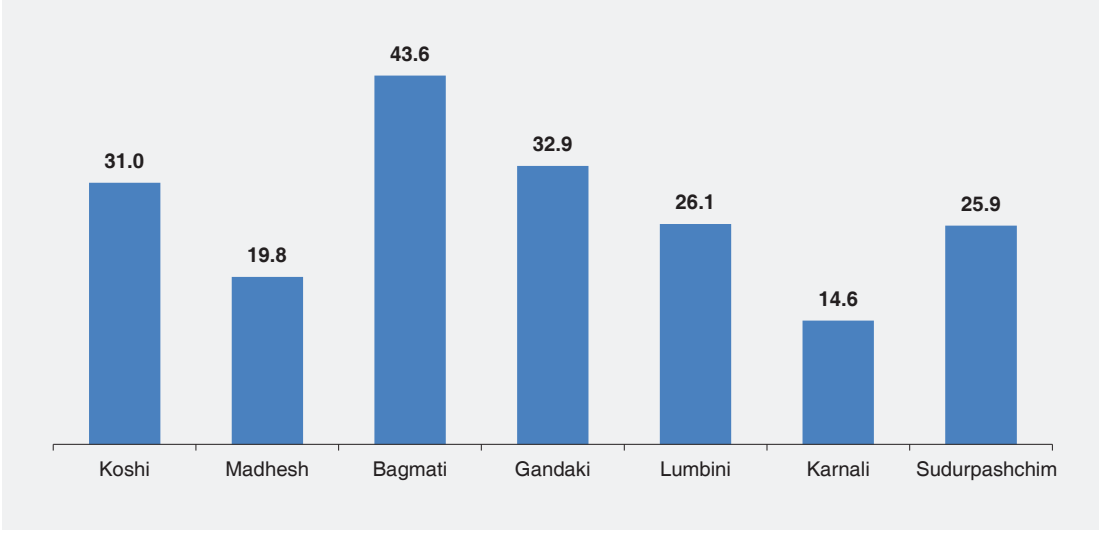
For female migrants, migration patterns are more influenced by social factors such as marriage and the international migration of male partners. The phenomenon of international migration often triggers internal migration within a country. When males migrate and provide remittances, the family or wife

with children move to cities or nearby towns for the education of children, splitting the family into small-fragmented sizes, or women left living with their in-laws with the result of family units becoming transnational families with their distinct features (Fernández-Sánchez et al., 2020; Singh, 2019). This dynamic underscore the interconnected nature of international and internal migration, where the economic benefits of working abroad facilitate internal mobility within the country. This gendered perspective on internal migration provides valuable insights into the demographic change within Nepal, more specifically inter-zonal and rural-urban migration (with rural-urban migration discussed in more detail in other sections). Inter-zonal migration, particularly from Mountain and Hill to Tarai, has been prevalent in the country since malaria eradication began in the Tarai zone.

3.3. Inter-provincial lifetime migration

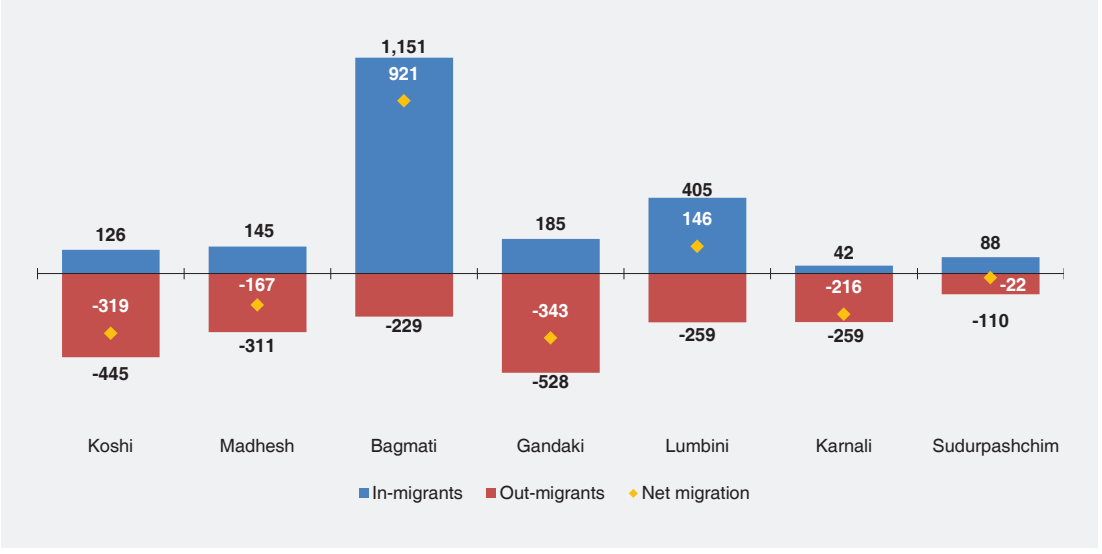
Considering the unit of lifetime internal migration per province, Census 2021 enumerated the highest lifetime in-migration rate as a percentage of total native-born population. The highest rate is in Bagmati (43.6%), followed by Gandaki (32.9%) and Koshi (31%) provinces (Figure 3.4). These three provinces are above the national average (29.2%) for lifetime internal migration rates in the 2021 census. The lowest lifetime internal migration rate is observed in Karnali (14.6%) and then Madhesh (19.8%) provinces and they are additionally in a significant position for having lifetime internal migration. The findings suggest that mobility of individuals has been tremendously increased in recent years within Nepal.

Figure 3.4: Lifetime migration as a percentage of total native-born population by province, NPHC 2021



When addressing inter-province lifetime migration, the volume of total inter-province migration stands at more than 214 thousand in 2021, where females (1.2 million) are considerably higher than males (987 thousand) (Table 3.4). Distribution of volume and percentage of lifetime migration according to province shows that Bagmati has the highest lifetime in-migrants (1,151 thousand), followed by Lumbini (405 thousand) (Figure 3.5, Table 3.4). Accordingly, Bagmati (921 thousand) and Lumbini (146 thousand) are the only provinces that have positive net-lifetime migration. In contrast, five provinces lost population due to migration. The highest loss was observed in Gandaki (with net-migration of -343 thousand), followed by Koshi (net-migration of -319 thousand) and Karnali (net-migration of -216 thousand). The percentage of out migration is 24.7 percent for Gandaki and 20.8 percent for Koshi. Overall, the total gross migration across all provinces is 2,142 thousand people. This information highlights the significant provincial differences in migration patterns within Nepal.

Figure 3.5: Volume of migration by province (in thousand), NPHC 2021



As discussed, distribution of lifetime in- and out-migration according to province and sex shows that percentage of in-migrants is considerably high for both males and females in Bagmati and Lumbini compared to the other five provinces (Table 3.4). Bagmati is the most preferred destination for both males (57.3%) and females (50.6%), with Lumbini standing in second position, where male in-migrants are 17.6 percent and females are 20 percent. It is further noted that rates of female in-migrants are higher than males in all provinces with the exception of Bagmati. Male in-migrants represent a rate of more than six percentage points higher than females in Bagmati. On the other hand, Gandaki experiences a highest proportion of out-migration of both males (23.5%) and females (25.7%), followed by Koshi which loses 17.6 percent males and 20 females.

The pattern of lifetime internal in- and out-migration by provinces indicates that Bagmati and Lumbini provinces are the major destinations for people moving within Nepal. It is largely because Kathmandu Valley capital city is located in Bagmati province, which includes three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur). Lumbini also has emerging urban centers like Bhairahawa, Butwal, Kapilbastu and Dang where migration from surrounding Hill and other Tarai districts is considerable. In recent times, internal migration has been aimed more towards urban centers that are discussed on the following section.

Table 3.4: Inter-provincial lifetime migration by sex, NPHC 2021

Province	Male				Female			
	% in-migration	% out-migration	Net migration	Gross migration	% in-migration	% out-migration	Net migration	Gross migration
Koshi	5.7	20.2	-142,955	255,675	6.1	21.3	-175,841	315,897
Madhesh	5.7	16.9	-110,538	223,578	7.7	12.5	-56,004	232,736
Bagmati	57.3	9.9	468,529	663,437	50.6	11.4	452,727	716,559
Gandaki	8.3	23.5	-150,071	313,583	9.0	25.7	-192,979	400,269
Lumbini	17.6	11.5	60,454	287,880	20.0	12.6	85,202	376,614
Karnali	1.7	12.1	-102,615	136,103	2.2	12.1	-113,801	164,723
Sudurpashchim	3.6	5.9	-22,804	94,652	4.5	4.4	696	103,020
Total (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	-	-	**100.0**	**100.0**	-	-
Total (No.)		**987,454**	-	-		**1,154,909**	-	-

3.4. Inter-district lifetime migration

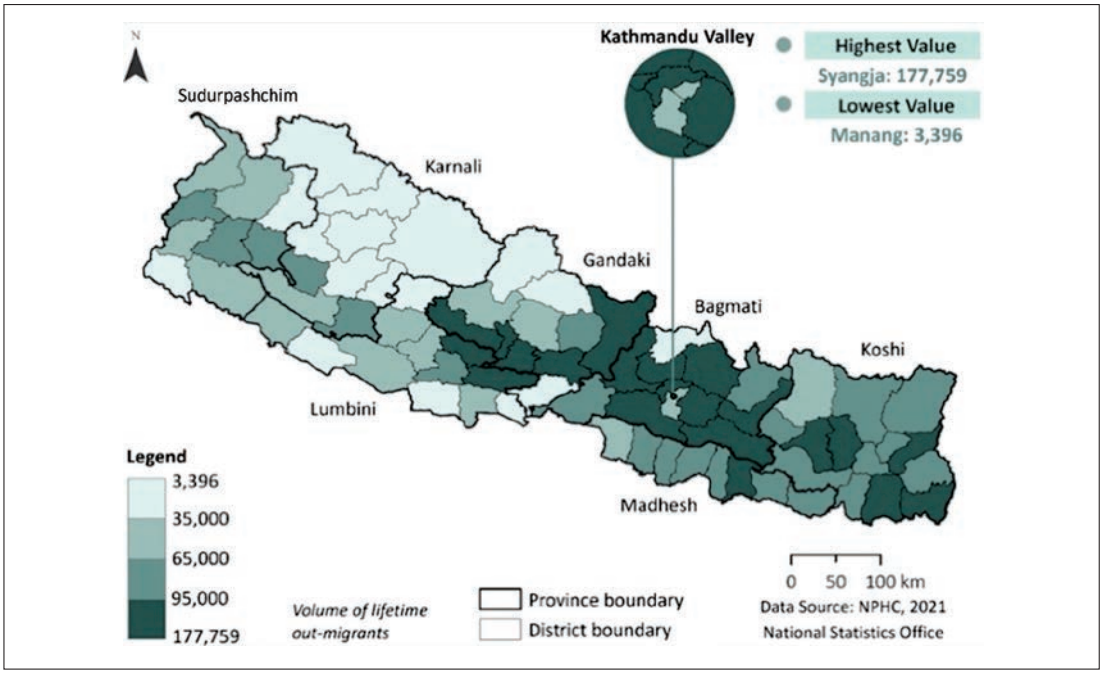
In this section, lifetime internal migration units are considered by district. A person who was born in a district different from the district where s/he is currently residing at the time of enumeration is considered a migrant. Census 2021 recorded a total of 568 thousand cases of inter-district lifetime internal migration, which is 20.1 percent of the total native-born population (not shown in table and graph), with this figure increasing from 4.7 percent in 1961.

Among all inter-district lifetime migrants, there are 18 districts that have lost more than half of the total native population from out-migration (Map 1 and Annex 4). Among them, Bhojpur, Khotang and Tehrathum show a rate of more than 90 percent of out-migrants. Taplejung, Parbat, Syangja and Ramechhap lost 70 to 78 percent and Okhaldhunga, Panchthar and Manang lost 60 to 66 percent population from out-migration. Gulmi, Dhankuta, Gorkha, Solukhumbu, Arghakhanchi,

Sankhuwasabha, Lamjung and Dolakha are the districts who lost more than half of the total native population due to out-migration. No districts have experienced zero out-migration. Twelve districts (e.g., Parsa, Rautahat, Nawalparasi (East), Bhaktapur, Nawalparasi (West), Lalitpur, Kanchanpur, Kathmandu, Kailali, Rupandehi, Banke and Kapilbastu) have less than 10 percent of out-migrants.

In case of in-migration, Kathmandu Valley districts continue to have the highest number of in-migrants. Kathmandu (57.2%), Bhaktapur (50.2%) and Lalitpur (46.2%) have the highest lifetime in-migration rates in 2021 (Map 1 and Annex 4). These three districts are among the capital city and the most urbanized area. They are followed by Chitawan, Manang, and Kaski. On the other hand, there are 16 districts that have less than five percent in-migration rate. They include Okhaldhunga, Salyan, Pyuthan, Achham, Darchula, Jumla, Baitadi, Dolpa, Rukum (East), Kalikot, Mugu, Humla, Rolpa, Dailekh, Bajhang and Bajura. Okhaldhunga is in Koshi province and Pyuthan in Lumbini, but all other districts belong to Karnali and Sudurpashchim. The common feature of these districts is that they all are in Hill and Mountain areas.

Map 1: Volume of lifetime out- and in-migration by district, NPHC 2021



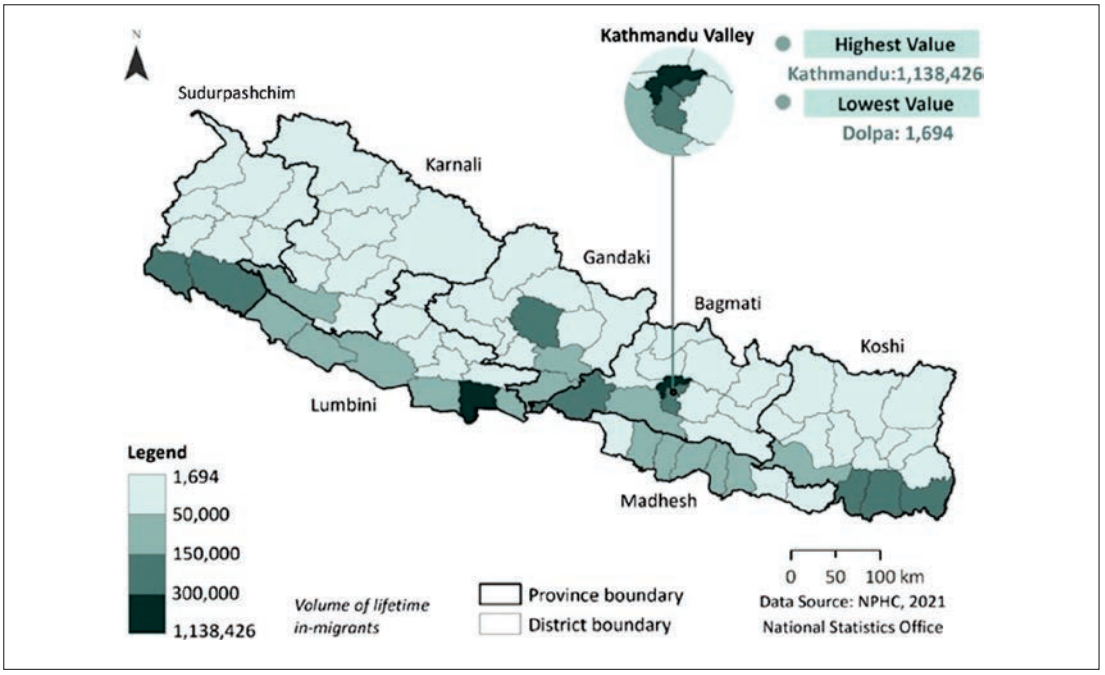
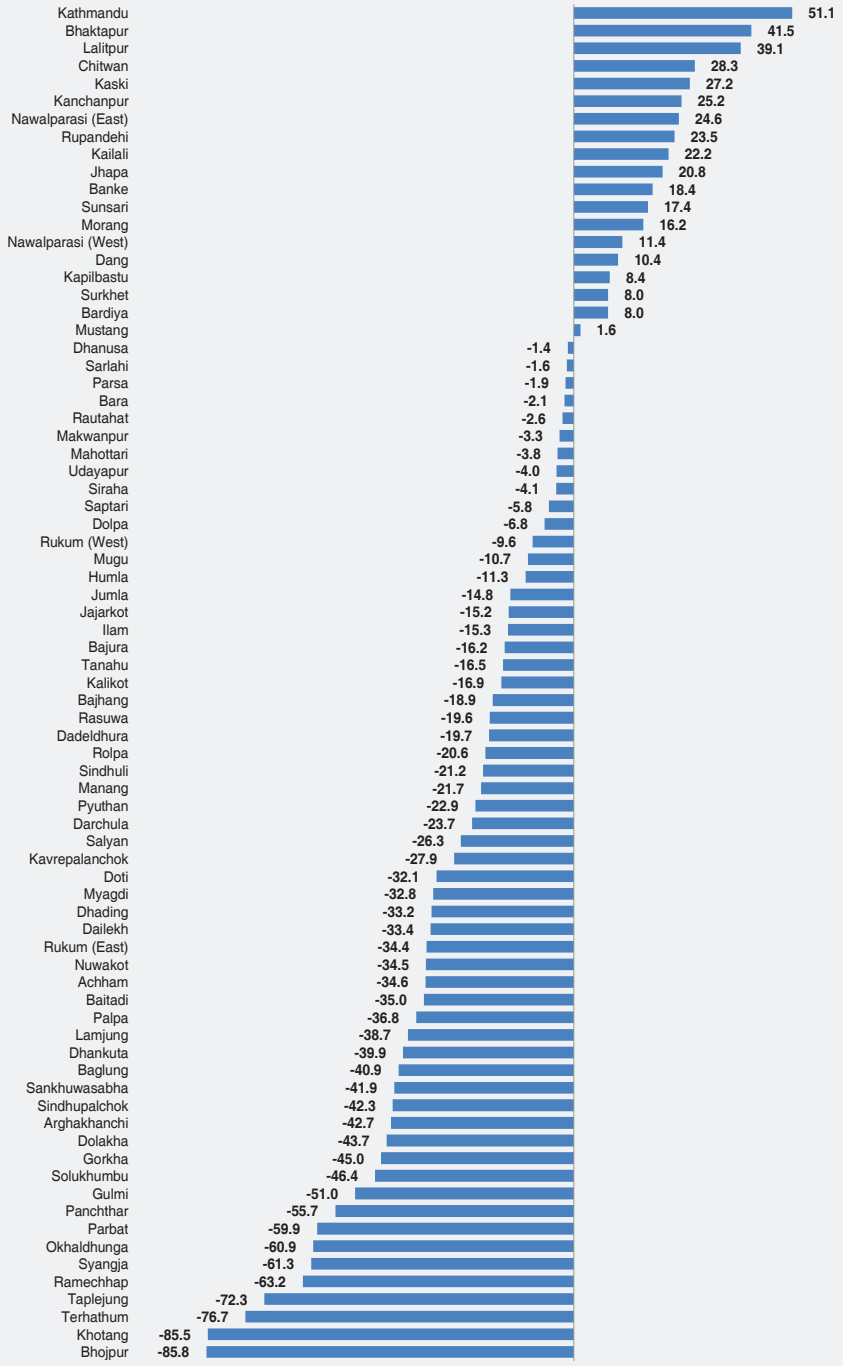


Figure 3.6 provides net-migration rate as a percentage of native-born population by district. Census 2021 found that there are only 19 out of 77 districts that have positive net-migration rates. Among them, Kathmandu Valley districts, namely Kathmandu (51%), Bhaktapur (41.5%) and Lalitpur (39%) that have highest rate of net-migration in 2021. The other districts include Chitawan, Kaski, Kanchanpur, Nawalparasi (East), Rupandehi, Kailali, Jhapa, Banke, Sunsari, Morang, Nawalparasi (West), Dang, Kapilbastu, Surkhet, Bardiya and Mustang. Among them, Mustang is the only districts located in mountain area; Surkhet, Kaski and Chitawan are also valleys in the Hill; and other districts are in Tarai zone. All these districts have large urban areas. The remaining 58 districts have negative net-migration rates, among which, Bhojpur (-85.8%), Khotang (-85.5%), Tehrathum (-72.3%) and Taplejung (-72.3%) have the highest negative net-migration. These districts are in hill zone and Koshi province.

The findings suggest that the internal lifetime in-migration is highly prevalent for the districts where large urban areas are located and have higher potential of economic opportunities, education and health facilities and all other opportunities are available. Kathmandu Valley, as the capital city that covers three districts (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur), is the most preferred destination. Almost all the municipalities in these districts are urban municipalities, including Kathmandu and Lalitpur Metropolitan city. The other districts that have positive net-migration have either district or provincial or urban municipality. For instance, Chitawan has six urban municipalities, including Bharatpur Metropolitan city; Kaski district has Pokhara Valley, which is also a Metropolitan city. Mustang is an exception that does not have large city, but it is a potential and the most common tourist area for both native and foreigners. On the other hand, districts with far remote areas and do not have large cities are the main migration sending areas.

Figure 3.6: Lifetime net-migration rate (as a percentage of native-born population) by district, NPHC 2021



Source: NPHC 2021.

CHAPTER 4

RECENT MIGRATION: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The census has, in general, five methods of migration data collection – place of birth, duration of residence, residence at fixed prior date, last prior residence and absentees from household at the time of census (Shryock & and Seigel, 1976). Place of birth, duration of residence and absence have been continuously asked in the census since 1952/54. The 2011 census collected data 'residence at fixed prior date' by asking individuals aged five years and older where they had lived five years prior to the census date in order to inform migration. NPHC 2021 discontinued this practice and introduced a new question regarding the individual's 'last prior residence', referring to the place of enumeration at the time of census. The lifetime internal migration is discussed in previous chapter. It overlooks short-term or temporary migrations that occurred between place of birth and current place of residence, and socio-economic factors influencing migration decisions (Dutta & Shaw, 2015). Compared to lifetime migration data, last prior residence is fairly recent in migration, so it is designated as "recent migration", and it also covers lifetime migration for those who did not move from the place of birth before arriving to the current place. The recent migration data provides a more current and dynamic picture, essential for developing effective policies and understanding modern migration trends (Levy & Wadycki, 1972). Accordingly, the recent migration data is emphasized for migration study to accurately capture the effects of economic incentives and other factors driving migration.

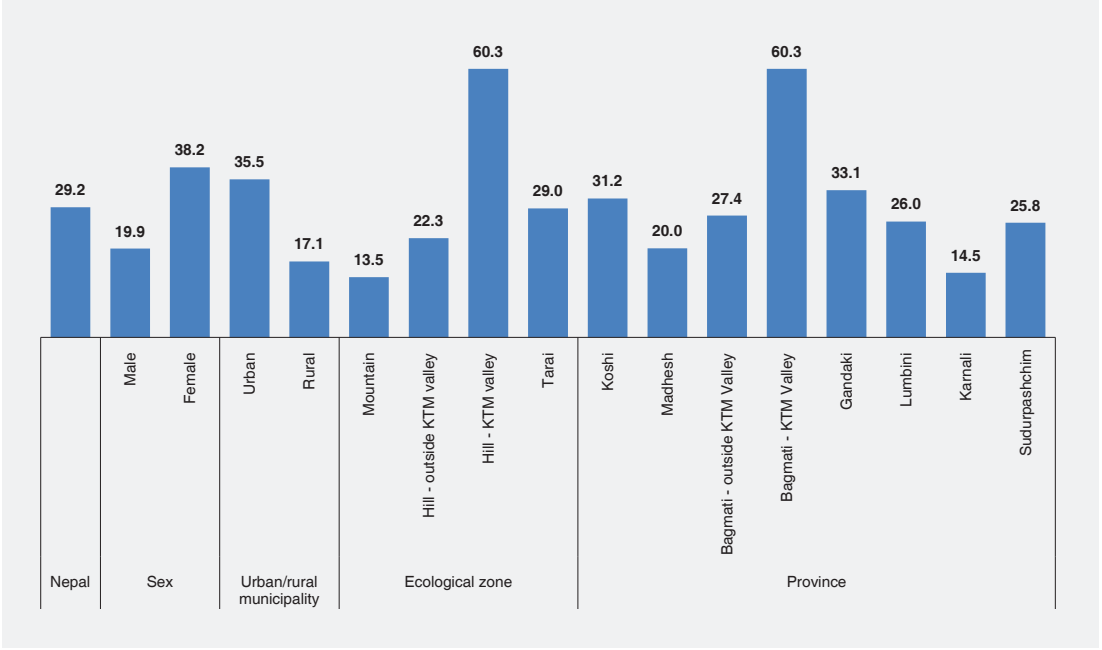
Despite the fact that duration of residence is one of the methods of data collection, it applies to both lifetime and recent migration. Duration of migration is the product of both older and recent migration, which provides the history of when individuals moved, how many of them moved in different points of time, and who individuals are who moved at different points of time. On the other hand, understanding recent phenomena of migration and its patterns and characteristics is much more desirable for policies and plans. Thus, the analysis of recent migration is delimited to its duration with less than 'one' or 'five' years by defining the recent migrants are those whose last prior residence is different from the current place of residence and the duration of stay at current place is less than 'one' or 'five' years. In general, less than one-year data provides truer estimates of the number of movement activities, whereas less than five-year data provides truer estimates of the number of permanent movers (Sigel & Swanson, 2004). However, in this chapter, all internal recent migration irrespective of duration is used in the analysis.

The analysis includes migrants and native born populations from non-institutional households, providing a baseline for future censuses. This change aims to highlight the difference between individuals' current locations (where they are counted during the census) and their last prior residences. Careful measurement of internal migration is important for both policy purposes and academic understanding of overall development of the nation. Spatial distribution of migration is then discussed based on rural/urban place of residence, ecological zone, province and districts. Ecological zones and provinces are further classified including Kathmandu Valley (with three districts). It deals especially with migration behaviour among the recent migrants based on duration of stay, mostly focusing on migration patterns across ecological zones, urban-rural municipality, provinces, and districts, socio-economic differentials, reasons for migration. Duration of stay is discussed to inform history of migration.

4.1. Migration rates

Migration rates form a base for the following sections. The recent migration rate is calculated based on 'last prior residence' and is defined as a person whose last prior residence of rural/urban municipality is different from the current rural/urban municipality as a percentage of native-born population excluding institutional households. This is a gross mobility of population for a defined area, which accounted for the total in-migrants in rural/urban municipality within defined area from other municipalities. As recorded in Census 2021, the total recent internal migrant figure in Nepal is 8,239,589 and the native-born population (excluding institutional households) is at 28,193,504, with the migration rate at 29.2 percent accordingly (Figure 4.1). The migration rate for females (38.2%) is almost double that of males (19.9%). Migration rate in urban municipalities (35.5%) is more than double of rural municipalities (17.1%). Regarding ecological zones, Kathmandu Valley which covers three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) and belongs to Hill zone is separately classified. Similarly, Bagmati is also further classified into two separate categories, Kathmandu Valley and without Kathmandu Valley. Among ecological zones, migration rate is highest in Hill-Kathmandu valley (60.3%), followed by Tarai (29.0%) which has a ratio of less than half of Kathmandu Valley. The migration rate is lowest in Mountain zone (13.5%). When addressing the data across provinces, the migration rate is highest in Kathmandu Valley of Bagmati (60.3%), followed by Gandaki (33.1%), and the lowest in Karnali (14.5%).

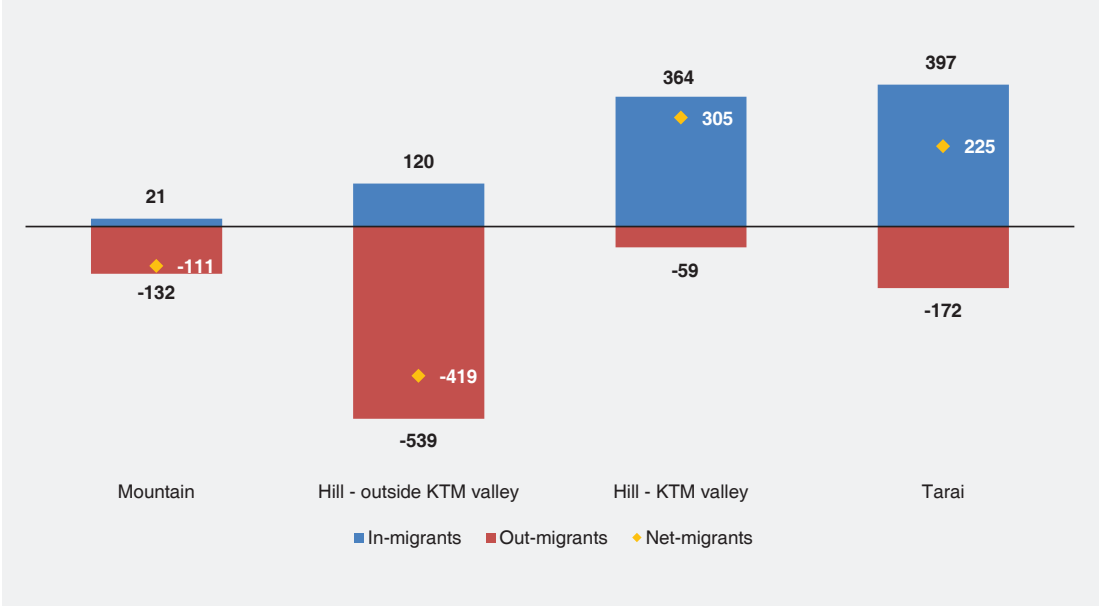
Figure 4.1: Recent migration rate by sex, urban/rural municipality, ecological zone and province, NPHC 2021



4.2. Inter-zonal recent migration

Migration according to ecological zone is an important component to track and will be discussed throughout this section. Recent migration is considered here as migrants whose last prior residence was different ecological zone from where they currently reside. The inter-zonal migration rate, shown via Figure 4.2 and Table 4.1, presents the data on inter-zonal migration in Nepal and shows the movement patterns of individuals across three ecological zones – Mountain, Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley, Hill-Kathmandu Valley only, and Tarai. The inter-zonal migration is discussed according to sex and migration indicators such as in-migration, out-migration, net-migration, and gross migration. The highest number of in-migrants are received by Tarai, which is 397 thousand and 44 percent of the total ecological zone, followed by Hill-Kathmandu Valley which received 364 thousand of in-migrants and accounts for 40.3 percent of volume of recent in- and out- net-migration among the ecological zones in 2021 (Figure 4.2). Mountain contains the least number of migrants, with 21 thousand received. On the other hand, Kathmandu Valley has seen the lowest number of migrant decrease (59 thousand and only 6.5% of the total out-migrants among the ecological zone), whereas Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley sees the highest rate of out-migration (539 thousand, which is around 60 percent of the total out-migration from the ecological zone). Accordingly, the figure of positive net-migration is highest in Hill-Kathmandu valley (305 thousand), followed by Tarai (225 thousand). Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley has the highest negative net-migration of -419 thousand.

Figure 4.2: Volume of recent in-, out- and net-migration by ecological zone (in '000), NPHC 2021



While assessing the flow of inter-zonal migration, it can be used to inform what proportion of migrants are received by an ecological zone from other zones (Figure 4.3). Tara has the highest rate of in-migrants from other ecological zones, among which the overwhelming majority (81.8%) migrated from Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley. Another pertinent migrant-receiving area is Hill-Kathmandu Valley, which received 364 thousand migrants from other ecological zones. A large number of migrants came from Hill districts other than Kathmandu Valley districts (55.3%). Tarai also seems to be an important migrant sender for Kathmandu Valley (27.6%). In addition to Kathmandu Valley, Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley (56.1%) and Mountain (21.6%) also receive migrants from Tarai. Tarai is found to be an important migrant sender area from which all other ecological zones have received migrants. Another important reflection suggested by the evidence is that Kathmandu Valley is also sending migrants to other ecological zones. Hill-outside Kathmandu Valley (22.5%), Mountain (17.3%) and Tarai (7%) have received a significant proportion of in-migrants from Kathmandu Valley.

The 2021 census data provides an insight to the fact that the traditional migration trend which trended towards Tarai in one hand, and to the urban cities on the other, has been changing over the years and has begun to diversify to other areas. In addition to diversification of internal migration, this also somewhat indicates the sense of reverse migration streams from Tarai to Hill and Mountain and big cities to rural areas and other smaller city areas. This pattern is mainly in search of opportunities in business and tourism sectors and construction works. Migration from Tarai to Hill is overwhelmingly targeted to Kathmandu Valley with the reasons including education, professional jobs, politics, business and other kinds of opportunities.

Figure 4.3: Flow of migrants from and to ecological zone, NPHC 2021

The data shows a marked difference in migration patterns between males and females across the ecological zones (Table 4.1). Both males and females exhibit the highest out-migration rates for Hill zone, with females (57.6%) outnumbering the males (51.3%). Mountain zone shows almost equal out-migration rates for both sexes, 19-20 percent. However, the net-migration reveals that Mountain and Hill zones have negative net-migration for both males and females, yet Tarai shows positive net-migration. On the other hand, in Tarai, female in-migrants (61.5%) are more prevalent than males (55.6%) and the net-migration is also much higher for females (145 thousand) than males (80 thousand). Similarly, gross migration is also much higher for females (319 thousand) than males (251 thousand) in Tarai. The findings indicate that Tarai receives more female migrants from other ecological zones and females are more on the move in Tarai. Overall, the Hill region experiences the highest out-migration, while the Tarai is still the most attractive destination, more specifically for females.

Table 4.1: Inter-zonal recent migration, NPHC 2021

Prior Residence (Ecological zone)	Current place of residence			Total (Out)	% out-migration	Net migration	Net- migration rate*
	Mountain	Hill	Tarai				
Male							
Mountain	-	39988	19196	59184	19.9	-50,326	-5.9
Hill	6321	-	146432	152753	51.3	-29,587	-0.5
Tarai	2537	83178	-	85715	28.8	79,913	1.1
Total (In)	8,858	123,166	165,628	297,652	100.0	-	-
In-migration (%)	3.0	41.4	55.6	100.0	-	-	-
Female							
Mountain	-	47,774	25,386	73,160	19.4	-60,617	-6.8
Hill	10465	-	206,434	216,899	57.6	-84,472	-1.4
Tarai	2,078	84,653	-	86,731	23.0	145,089	1.9
Total	12,543	132,427	231,820	376,790	100.0	-	-
In-migration (%)	3.3	35.1	61.5	100.0	-	-	-

*Note: * Net-migration rate as a percentage of native-born population.*

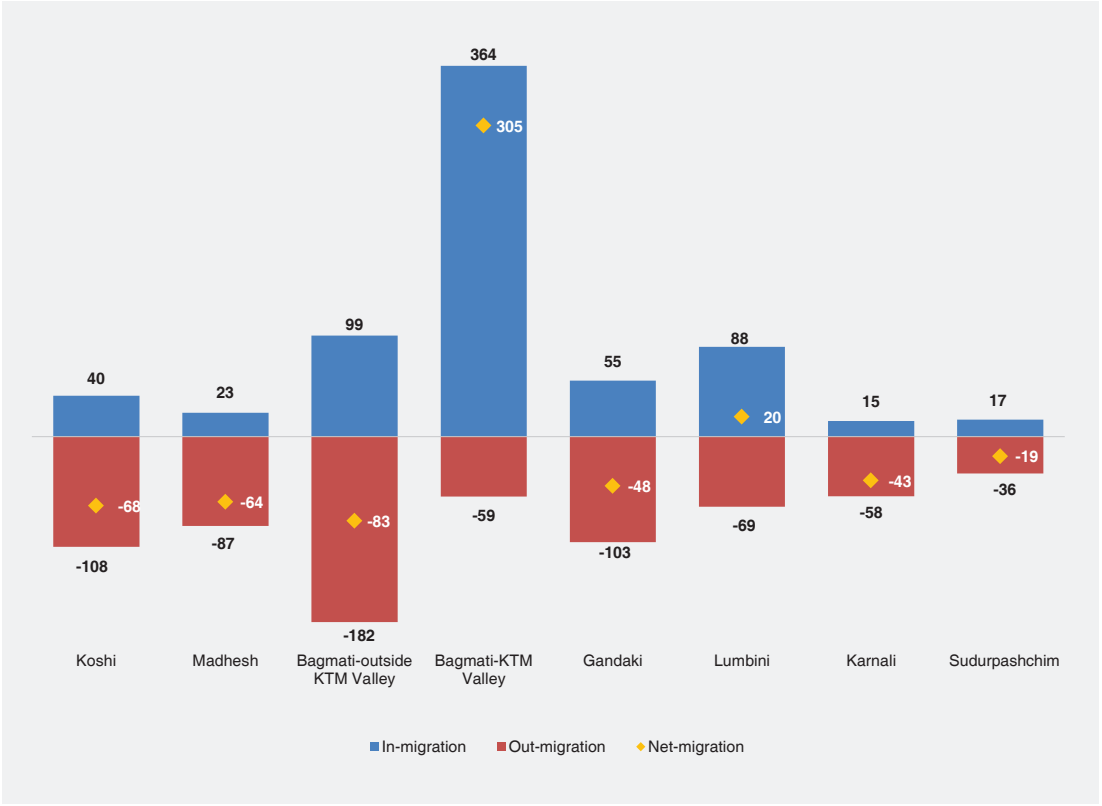
4.3. Inter-provincial recent migration

Looking at provincial migration, Bagmati-Kathmandu valley has the highest migration rate (60.3%), followed by Gandaki (33.1%) and Koshi (31.2%), whereas it is lowest in Karnali (14.5%) (Figure 4.1). Regarding inter-provincial migration, Bagmati-Kathmandu Valley receives the highest in-migrants (364 thousand), which is 60.3 percent out of total inter-provincial migrants (Figure 4.4). Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley stands at second position in receiving in-migrants (99 thousand), followed by Lumbini with 88 thousand in-migrants. The lowest in-migration figure is in Karnali (15 thousand). On the other hand, Koshi has the highest figure of out-migrants (182 thousand), followed by Gandaki by losing 103 thousand people through out-migration. In case of net-migration, there are only two provinces, Bagmati-Kathmandu Valley and Lumbini, which show positive net-migration. Bagmati-Kathmandu Valley gains 305 thousand and Lumbini gains 20 thousand migrants. All other provinces show a net-loss of individuals through migration. Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley has the highest loss rate, followed by Koshi (-68 thousand).

The findings indicate that both Bagmati-Kathmandu Valley and Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley are the provinces which receive the most migrants. Madhesh province with Tarai districts does not seem

to attract as many migrants likely due to the fact that it has a lower number of urban areas compared to Bagmati province. Volume of population movement seems to be the least in Sudurpashchim and Karnali as these provinces have lowest in- as well as out-migration.

Figure 4.4: Volume of recent in-, out- and net-migration by province (in '000), NPHC 2021



In general, when assessing sex differentials, in- and out-migration patterns are similar for males and females in the provinces (Table 4.2). Male in-migration is highest in Bagmati (58.6%), as well as female in-migration rates (52.2%), yet the proportion of migrants is much higher for males than that of females in Bagmati. Similarly, Lumbini has the second highest rate of in-migration for both males and females, yet opposite to the pattern showed in Bagmati province, it has more female (18.2%) than male (14.6%) in-migrants. Karnali and Sudurpashchim have lowest in-migrant rates for both males and females. In the case of out-migration, Madhesh has the highest out-migration (19.6%) for males, whereas Gandaki shows the highest in-migration for females (21.1%). The second position is occupied by Koshi for both males (19.4%) and females (21%). Sudurpashchim is at the lowest position for both male and female out-migration. As with in-migration, Bagmati and Lumbini are the only provinces with positive net-migration. Bagmati gains 112 thousand males and 110 females, with slightly more males than females. Lumbini gains around 6 thousand males and about 14 thousand females, with

females more than double of males. Madhesh province accounts for highest loss of people through migration, both for males and females, however loss of females (-271 thousand) is almost seven times higher than that of males (-39 thousand).

This indicates that Bagmati has the highest population movement for both males and females through both in- and out-migration. Koshi has a slightly higher out-migration for females, but males still contribute to a significant proportion to the total migration. Madhesh exhibits a significant gender disparity; it loses a much higher volume of females than that of males. This highlights a substantial outflow of females from Madhesh relative to males. Karnali and Sudurpashchim experience lower level of migration, both in- and out-migration. Similarly, Bagmati gains more males and Lumbini gains more females.

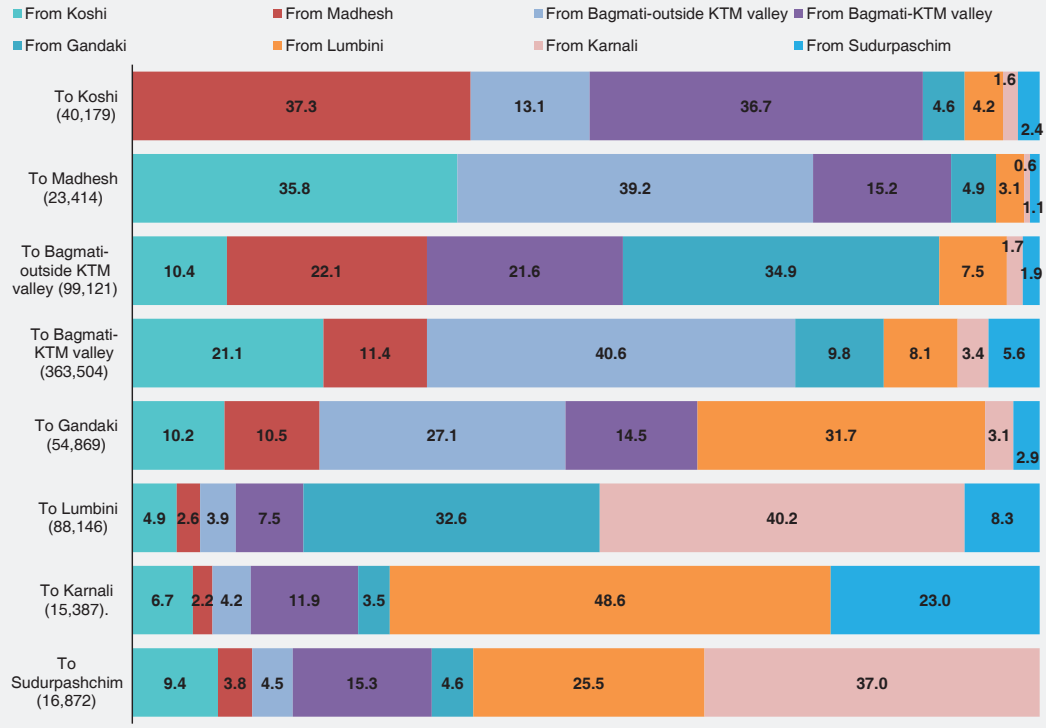
Table 4.2: Inter-provincial recent migration, NPHC 2021

Province	Male				Female			
	in-migration (%)	% out-migration	Net migration	Net-migration rate*	% in-migration	% out-migration	Net migration	Net-migration rate*
Koshi	7.3	19.4	-29,878	-1.3	7.8	21.0	-37,720	-1.5
Madhesh	3.7	19.6	-39,136	-1.3	5.0	13.7	-271,374	-9.6
Bagmati	58.6	13.3	111,992	3.8	52.2	13.5	110,330	3.7
Gandaki	10.4	17.4	-17,451	-1.6	10.3	21.1	-30,855	-2.4
Lumbini	14.6	12.3	5,626	0.2	18.2	13.3	13,913	0.6
Karnali	2.7	10.4	-18,938	-2.3	3.0	11.4	-23,935	-2.8
Sudurpashchim	2.7	7.6	-12,215	-1.0	3.6	6.0	-6,964	-0.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	-	-	100.0	100.0	-	-
Total (Numbers)	247,057		-	-	285,611		-	-

*Note: *Net-migration rate as a percentage of total native-born population.*

Looking at inter-provincial migration flow, Bagmati-Kathmandu Valley received the highest proportion of migrants from the districts outside of Kathmandu Valley of Bagmati (40.6%) and from Koshi (21.1%) (Figure 4.5). Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley received the highest proportion of migrants from Gandaki (34.9%) and then Madhesh (22.1%) and Kathmandu Valley (21.6%). Similarly, the proportion of migrants received by Madhesh is highest from Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley (39.2%), by Koshi from Madhesh (37.3%) and Kathmandu Valley (36.7%), Gandaki from Lumbini (31.7%), Lumbini from Karnali (40.2%), Karnali from Lumbini (48.6%) and Sudurpashchim from Karnali (37%).

Figure 4.5: Flow of migrants from and to provinces, NPHC 2021



Inter-provincial flow indicates that the migrants in a province largely come from the adjoining provinces. Reciprocity in internal migration among the provinces is clearly seen from the evidence. Even though the internal migration is largely destined to those provinces that have bigger and/or emerging bigger urban areas, some provinces such as Koshi and Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley, Madhesh, Gandaki, Sudurpashchim and Karnali also have a significant proportion of in-migrants originated from Kathmandu Valley. The result also supports findings from inter-zonal migration in that it provides a sense of diversification of migration destination on one hand, and the increasing tendency of reverse migration.

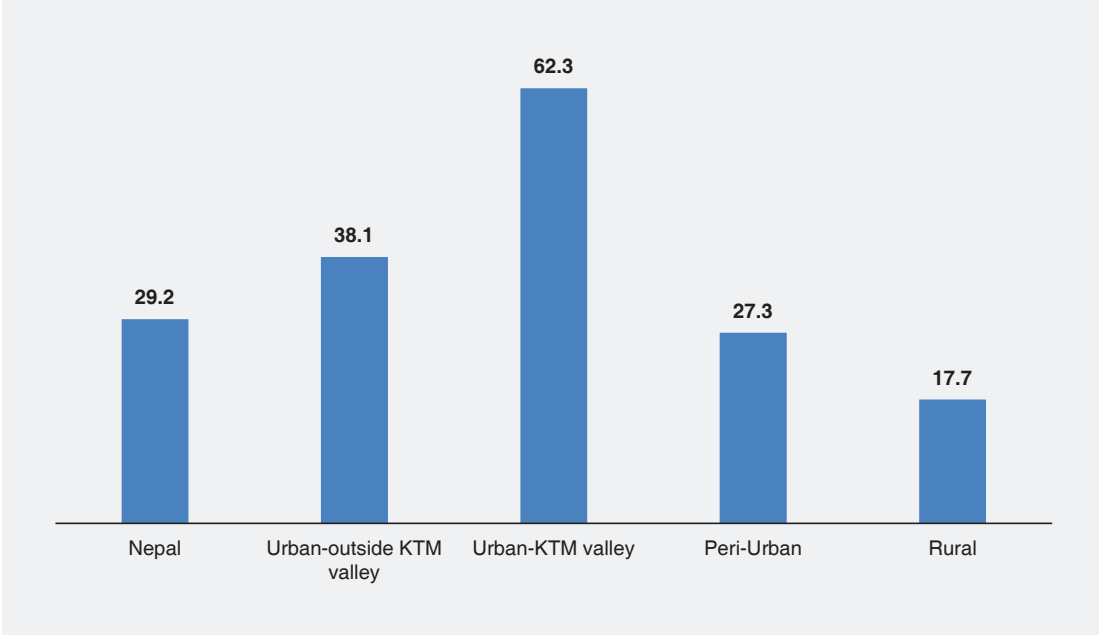
4.4. Rural-urban migration

4.4.1. Migration rates and distribution

Considering the rural/urban municipality, the internal migration rate as a percentage of native-born population is 17.1 percent for rural municipalities and 35.5 percent for urban municipalities (see Figure 4.1). The classification of rural or urban municipalities largely misrepresents the rural/urban

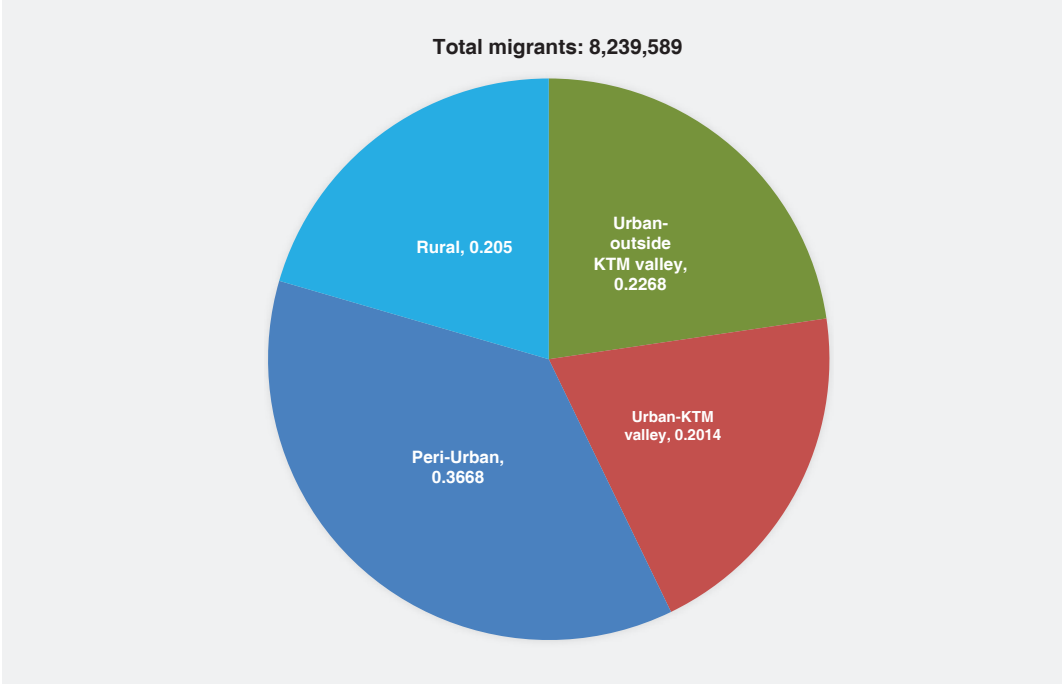
characteristics as many urban municipalities possess rural characteristics. The classification of rural/urban municipalities was introduced after the restructuring of the country in 2015 and involved the classification of many rural areas into urban municipalities. Consequently, the urban municipalities hold a share of 66 percent of the total population, which is not true. This is the reason why rural/urban has been reclassified by the government into three categories – rural, peri-urban and urban – is based on degree of urbanization using density of population (NSO, 2024a). For the analysis, Kathmandu Valley urban area is separated from other urban areas because it is the capital city area and the largest urban area of the country. As shown by Figure 4.6, Kathmandu Valley urban area has the highest migration rate, which is 62.3 as a percentage of total native-born population of the Kathmandu Valley urban area. It is followed by the urban area outside of the Kathmandu Valley (38.1%) and the rural area shows the lowest migration rate (17.7%).

Figure 4.6: Migration rates by rural/urban residence, NPHC 2021



Looking at distribution of migrants according to rural/urban residence, peri-urban has the highest proportion of migrants (36.7%), followed by urban area outside Kathmandu Valley (22.7%) (Figure 4.7). Kathmandu Valley urban stands at third position (20.1%), but it alone holds one-fifth of the total migrants in the country. It is worthy to note here that Kathmandu Valley covers only three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur), whereas urban outside Kathmandu Valley covers all other urban areas in the country.

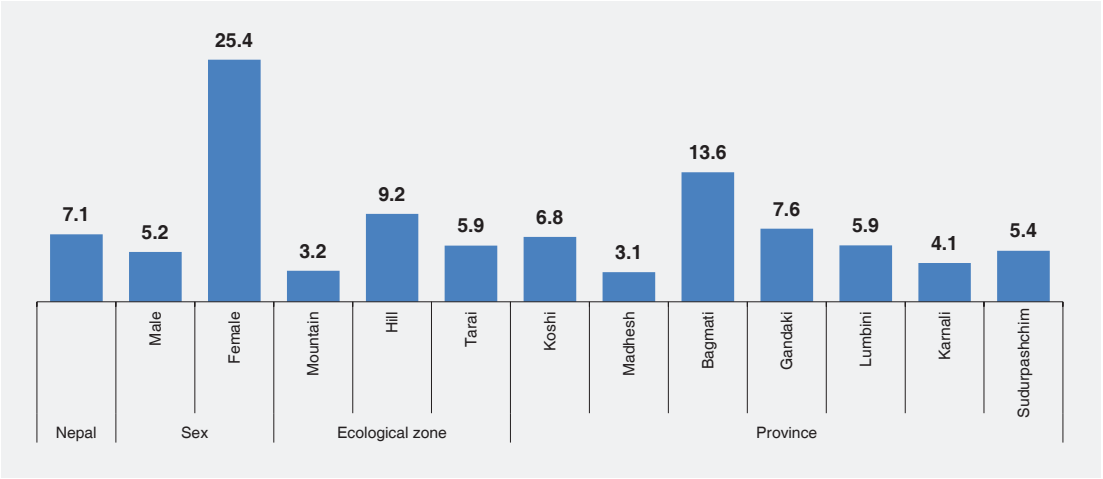
Figure 4.7: Percentage distribution of in-migrants by rural/urban residence, NPHC 2021



4.4.2. Rural-urban migration stream

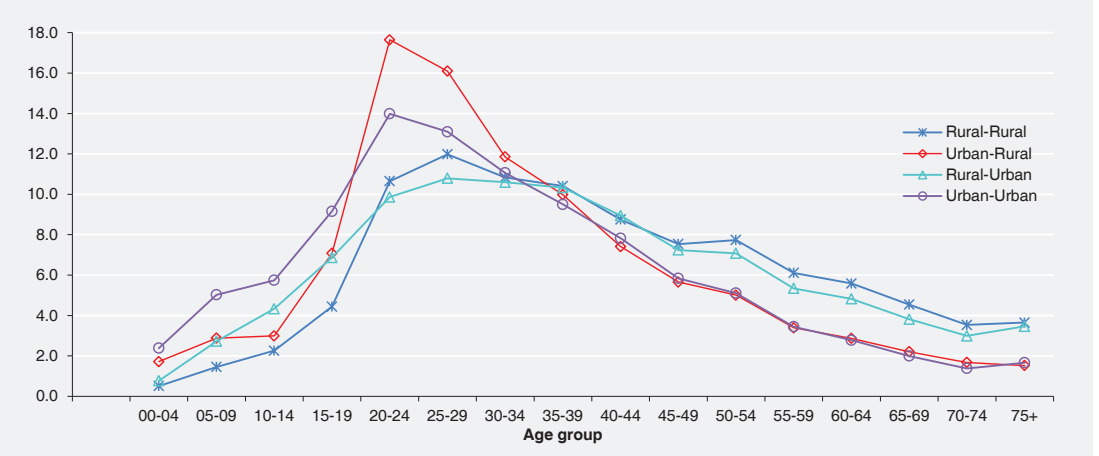
The National Population and Housing Census 2021 recorded internal migration data based on whether the last prior residence was in a rural or urban municipality. The rural-urban migration stream is analysed here with this data. Total internal migrants from/to rural and urban areas are at a figure of 1,994,996 according to 2021 census data, which is 7.1 percent (Figure 4.8) as a percentage of total native-born population (28,193,504) and it occupies a 24.2 percent share of the total internal recent migration (8,239,589). As shown in Figure 4.8, the migration rate of females (25.4%) is five-times higher than that of males (5.2%), indicating that females are much higher accounted for in rural-urban migration streams. It is highest in Hill zone (9.2%), which is almost three-times higher than that in Mountain and higher than Tarai by more than three percentage points. Among provinces, the migration stream rate is 13.6 percent in Bagmati as a percentage of native-born population, which is followed by Gandaki (7.6%) and Koshi (6.8%). However, the migration stream in Bagmati is around double of that in Gandaki and Koshi. The lowest migration stream rate is observed in Madhesh (3.1%) and Karnali (4.1). The migration stream in Madhesh is even slightly less than that in mountain and it is more than four-times less than that in Bagmati.

Figure 4.8: Migration rates for rural-urban stream by sex, ecological zone and province, NPHC 2021



Regarding the age representation of rural-urban migration streams, all four migration streams demonstrated an inverted U-shape which begins to sharply increase after 10-14 age groups, peaking at 20-24 and/or 25-29 age group, and then beginning to fall proportionally (Figure 4.9). Urban-rural and urban-urban streams are observed to be much sharper in two age groups (20-24 and 25-29) than other streams. The progression of rural-urban migration demonstrates less drastic of a spike than that of the other streams, beginning to increase earlier and decrease at a slower rate. This indicates that individuals in all age groups are greater involved in rural to urban migration, with a higher degree in the 20-39 age group.

Figure 4.9: Percentage distribution of migrants by age of migrants and migration stream, NPHC 2021



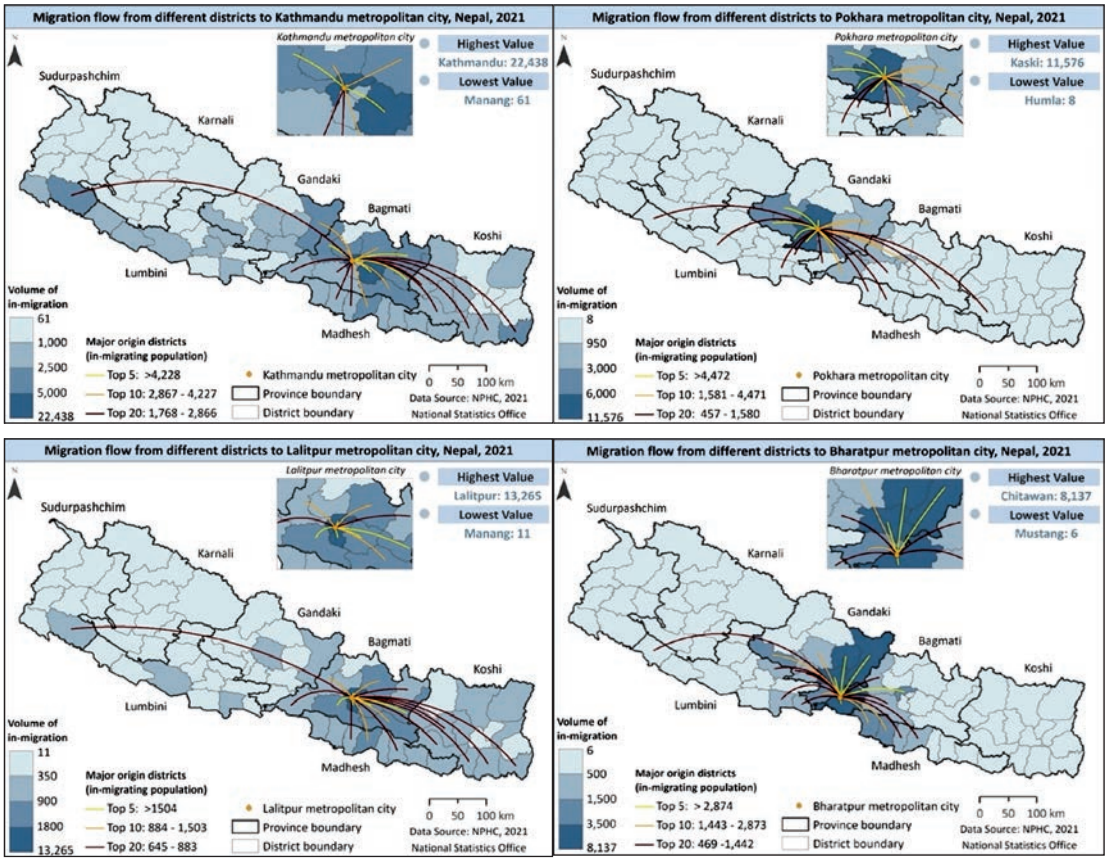
Data shows that rural-urban migration is dominant in the country (51.3%), which occupies more than half of the total stream (Table 4.3). Urban-urban migration (32.8%) also appears to be significant. Individuals from small cities and towns migrating to big urban cities is common in overall migration systems and has been growing in Nepal too. It concerns not only small to big cities, yet also involves activities from and within big cities. For example, the population growth rate is -1.18 percent in Kathmandu and 0.30 percent in Lalitpur in 2021, which is largely as people from core city areas migrate to peripheral newly emerged cities for residential purposes (NSO, 2024b). These peripheral areas are mostly newly emerged urban municipalities around big cities like Kathmandu and Lalitpur metropolis. Males are slightly more represented than females in both rural-urban and urban-urban migration. However, females are represented as double (14.8%) that of males (7.5%) in rural-rural migration, with notable percentages in urban-rural migration which is mainly due to migration for business and agriculture related work such as olericulture. People also migrated from densely populated areas and in response to a renewed attraction by rural lifestyles. The data is further disaggregated by ecological zones – Mountain, Hill, and Tarai – showing significant variations in streams of migration. Rural-urban and urban-urban migration are dominant in both Hill and Tarai, whereas rural-rural migration is more pronounced (in addition to rural-urban) in Mountain zone. Additionally, migration by provinces reveals that rural-urban migration is dominant, followed by urban-urban migration in all provinces. However, the urban-urban migration stream is also much higher in Bagmati (44.9% after rural-urban as 49.7%) than in other provinces.

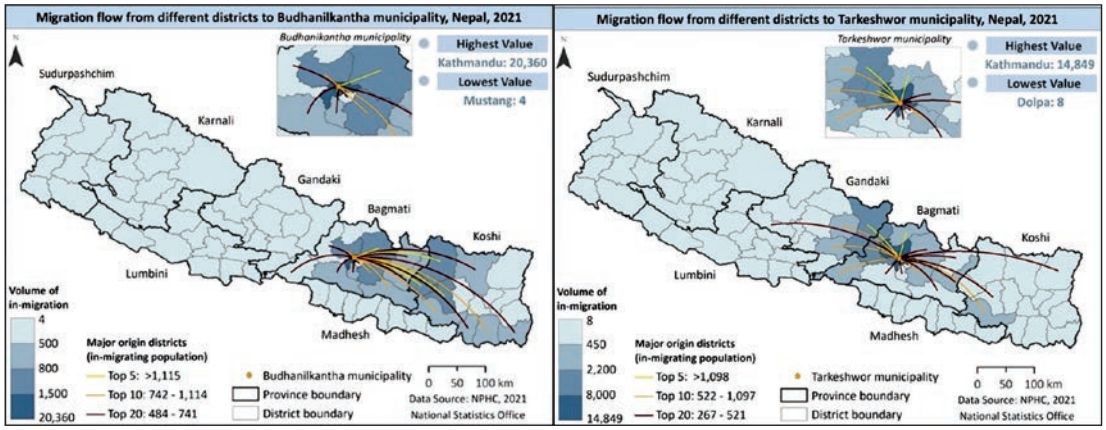
Table 4.3: Stream of migration – rural-rural, urban-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban, NPHC 2021

Area	Rural-rural	Urban-rural	Rural-urban	Urban-urban	Total (%)	Total (No.)
Nepal	12.0	3.9	51.3	32.8	100.0	1,994,996
Sex						
Male	7.5	3.5	52.2	36.8	100.0	781,478
Female	14.8	4.3	50.8	30.2	100.0	1,213,518
Ecological zone						
Mountain	37.6	11.9	37.3	13.2	100.0	56,635
Hill	9.3	3.6	48.6	38.5	100.0	1,057,100
Tarai	13.5	3.9	55.5	27.1	100.0	881,261
Province						
Koshi	17.3	6.0	51.0	25.6	100.0	325,325
Madhesh	16.1	4.8	54.8	24.3	100.0	181,877
Bagmati	4.0	1.4	49.7	44.9	100.0	805,646
Gandaki	13.1	5.8	53.1	28.1	100.0	183,017
Lumbini	20.7	5.5	51.5	22.3	100.0	289,725
Karnali	19.4	7.5	50.1	23.0	100.0	67,698
Sudurpashchim	16.6	5.3	55.1	23.1	100.0	141,708

Regarding rural-urban migration, NPHC 2021 provides information on municipality of prior residence, however it does not identify the prior municipality but instead the district of prior residence. Accordingly, in order to inform migration flow, the major 22 urban municipalities which are selected here received 100,000 above in-migrants from different districts recorded by the 2021 census (Map 2; Annex II: Maps). Among these districts, Map 2 displays six major urban municipalities (Kathmandu, Pokhara, Lalitpur and Bharatpur metropolitan city and Budhanilkantha and Tarkeshwor municipalities) and the remaining are displayed in Annex II. Budhanilkantha and Tarkeshwor are the largest urban municipalities in Kathmandu Valley, and they are adjoining municipalities of Kathmandu Metropolitan city. For migration to the cities, only top 20 origin districts are illustrated in all the maps due to a technical issue in which other origins are quite scattered with minimal volume. The main three metropolitan cities, namely Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lalitpur, seem to receive in-migrants from all over the country. The top 20 origin districts also show scattered results for these cities. For other municipalities such as Bharatpur, Budhanilkantha, Tarkeshwor (2nd and 3rd panel of Map 2) and other municipalities (Annex II: Maps), the origins are mostly from surrounding districts, which indicates that most of migration in these municipalities are from within short distance origin.

Map 2: Migration flows in top six municipalities from different districts, NPHC 2021

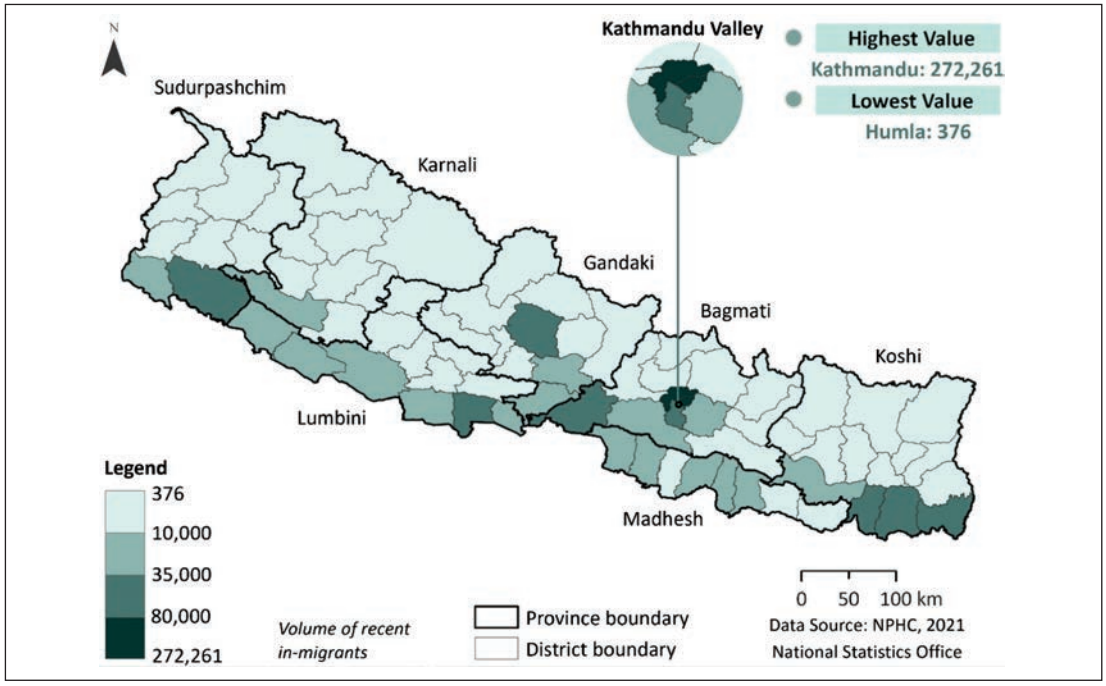




4.5. Inter-district recent migration

The most recent migration data from 77 districts of Nepal reveals significant disparities in migration patterns, reflecting broader socioeconomic dynamics. Bhaktapur (19%) has the highest in-migration rate, followed by Lalitpur (14.5%), and Kathmandu (14.0%) (Map 3). In contrast, Taplejung and Khotang exhibit high out-migration rates, with percentages of 17.4 percent and 17.1 percent respectively, indicating substantial population loss (Map 4). There are 18 districts which show positive net-migration rates (Figure 4.10). Among them, the highest net-migration rates are observed in Bhaktapur (16.3%), Lalitpur (12.5%) and Kathmandu (8.7%) and closely followed by Kaski (7%). All these districts with higher positive net-migration have either big urban areas or newly emerging big cities. However, this inflow can strain resources and infrastructure, necessitating the need for effective urban planning and policy interventions. On the other hand, districts with higher negative net-migration rates, such as Khotang (-15.5%), Bhojpur (-12.7%), Ramechhap (-11.2%), Syangja (-10.5%), Tehrathum (-10.3%) and Okhaldhunga (-10%) face challenges like labor shortages. In addition, all of the districts most affected by the 2015 earthquake have negative net-migration rates, except Kathmandu Valley districts. Exceptionally, Manang and Mustang have both in- and out-migration high and positive net-migration rates. High in-migration is mainly due the fact that these districts contains areas where tourism related activities are high, encouraging migration for individuals working in tourism-related industries. However, as not all the parts of these districts are tourist areas, individuals continue to migrate out of the non-tourist areas of the district. Overall, the migration patterns underscore the need for balanced regional development to mitigate the adverse effects of high in-, out-, and inter-district (gross) migration (Map 3 & 4; Annex 5).

Map 3: Volume of recent in-migration by district, NPHC 2021



Map 4: Volume of recent out-migration by district, NPHC 2021

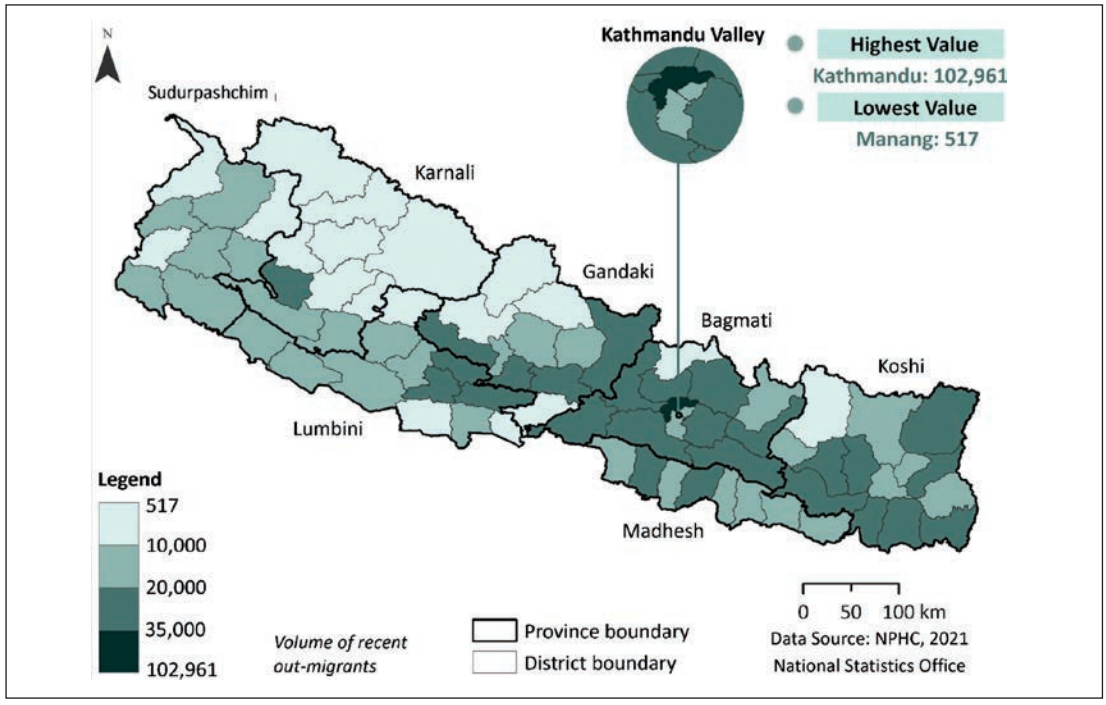
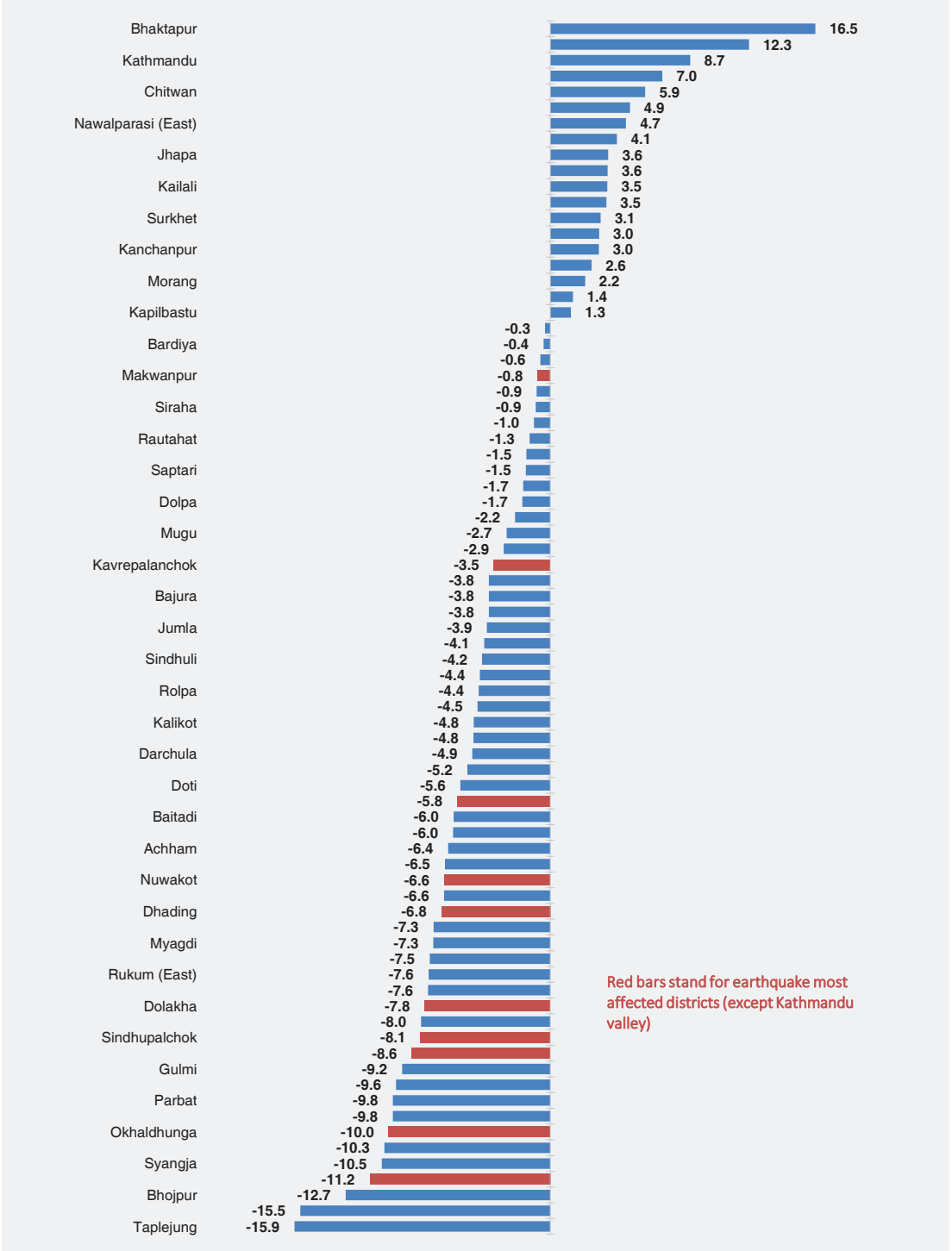


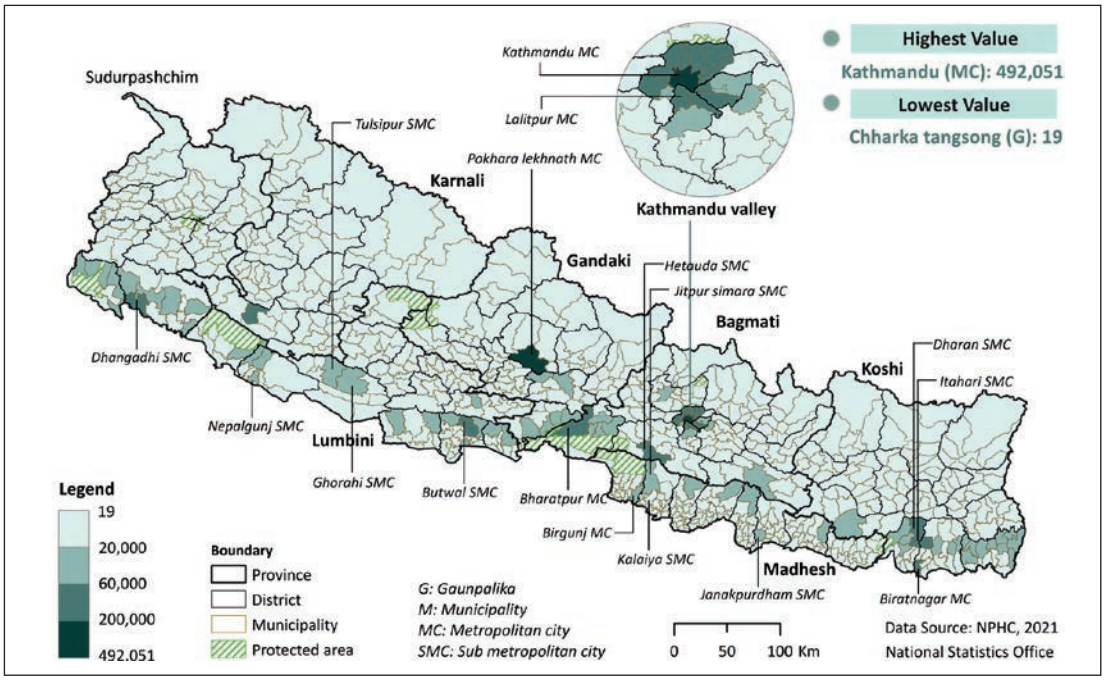
Figure 4.10: Net-migration as a percentage of native-born population by district, NPHC 2021



The discussion above suggests that, according to ecological zone, internal migration to Tarai is still prevalent yet the migration destinations to Koshi and Lumbini Provinces are greater, which is not the case for migration to Madhesh Province. This is due to the fact that these provinces have larger and more emerging urban municipalities. Migration to Hill ecological zone is equally expanding but destined only to the Kathmandu Valley cities and Pokhara, where three metropolitan cities and emerging large cities exist. According by Province, Bagmati stands to be the province receiving the highest in-migrant population; a region where Kathmandu Valley cities, Bharatpur (Chitawan) metropolitan city, and Hetauda sub-metropolitan city are located. When analyzing according to rural/urban residence as well as municipality, migration is overwhelmingly destined to urban municipalities/residences. This evidence largely demonstrates that internal migration is primarily concentrated in urban areas.

Furthermore, illustrating volume of in-migration according to urban/rural municipalities provides an insight to pointing out of location of migration destinations that all are large and emerging cities (Map 5). Darker areas in the map shows high volume of in-migration. This includes six metropolitan cities (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bharatpur, Pokhara, Biratnagar, and Birgunj), 11 sub-metropolitan cities (Dharan, Itahari, Janakpur, Jitpur Simara, Kalaiya, Hetauda, Butwal, Ghorahi, Tulsipur, Nepalgunj and Dhangadi), and other emerging large cities that are mostly located in Tarai of Koshi, Lumbini, and Sudurpashchim Provinces. However, as shown in Map 5, there is one metropolitan city (Birgunj) and three sub-metropolitan cities (Janakpurdham, Kalaiya and Jitpur Simara) in Madhesh Province where in-migration is considerably low compared to other Provinces.

Map 5: Volume of recent in-migration by urban/rural municipality, NPHC 2021



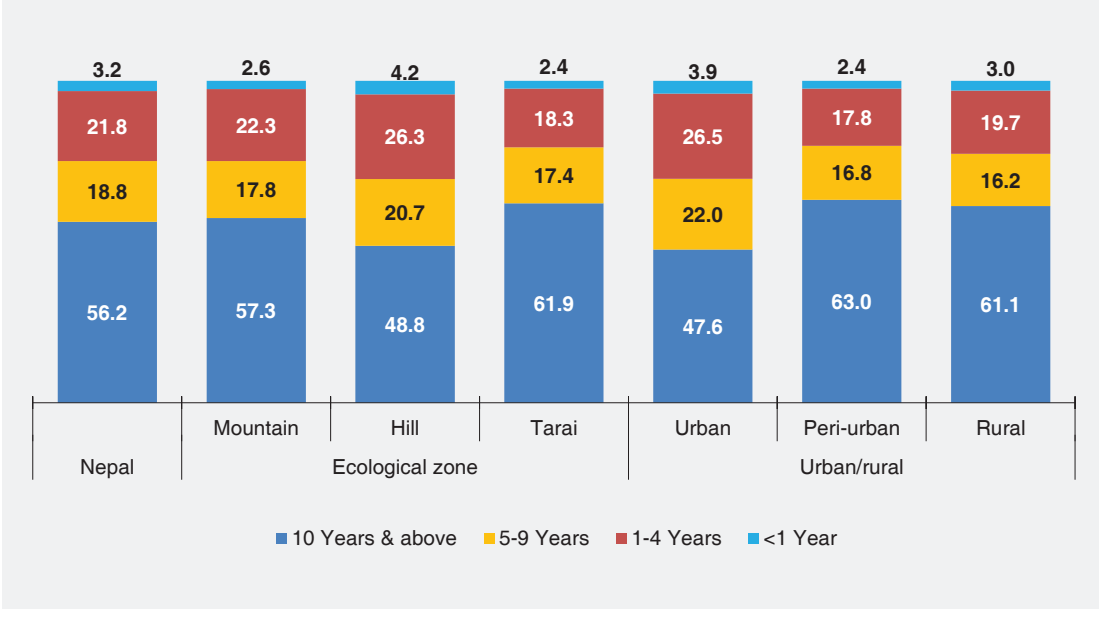
4.6. Duration of stay: Period migration

Duration of stay provides important information on period migration which provides not only the length of migration but also a trend of migration. As discussed above, migration based on question on 'last prior residence' is newly introduced in the census of Nepal, which is designated as 'recent migration'. Duration of stay in years was recorded in reference to 'last prior residence'. It helps inform variation in length of stay at current place of residence after leaving the last prior residence.

4.6.1. Pattern in duration of stay

Looking into the length of stay at current place of residence, duration of stay is classified into four categories – less than one year, 1-4 years, 5-9 years and 10 years and above (Figure 4.11). Overall, one-fourth of the total migrants staying at current place of residence for less than five years. Among the ecological zones, it is highest in Hill (26.3+4.2=30.5%) and in urban (26.5+3.9=30.4%) among urban/rural categories. A majority of those who stay at a current place for 10 years or above is present for all categories, except for Hill and Urban zones. The most recent migration of those staying for less than one year is also significant and it is highest in Hill zone (4.2%) and urban (3.9%) areas. The evidence suggests that Hill and urban areas have much higher proportion of newer migrants than in other categories.

Figure 4.11: Percentage of migrants by duration of stay by ecological zone and rural/urban residence, NPHC 2021



Since the census has not collected background information of migrants at origin, it is difficult to predict why they migrate. The information on migrants was collected for the place of destination, which is discussed in terms of length or duration of stay and migrant's characteristics. Table 4.4 suggests that majority have migrated for five years and above (73.8%). A proportion of those who migrated for one to four years are represented by little more than one-fifth (21.5%) and those who migrated for less than one year (most recent migrants) account for only three percent. A similar pattern is seen for almost all categories of individual characteristics, with exception of children.

The most recent migrants (<1 years) are greater represented by males (3.7%) than females (2.6%) and they are relatively younger, meaning that proportion of most recent migrants are more among children and youth – children aged 0-14 years are 21.4% and those aged 15-24 are 6.2% (Table 4.4). For caste/ethnic groups – 'except other, foreigners and caste/ethnicity not stated' – a proportion of most recent migrants is much higher among Hill groups, including Hill Caste (3%), Hill Janajati (3.4%) and Hill Dalit (3.4%). Most recent migrants are represented at a slightly higher rate amongst persons with disability (3%) than those without disabilities (2%). When looking at literacy of migrants, migrants without literacy are overwhelmingly older persons, with 5 years and above of duration of stay, whereas a significant proportion of recent migrants are literate (3.4% for <1 year and 25.6% for 1-4 years). Similarly, in case of educational level, it is found that a proportion of most recent migrants are among those who attended early child development (8.4% for <1 year and 60.1% for 1-4 years). A significant proportion of most recent migrants attended basic, secondary, and higher level of education (ranging from 26 to 32% for <5 years). This suggests that recent migrants are mostly educated and those who have Early Child Development (ECD) are dependents.

Table 4.4: Characteristics of recent migrants by duration of stay, NPHC 2021

Socio-demographic characteristics of migrants	Duration of Stay					
	<1 yr	1-4 yrs	5+ yrs	NS	Total (%)	Total (No.)
Nepal	3.0	21.5	73.8	1.8	100.0	8,239,589
Sex						
Male	3.7	24.8	69.5	2.0	100.0	2,767,883
Female	2.6	19.8	76.0	1.6	100.0	5,471,706
Age group						
00-14 (Children)	21.4	73.6	0.0	5.0	100.0	84,534
15-24 (Young)	6.2	43.2	48.6	2.0	100.0	2,043,142
25-44 (Middle age)	2.2	18.3	78.0	1.5	100.0	3,389,394
45-64 (Older)	0.9	7.9	89.4	1.8	100.0	1,937,221

Socio-demographic characteristics of migrants	Duration of Stay					
	<1 yr	1-4 yrs	5+ yrs	NS	Total (%)	Total (No.)
65+ (Old age)	0.9	6.8	90.5	1.9	100.0	785,298
Caste/ethnicity						
Hill Castes	3.0	21.8	73.3	1.9	100.0	3,355,659
Madhesh/Tarai Caste	1.9	17.5	79.6	1.0	100.0	904,133
Mountain/Hill Janajati	3.4	23.5	71.2	1.8	100.0	2,354,504
Tarai Janajati	2.9	19.0	76.7	1.5	100.0	525,484
Hill Dalits	3.4	22.4	71.8	2.5	100.0	668,476
Madhesh/Tarai Dalit	1.5	15.4	82.3	0.8	100.0	239,270
Religious/Linguistic groups	2.6	19.7	76.4	1.3	100.0	179,447
Others, Foreigners & Not stated	6.5	32.1	59.3	2.0	100.0	12,616
Disability						
Person with disability	2.0	13.4	82.5	2.1	100.0	184,760
Person without disability	3.0	21.7	73.6	1.7	100.0	8,052,854
Literacy						
Illiterate	1.0	8.6	88.8	1.5	100.0	2,225,537
Literate	3.4	25.6	69.2	1.8	100.0	5,927,827
Literacy not stated	4.6	22.6	44.1	28.7	100.0	1,691
Education level*						
Early Child Development (no grade)	8.4	60.1	28.9	2.6	100.0	80,681
Basic (1-8)	3.0	23.1	72.2	1.8	100.0	2,241,094
Secondary (9-inter)	3.9	27.7	66.8	1.7	100.0	2,700,606
Higher (bachelor+)	3.4	26.6	68.1	1.8	100.0	667,591
Other/No Level/Level NS/Never attending	1.5	11.1	85.2	2.3	100.0	239,546

** Population aged five years and above.*

4.6.2. Migration trend

There is no data on recent migration in the past census to inform trends in migration. The duration of stay is helpful to inform the trend in migration when the duration in years is converted into date in years. Data provides the duration up to 60 years (0-59 years) and the conversion into calendar year regresses up to the year 1962 (1962 to 2021). This history of migration indicates trends in migration during last 60 years since 1962. The migration history in terms of duration is meaningful when it is linked with politico-development plans and policies. Accordingly, the report describes migration history along with Nepal's periodic plans. The findings reveal a significant insight into how policies have influenced migration patterns over the years (Figure 4.12; Annex 6). The duration began with second five-year development plan (1962-65) where the focus was on infrastructure development, agriculture, transportation and communication. As a result, more migrants moved to Tarai for the abandoned agricultural opportunities. This trend continued to third and fourth development plans like employment generation policies and rural development that peaked migration to Tarai. This pattern is still of significance in Tarai.

Efforts to balance regional development during the sixth plan (1980-85) resulted in a slight decrease in migration to Tarai and an increase in Hill zone. Post-conflict reconstruction and economic growth during the Eleventh Plan (2007-2010) led to increased migration to Hill, especially Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitawan valley cities. This pattern can be seen since the 8th plan and continued till fifteenth plan. In the meantime, the earthquake severely affected many mountainous and hilly areas, leading to increased migration to safer areas. The Hill zone, including districts like Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur, also experienced significant damage but mainly in old city areas. However, most of the areas in these districts were safe. Many people from the affected areas migrated to less affected sub-urban areas of the Kathmandu Valley and other urban centers within Hill zone.

The migration history according to ecological zones is displayed in Figure 4.12. There is a constant proportion of migration throughout the 60 years period for mountain zone. However, when looking into Mountain zone separately, fluctuating migration trends can be seen (small Figure within Figure 4.12). There is a significant change over time in the proportion of migration in Mountain. When looking into Hill and Tarai, there has been shifting trend in migration over the years. There was a wider gap in migration between Hill and Tarai in earlier years, where Tarai had considerably higher migration than that in Hill. The widest gap was observed for 1971, where migration from other parts of the country into Tarai was 71 percent and that was 26.5 percent in Hill. Domination of Tarai migration over Hill continued but with squeezing gap in later years. By 2015, a proportion of migration in both Hill and Tarai met together (48.7%). After 2015, the rate of migration in Hill began to be dominate over Tarai and the gap between them began to widen, as it currently stands at a rate of 56.2 percent for Hill and 41.5 percent for Tarai in 2021.

Two different historical events in Nepal marked a historical turning point in 2015, leading to a shift in migration patterns. Firstly, Nepal experienced a large political change through the restructuring of the country's political and administrative system. Since 2015, the country has become a federal democratic republic with three tiers of government – Local, Provincial and Federal administrative structure. Establishment of new political structures with a new constitution and indication of political stability in the country emerged the hope of people that the country would take its pace for the development. Economic activities increased through various formal as well as informal sectors. Avenues for opportunities grew in the country, more specifically in the larger urban cities, so the movement of people also increased accordingly. Secondly, the country experienced a disastrous earthquake in 2015 which affected 31 Mountain and Hill districts, and 14 districts were severely affected. Further reference is contained in the Case of the 2015 Earthquake section below. Both events have played a vital role in migration to safer urban areas, specifically to municipalities in Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys.

Case of the 2015 Earthquake

Nepal experienced a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25 April 2015. The epicenter of the earthquake was in Gorkha district of central Nepal. It was followed by more than 300 aftershocks, including one of 6.8 magnitude on 12 May. The epicenter of the second earthquake took place in Sindhupalchok, also in central Nepal. A total of 31 districts were affected by the earthquake, which are in the Hill and Mountain districts of central Nepal. Among them, 14 districts (Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Kavrepalanchok, Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga, Makwanpur, Sindhuli, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur) were 'severely hit'. Another 17 districts were 'slightly affected'.

This earthquake was a devastating natural disaster in the history of Nepal, which caused around 9,000 deaths, over 22,000 injuries and destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes (NPC, 2015). According to IDMC and ADB (2022), 3.4 million people have been displaced during 2011-2021 due to disaster in Nepal, of which the 2015 earthquake holds a share of 79 percent (2.6 million) of the total displacement. Other disasters include floods, landslides and storms. Most of the displaced people migrated to Kathmandu Valley, despite the fact that Kathmandu Valley districts were also among the severely affected districts. This is largely due to the fact that all of the earthquake affected districts are neighboring districts of Kathmandu Valley on one hand, and the effect of the earthquake in Kathmandu Valley was only on the old structures of the core older city areas. In addition to Kathmandu Valley, Chitawan and Pokhara cities are also migration destinations as these cities are also not far from the earthquake affected districts.

Rural-urban variation in migration also has a significant implication when it is seen in terms of duration (Figure 4.13; Annex 6). Like in Hill and Tarai, there was wider gap in migration in urban and peri-urban and rural areas in earlier years since 1962. Rural migration was dominant over urban migration in early years when the migration trajectory was largely Tarai. The domination of rural migration continued but the gap was continuously closing. Restoration of democracy in 1991 can be seen as a turning point which opened up the avenues of opportunities more in urban areas. Since 1992, urban migration began to outweigh the rural migration and the gap between them has been progressively widening, reaching to 51.9 percent in urban and 19.1 percent in rural in 2021. The overall trend in migration in rural and peri-urban is similar but still they have wider gap in earlier years, later on they have been coming closer and still migration in peri-urban is 10 percentage points higher (29%) than that in rural areas (19.1%). Trends in migration between urban and peri-urban over the years is similar that there was wider gap in earlier years with domination of peri-urban. However, the end of the Maoist Insurgency post-2005, migration to urban areas began outweighing peri-urban migration and this tendency has been continuous with steady widening the gap. It is largely because mass levels of internal migration has occurred most preferably to the large urban areas during and after Maoist Insurgency mainly due to security reasons. At the result, migration in urban areas is 51.9 percent and that in peri-urban areas is 29 percent in 2021.

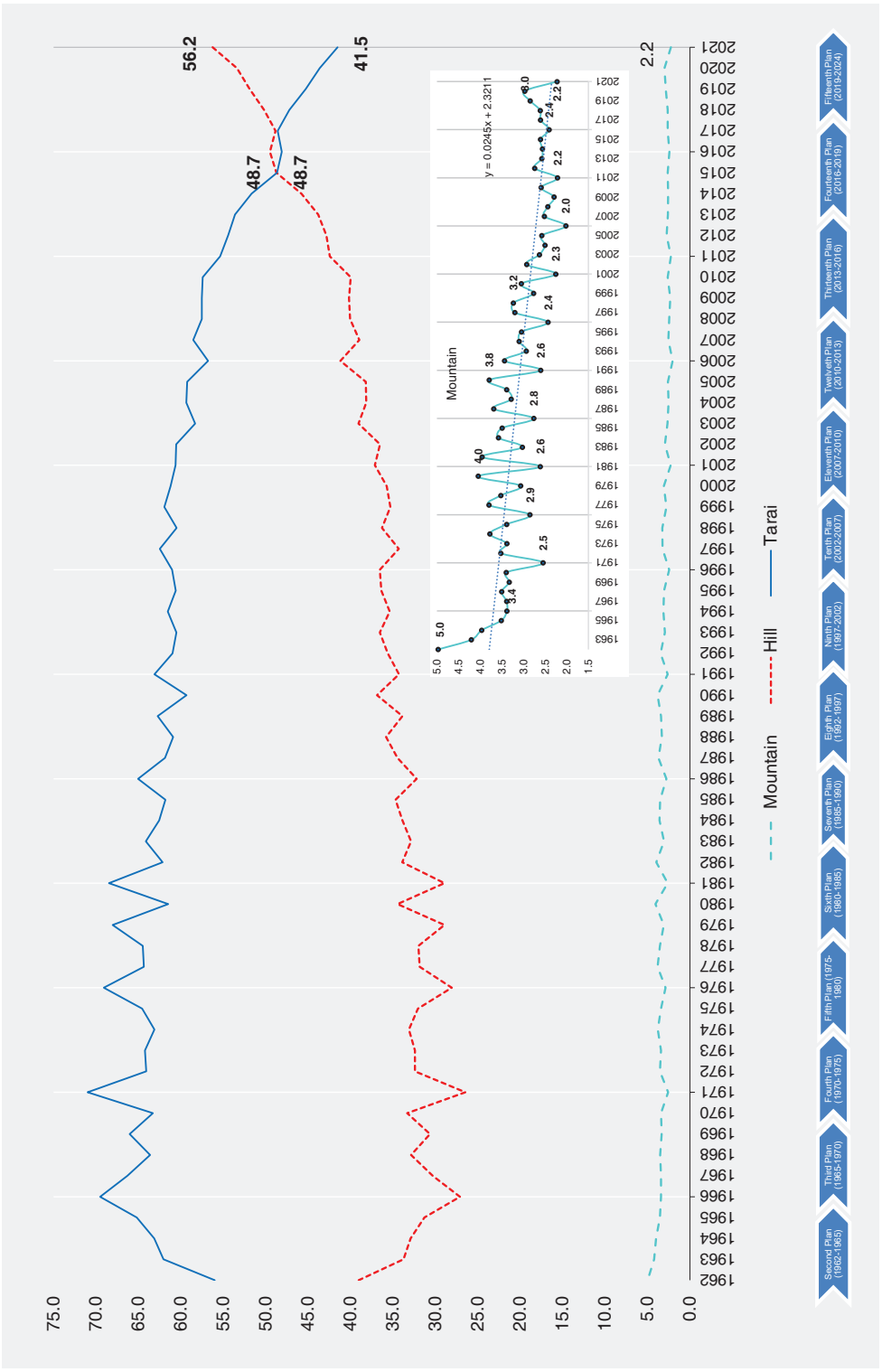
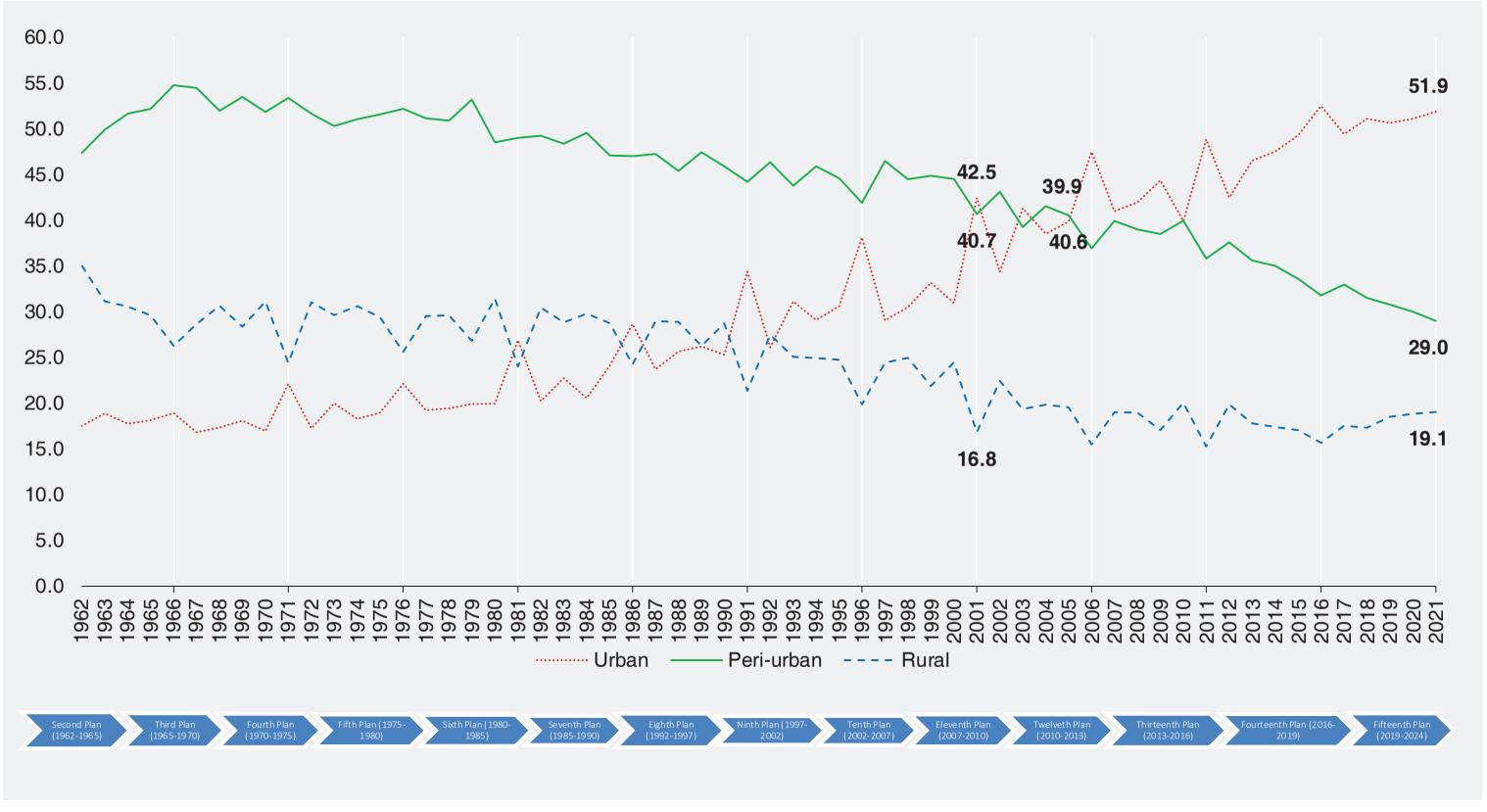


Figure 4.12: Percentage of migrants by duration of stay by ecological zone, NPHC 2021

Figure 4.13: Percentage of migrants by duration of stay by rural/urban residence, NPHC 2021



4.7. Reasons for recent migration

Incentives and reasons as to why and how individuals migrate is a primary focus in studying of migration patterns. The 2021 census identifies 8 such reasons for internal migration, including job related reasons, study/training, marriage, agriculture, natural disaster and dependents. This section discusses the reasons for migration of less than 5 years so that current trend is informed. Table 4.5 shows a detailed analysis of reasons for the recent migration within Nepal based on urban-rural, ecological zone and provinces. The 2021 census recorded the most important reasons for migration as dependent family member (25.9%) and marriage (24.9%). In addition, work/job (19.2%) and study/training (14.1%) as the reasons for migration are also significant.

Reasons for internal migration differ for different areas. Despite this, there is evidence of commonalities between ecological zones, urban-rural and provinces. In urban areas, the most common reason for why people migrate is dependency on family members (27.8%), followed by work or job opportunities (20.3%) and marriage (20.1%). Study/training is also an important reason which 15.8 percent of migration for. In rural areas, migration is predominantly due to marriage (50.5%) followed by dependency on family members (16.2%). In the Mountain, the main reasons for migration are marriage (42.3%) and work or job opportunities (20.1%). In Hill, migration is largely due to work or job opportunities (23.2%) and marriage (18.7%). The primary reasons are marriage (31.3%) and dependency on family members (26.7%) in Tarai. Across the provinces, marriage is the leading reason for migration in five provinces, except for Bagmati and Gandaki. For example, in Madhesh, marriage reason accounts for 64.1 percent, while in Karnali and Sudurpashchim, it accounts for 33.2 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively, highlighting the strong cultural emphasis on family and social ties. In contrast, in Bagmati, the primary reasons for migration are work or job opportunities (25.1%) and marriage (13.0%) (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Reasons for migration by urban-rural municipality, ecological zone and province, NPHC 2021

Area	Work/Job	Business	Study/ training	Marriage	Dependent family member	Natural disaster	Agriculture	Returnee	Others	Total	Total (No.)
Nepal	19.2	3.2	14.1	24.9	25.9	0.5	1.9	3.1	7.2	100.0	2,010,078
Urban-rural municipality											
Urban	20.3	3.4	15.8	20.1	27.8	0.5	1.7	2.6	7.9	100.0	1,689,625
Rural	12.9	2.3	4.9	50.5	16.2	0.6	3.1	5.7	3.9	100.0	320,453
Ecological zone											2,010,078
Mountain	20.1	4.1	10.9	42.4	13.5	0.5	1.1	4.7	2.6	100.0	56,955

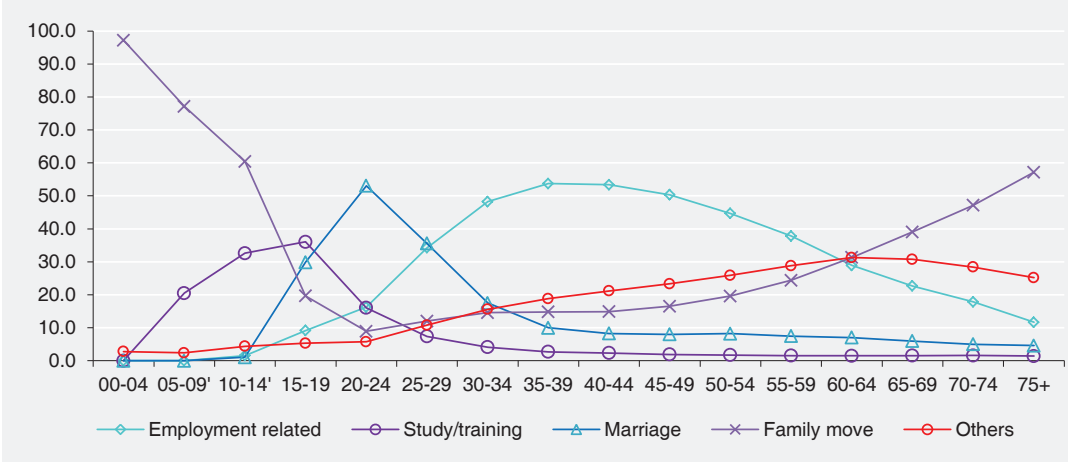
Area	Work/Job	Business	Study/ training	Marriage	Dependent family member	Natural disaster	Agriculture	Returnee	Others	Total	Total (No.)
Hill	23.2	3.5	16.5	18.7	26.0	0.4	0.9	2.9	7.9	100.0	1,066,522
Tarai	14.2	2.8	11.3	31.3	26.7	0.5	3.2	3.1	6.7	100.0	886,601
Province											
Koshi	16.2	3.1	10.6	26.6	27.1	0.4	4.2	4.4	7.4	100.0	326,577
Madhesh	9.3	1.5	5.8	64.1	12.7	0.3	1.1	2.4	2.8	100.0	183,212
Bagmati	25.1	3.4	17.3	13.0	28.9	0.5	0.8	2.0	9.0	100.0	811,081
Gandaki	22.2	4.0	14.9	21.7	25.8	0.5	1.2	3.4	6.1	100.0	185,954
Lumbini	14.9	3.7	13.2	27.5	26.9	0.5	2.4	3.5	7.6	100.0	292,150
Karnali	15.1	4.7	16.6	33.2	18.5	0.3	1.7	5.7	4.3	100.0	68,529
Sudurpashchim	11.7	2.2	13.3	33.6	25.4	0.9	3.8	4.3	4.9	100.0	142,575

Note: excluded not stated and do not know (n=4611)

Table 4.6 provides a detailed breakdown of migration reasons in Nepal by sex and age. For both sexes, the primary reasons for migration are marriage (24.9%), being a dependent family member (25.9%), and work/job (19.2%). Males predominantly migrate for work/job (31.8%), being a dependent family member (28.3%), and study/training (18.9%), while females mainly migrate for marriage (40.4%), being a dependent family member (24.4%), and work/job (11.1%). This indicates the motives for moving are clearly gendered.

Age is an influencing factor for migration as well as for reasons for migration. Reasons are reclassified when examining it according to age groups – employment related, study/training, marriage, family move (dependent) and other reasons (Figure 4.14; Table 4.6). It is clear that the youngest (0-4 years) and oldest (75+) migrate primarily for accompanying family, with percentages of 97.2 and 57.2 respectively. Marriage (53.0%) is the leading cause for those aged 20-24 age group, it starts increasing with age group 15-19 (30%), peaking at 20-24 age group and then decreasing to age group 35-39 (10%). The reason for migration as study and training gradually increases until age groups 15-19 with a peak of 36 percent, then it started decreasing sharply and the age group 30-34 onwards it is nominal. Work related migration that includes work/job, business and agriculture work begin after the age of 14 and it makes up an inverted U-shape, increased until the age group 35-39 (53.7%) and then it began to decrease as age increases.

Figure 4.14: Percentage of migrants by reason of migration by age group, NPHC 2021



Note: Work related include work/job, business and agriculture; others include natural disaster, returnee and others.

The data shows that natural disaster-induced migration remains consistently low across all age groups, with a slight increase among older individuals, reaching a high of 1.4 percent in the 75+ age group. In contrast, the percentage of returnees and agriculture-related migration rises with age. For example, returnees are most prevalent in the 65-69 age group (23.2), while agriculture-related migration is higher in the 35-39 age group (4%) and reaches a high of 7.5 percent in the 55-59 age group. This indicates that older individuals are more likely to return to their place of origin and engage in agriculture, whereas natural disasters have a relatively minor impact on migration across all age groups.

Table 4.6: Reasons for recent migration by sex and age, NPHC 2021

Sex and age	Work/Job	Business	Study/ training	Marriage	Dependents	Natural disaster	Agriculture	Returnee	Others	Total	N
Sex											
Both	19.2	3.2	14.1	24.9	25.9	0.5	1.9	3.1	7.2	100.0	2,010,078
Male	31.8	4.9	18.9	0.9	28.3	0.6	2.3	4.4	7.9	100.0	786,592
Female	11.1	2.2	10.9	40.4	24.4	0.4	1.6	2.2	6.9	100.0	1,223,486
Age Groups											
00-04	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	97.2	0.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	100.0	79,827
05-09	0.0	0.0	20.5	0.0	77.1	0.5	0.0	1.9	0.0	100.0	143,740
10-14	1.5	0.0	32.6	1.1	60.5	0.5	0.0	1.9	1.9	100.0	132,020
15-19	8.1	0.8	36.0	29.9	19.7	0.2	0.2	1.9	3.2	100.0	269,836

20-24	13.9	1.6	16.0	53.1	8.9	0.2	0.7	2.0	3.5	100.0	462,995
25-29	28.4	4.1	7.4	35.6	12.0	0.3	1.8	2.9	7.5	100.0	296,007
30-34	38.3	6.8	4.1	17.5	14.6	0.5	3.1	3.8	11.3	100.0	185,441
35-39	41.5	8.2	2.7	10.0	14.8	0.6	4.0	4.7	13.5	100.0	125,812
40-44	39.9	8.9	2.3	8.2	14.9	0.8	4.6	5.4	15.0	100.0	84,746
45-49	36.3	8.5	1.9	8.0	16.5	1.0	5.5	5.5	16.7	100.0	57,328
50-54	31.3	6.9	1.7	8.2	19.6	1.2	6.5	5.9	18.8	100.0	49,500
55-59	25.1	5.3	1.5	7.5	24.4	1.4	7.5	6.3	21.1	100.0	34,140
60-64	17.8	3.9	1.5	7.0	31.3	1.6	7.3	6.4	23.3	100.0	29,136
65-69	13.1	2.9	1.6	6.0	39.1	1.6	6.7	6.1	23.1	100.0	21,605
70-74	10.1	1.9	1.6	5.0	47.2	1.4	5.8	5.2	21.8	100.0	16,513
75+	6.4	1.4	1.4	4.6	57.2	1.4	3.8	5.0	18.8	100.0	21,432

Note: Excluded not stated and do not know.

A 2018 World Bank report projected that over 143 million people could become "climate migrants" by 2050, driven from their homes by floods, droughts, and water scarcity (Clement et al., 2021) (Table 4.7). This global projection is highly relevant to Nepal, where climate change is already causing significant internal displacement. According to a study by Sherpa and Bastakoti (2021), around 1.3 million people in Nepal could be forced to migrate by 2050 due to climate disasters. Given the potential scale of this issue, it is crucial to integrate climate migration considerations into national policies to ensure effective preparedness and response. However, the data on migration relating to climate change and natural disaster is almost none and reason for migration due to natural disaster recorded by the census is almost unworkable.

Table 4.7: Reason for migration, South Asian Countries

Country	Census year	Definition	Employment	Education	Marriage	Asso-ciational*	Others
Pakistan	1998	Lifetime	20.4	5.4	31.7	18.8	23.6
India	2001	Place of last residence	19.4	1.4	39.7	24.8	14.7
Bhutan	2005	Lifetime	26.4	14.6	10.5	31.5	17.0
Sri Lanka	2011	Lifetime	20.8	1.2	17.1	42.8	18.2
Nepal	2011	Lifetime	31.7	13.4	23.6	20.4	11.0
Nepal	2021	Most recent**	22.3	14.0	24.9	25.9	12.5

Sources: (Srivastava & Pandey, 2017*).*

Note: ** Accompanied their spouses, parents or relatives.*

*** Most recent migrant is a person whose place of usual residence five years before.*

The data on migration reasons by wealth quintile in Nepal reveals distinct patterns (Table 4.8). Among the lowest quintile, marriage is the predominant reason for migration (55.9%), followed by being a dependent family member (17.3%) and work/job (8.5%). As wealth quintile increases the reasons for migration diversify. In the middle quintile, marriage (31.7%) remains a major factor, while work/job (18.8%) and study/training (9.6%) are also more significant. For the higher quintile, study/training (20.2%) and work/job (22.9%) are prominent, followed by marriage (15.4%). The highest quintile shows a high percentage of migration for being a dependent family member (29.9%) and study/training (15.3%), with work/job (19.7%) also notable. Overall, the data indicates that economic and educational opportunities drive migration among wealthier groups, while traditional reasons like marriage and family dependency are more prevalent among lower groups.

Table 4.8: Reasons for recent migration by wealth quintile, NPHC 2021

Wealth quintile	Work/Job	Business	Study/ training	Marriage	Dependent family member	Natural disaster	Agriculture	Returnee	Others	Total
Lowest	8.5	1.0	3.3	55.9	17.3	0.8	4.7	4.5	3.7	143,368
Lower	13.1	1.8	5.2	48.9	18.4	0.6	3.2	4.6	3.9	212,053
Middle	18.8	2.6	9.6	31.7	24.4	0.5	3.0	3.5	5.6	347,490
Higher	22.9	3.3	20.2	15.4	27.1	0.4	1.4	2.0	7.2	678,255
Highest	19.7	4.4	15.3	16.2	29.9	0.4	0.7	3.1	10.1	628,912
Total	19.1	3.2	14.0	24.9	25.9	0.5	1.9	3.1	7.2	143,368

CHAPTER 5
INTERNAL MIGRATION AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

The restructuring of Nepal's administrative divisions has indeed had a significant impact on internal migration patterns. The transformation of rural Village Development Committees (VDCs) into rural/urban municipalities has likely encouraged the movement of people from rural to urban areas, contributing to the growth of these newly classified urban municipalities. It is largely because people realize that if it is an urban municipality, there will be at least education and health facilities, basic infrastructures like road, transportation, communication, availability of daily use goods and services, and most importantly security. This explains why the process of moving within a country can have significant impact on both the areas people leave and the areas they move in. Indeed, internal migration can have a significant impact on local areas while not necessarily harming the nation as a whole. Internal migration often leads to the growth of mega cities as people move from rural areas to urban centers in search of better opportunities. This can lead to a rapid urbanization and the development of infrastructure. Likewise, new cities can emerge and become hubs of economic activity and contribute to the overall development of the nation. On the other side, areas that people migrate from can experience depopulation. This can lead to a decline in local economies and can create "no population" zones. An example demonstrating this concept is seen in the fact that there are 34 Mountain and Hill districts which demonstrate negative population growth rate in 2021.

The purpose of previous chapter was to show the change in internal migration trends and patterns. This section attempts to seek clarity on the question of whether migrants are still same or different from the past. Due to migration, it must be asked whether there are there any changes observed in population redistribution, population growth and net-migration, feminization, socio-culture diversity, and reasons for migration. Finally, it examines the relationship between internal and international migration. The analysis of internal migration in this chapter utilizes is based on the data on migration for less than five years preceding the census. Two different types of data has been used in this chapter. The recent migration is used by limiting the duration of stay for less than five years. In order to compare the recent migration, data were used from past censuses which are 'lifetime migration'. It is because 'recent migration' data based on 'last prior residence' were not collected in the past censuses.

5.1. Migration and population redistribution

Internal migration can alter spatial distribution of population for both sending and receiving areas, since it is only one form of spatial mobility. It sits alongside births, deaths and international migration in shaping population change, but as the first demographic transition runs its course and as spatial

differentials in vital rates diminish, internal migration plays an increasingly important role (Rees et al., 2016). The role of internal migration in population redistribution was studied by Ravenstein (1985), who explored the flows of lifetime migrants recorded in the 1871 and 1881 censuses of Great Britain and Ireland. He showed how internal migration from rural areas was essential to the growth of industrial cities and towns in Britian, where mortality was high. As Long and Boertlein (1990) stated that migration flows covering different measurement intervals cannot be compared reliably, the effects cancel out for net-migration so that measures can be converted to common intervals that is, 1 and 5 years. In practice, size and composition of the population at risk alter over time and the contextual forces driving migration also change, so that migration over any single year interval is unlikely to be representative of the longer interval. Therefore, 5 years transition data provide a more realistic picture of the underlying flows and net distribution of population as a more recent phenomenon.

5.1.1. Population size, growth and density

Nepal has been experiencing a scale of population redistribution through migration (Gurung, 1988). In this regard, population redistribution is explored with population size, growth rate and density to highlights trends in population growth and distribution across different ecological zones in Nepal from 1981 to 2021.

Mountain has seen a slight population increase from 1.3 million in 1981 to 1.8 million in 2021 (Table 5.1). However, the growth rate has fluctuated, increased at 1.57 percent in 2001 and then declined to -0.05 percent in 2021. The population density has remained low, which is only 34 people per sq.km. in 2021. This negative growth rate suggests a high rate of out-migration and declining birth rates, reflecting challenges in economic opportunities and infrastructure development. Likewise, the hill experienced steady population growth, from 7.2 million in 1981 to 11.8 million in 2021. The growth rate increased at 1.97 percent in 2001 but slowed to 0.3 percent in 2021. Population density increased from 117 people per square kilometer in 1981 to 192 in 2021. Whereas Tarai experienced the most significant population increase, from 6.6 million in 1981 to 15.6 million in 2021. The growth rate was the highest at 4.11 percent in 1981 but has gradually decreased to 1.54 percent in 2021. Population density has increased continuously from 193 people per sq. km in 1981 to 460 in 2021.

Table 5.1: Population growth and distribution by ecological zone, 1981-2021 Censuses

Area	Population indicators	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Mountain	Population (%)	8.7	7.8	7.3	6.7	6.1
	Growth rate (%)	1.35	1.02	1.57	0.54	-0.05
	Density (per sq.km.)	25	28	33	34	34
Hill	Population (%)	47.7	45.5	44.3	43.0	40.3
	Growth rate (%)	1.65	1.61	1.97	1.06	0.3
	Density (per sq.km.)	117	137	167	186	192

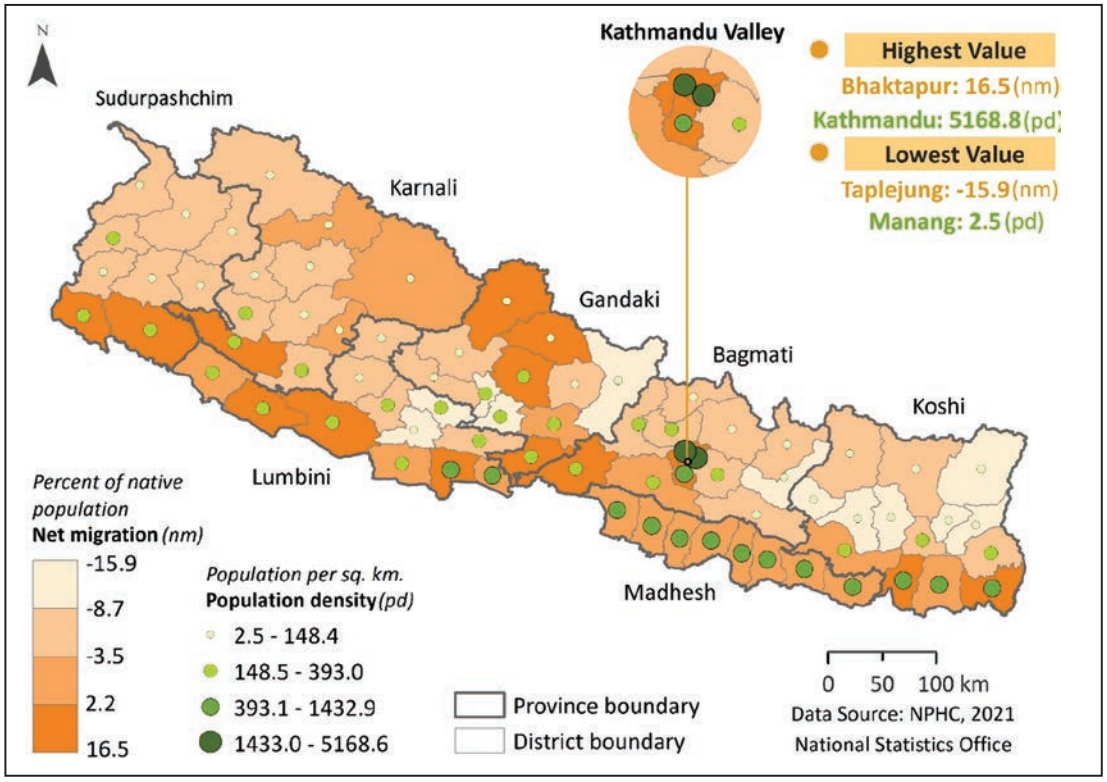
Area	Population indicators	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Tarai	Population (%)	43.6	46.7	48.4	50.3	53.6
	Growth rate (%)	4.11	2.75	2.62	1.72	1.54
	Density (per sq.km.)	193	254	330	392	460

Source: NSO (2024a), *Table 3.2.*

Note: For growth rate two digits after decimal are used.

Migration and population density are strongly associated (r=0.559;). Districts with higher population density shown by bigger and darker circles have higher positive net-migration shown by darker areas (Map 6). Conversely, districts with lower population density shown by smaller balls have lower and negative net-migration shown by thicker areas. The districts with higher net-migration and population density are mainly migrants receiving areas, especially districts in Tarai and some districts in hills like Kathmandu valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) and Kaski (due to Pokhara valley) where the level of in-migration is much higher (also discussed in previous chapters). All these hill districts have metropolitan cities, and all kinds of infrastructure and social, economic and political opportunities are concentrated mainly in Kathmandu valley districts. Manang and Mustang from Mountain zone are exceptional mainly due to tourism and related opportunities.

Map 6: Recent net-migration and population density per sq.km by district, NPHC 2021



5.1.2. Net-migration and population growth

This section deals with the measure of relative impact of internal migration on population change by comparing lifetime net-migration and population growth rate. Population change is assessed based on four classifications. They are as follows:

- Net-migration loss and population loss (negative net-migration and negative population growth);
- Net-migration loss and population gain (negative net-migration and positive population growth);
- Net-migration gain and population gain (positive net-migration and positive population growth);
- Net-migration gain and population loss (positive net-migration and negative population growth)

The bar graph shown in Figure 5.1 and 5.2 illustrates the relationship between migration and population changes based on comparison between net-migration and population growth. The result highlights how different migration patterns can impact the population dynamics. Figure shows that there are 34 districts which have a loss in both migration and population growth and this situation can occur in areas facing economic challenges, lack of job opportunities or the factors like earthquake that drive people to move away. Among 34 districts, 9 districts are from severely earthquake affected districts. Twenty-four districts from all zone and provinces (but all eight districts from Madhesh) have net-migration loss but population gain. These districts have larger population size and negative net-migration is due to high out-migration to other districts especially in Kathmandu Valley districts. The population gain in these districts is mainly due to high fertility in these districts, as the TFR of 2.85 in Madhesh is highest among the provinces (NSO, 2024c). Likewise, 18 districts have both net-migration gain and population gain which indicates these districts like Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kaski, Surkhet are hotspots for migration destination. There is one district, Manang, in exception that it has net-migration gain (3.5%) and the population loss with growth rate of -1.39 percent per annum. Manang is a district that has the lowest population and population movement is also low. Despite this, Manang is a tourist district, so in-migration (688) is slightly higher than out-migration (517). This helps inform complex interplay between migration trends and population changes.

Figure 5.1: Number of districts by net-migration and population growth, NPHC 2021

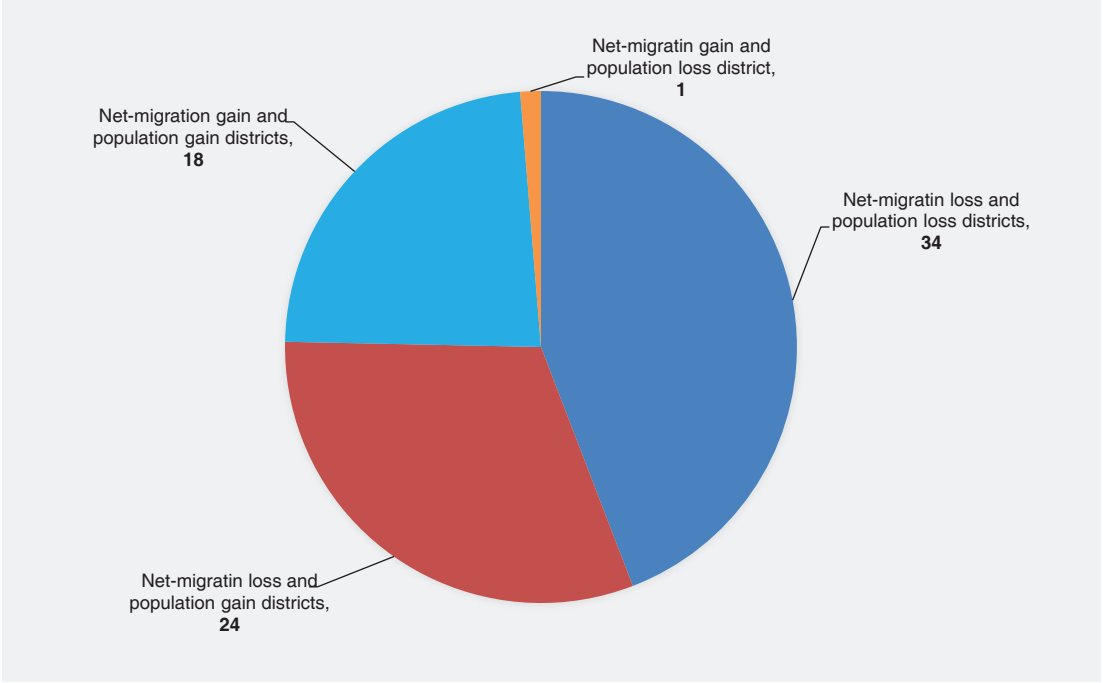


Figure 5.2 shows the relationship between net-migration and population growth rate (Map 7; Annex 7). This figure shows a strong positive linear relationship between population growth rate and net-migration (r=0.844, Figure 5.2). This indicates that the higher the population growth rate the higher or positive net-migration and the lower or negative the growth rate the lower or negative net-migration in the districts. There are only 19 districts that have positive net-migration rates, and they all have high population growth. Three districts of Kathmandu Valley and Kaski from hill and all other districts from Tarai are the main migrant receiving districts. Manang is an exception that has lowest population with lower level of migration, but the growth is associated with tourism. The evidence indicates that migration shapes the population growth.

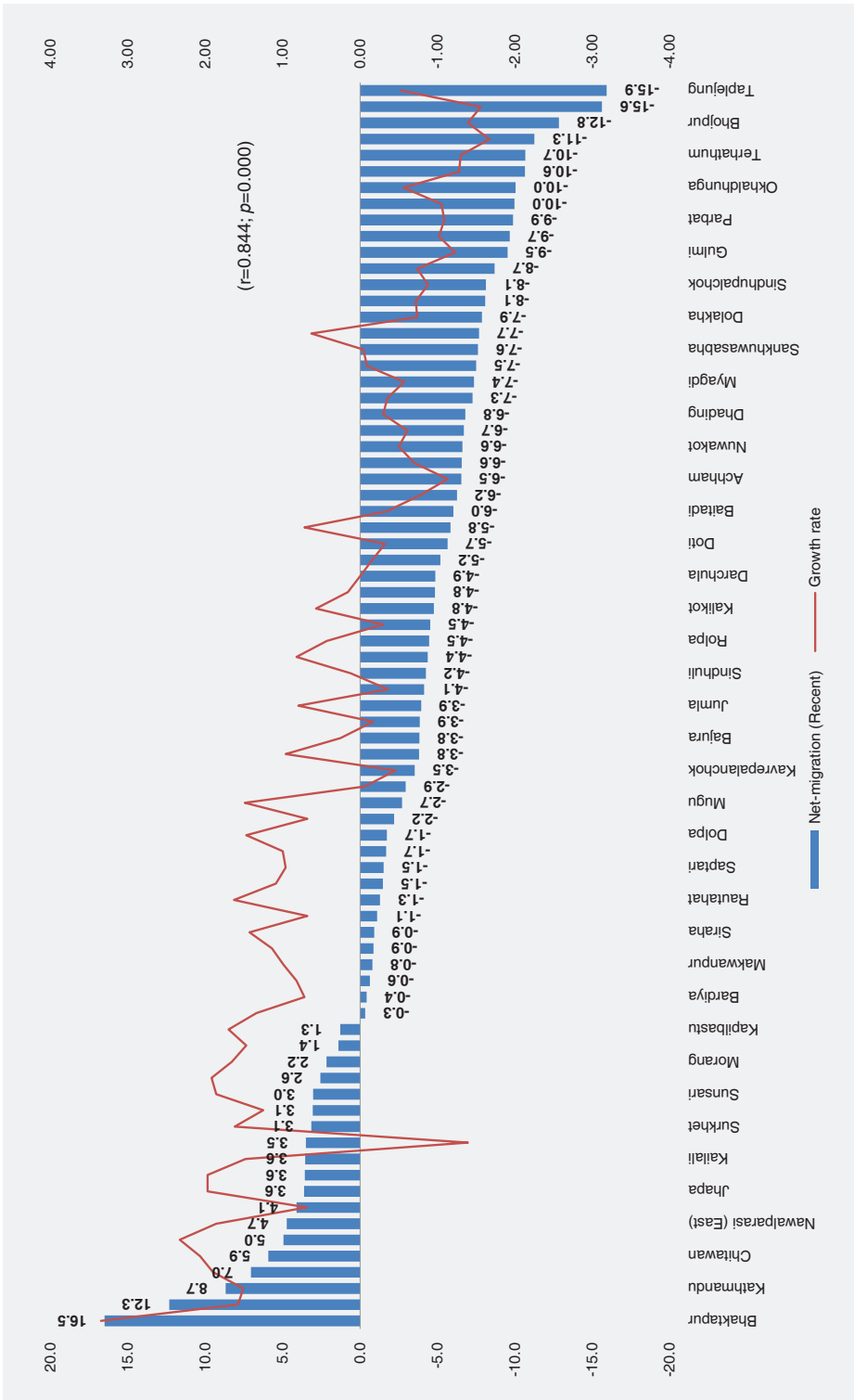
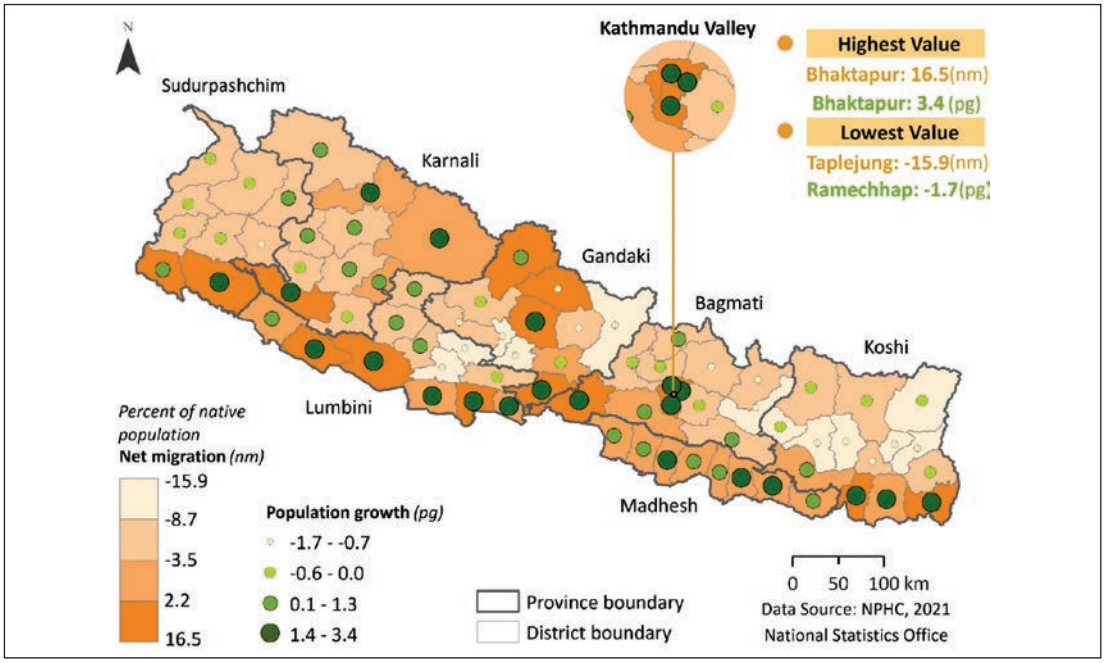


Figure 5.2: Recent net-migration and population growth rate by district, NPHC 2021

Map 7: Recent net-migration and population growth rate by district, NPHC 202



5.1.3. Migration effectiveness

This section deals with the effects of migration in terms of net-migration rate (NMR), migration effectiveness ratio (MER) and migration turnover rate (MTR) among the migrants whose duration of stay are less than 5 years. The MER is a measure of how efficient the migration process is for a given area (Gallaway & Vedder, 1985). It is a net impact of migration on population growth that is calculated as the ratio of net migration (in-migrants minus out-migrants) to the gross migration (the total of in-migrants plus out-migrants), expressed as a percentage. The MER ranges from +100 (meaning all movement is in-migration; maximum positive impact on population growth) to -100 (meanings all movement is out-migration; maximum negative impact on population size), with 0 meaning that in-migration and out-migration are equal (no net effect on population growth). MTR provides the total turnover of a population through in- and out-migration. It helps understand the level of population mobility and stability. A high MTR suggests a high level of population movement and low MTR suggests stability.

Among the ecological zone, Kathmandu Valley has the highest in-migration rate (12.5%), and other zones are far below. Both Kathmandu Valley and Tarai have positive net-migration (10.5% and 1.5% respectively), whereas Mountain has the highest negative net-migration rate (-6.4%) (Table 5.2). Migration turnover rate is also considerably high in Kathmandu Valley (14.5%) indicating a high population movement. The net-migration seems to be more efficient in changing population size in Kathmandu Valley, Tarai and mountain compared to Hill. Migration effectiveness ratio (MER) is high in

Kathmandu Valley (+72.2%), mountain (-72.2%) and Hill (-63.5%). Migration has high positive impact on population growth in Kathmandu Valley and high negative impact on population size in both Mountain and Hill outside Kathmandu Valley. Tarai population growth is also due to in-migration (MER=39.5%).

According to province, the Kathmandu Valley of Bagmati has the highest positive NMR (10.5%), MTR (14.5%) and MER (+72.2%), which indicates that this zone is a highly preferred destination, so that in-migration has significantly contributed to its population growth (Table 5.2). Bagmati outside Kathmandu Valley also has high MTR, that is 9.3 percent, which is higher than other provinces. It indicates the Bagmati outside Kathmandu Valley also has higher population movement, largely contributed by out-migration. After Kathmandu Valley of Bagmati, Lumbini has positive but nominal net-migration rate (0.4%) and positive MER (12.5%), indicating relatively stable population but with positive impact on population growth. All other five provinces have negative net-migration and effectiveness ratios indicating loss of population due to excess out-migration to other provinces. Among them, Karnali (-2.6%) and Gandaki (-2.0%) have the higher NMRs. In case of MER, Karnali has the highest negative MER (-58.2%) followed by Madhesh (-57.7%). The high negative MER in these two provinces suggests that migration is effective in reducing population growth and may face challenges like labour shortage. However, the MTR is lowest in Madhesh (1.9%) and Sudurpashhchim (2.0%), which indicates the level of migration activity is lower and the population is more stable in these provinces. This suggests that these regions are experiencing social and economic changes, which could be both opportunities and challenges depending on how well they manage the inflow and outflow of people.

Table 5.2: In-, out- and net-migration rate, migration turnover rate and effectiveness ratio by ecological zone and province, NPHC 2021

Area	As a % of native-born population				Migration effectiveness ratio (MER)
	In-migration rate (IMR)	Out-migration rate (OMR)	Net-migration rate (NMR)	Migration turnover rate (MTR)	
Ecological zone					
Mountain	1.2	7.6	-6.4	8.8	-72.2
Hill-outside KTM valley	1.4	6.3	-4.9	7.7	-63.5
Hill-KTM valley	12.5	2.0	10.5	14.5	72.2
Tarai	2.7	1.2	1.5	3.8	39.5
Province					
Koshi	0.8	2.3	-1.4	3.1	-45.7
Madhesh	0.4	1.5	-1.1	1.9	-57.7
Bagmati-outside KTM valley	3.3	6.0	-2.7	9.3	-29.4
Bagmati-KTM valley	12.5	2.0	10.5	14.5	72.2
Gandaki	2.3	4.3	-2.0	6.6	-30.6
Lumbini	1.8	1.4	0.4	3.2	12.5
Karnali	0.9	3.5	-2.6	4.4	-58.2
Sudurpashchim	0.6	1.4	-0.7	2.0	-36.2

5.2. Migration and age-sex structure

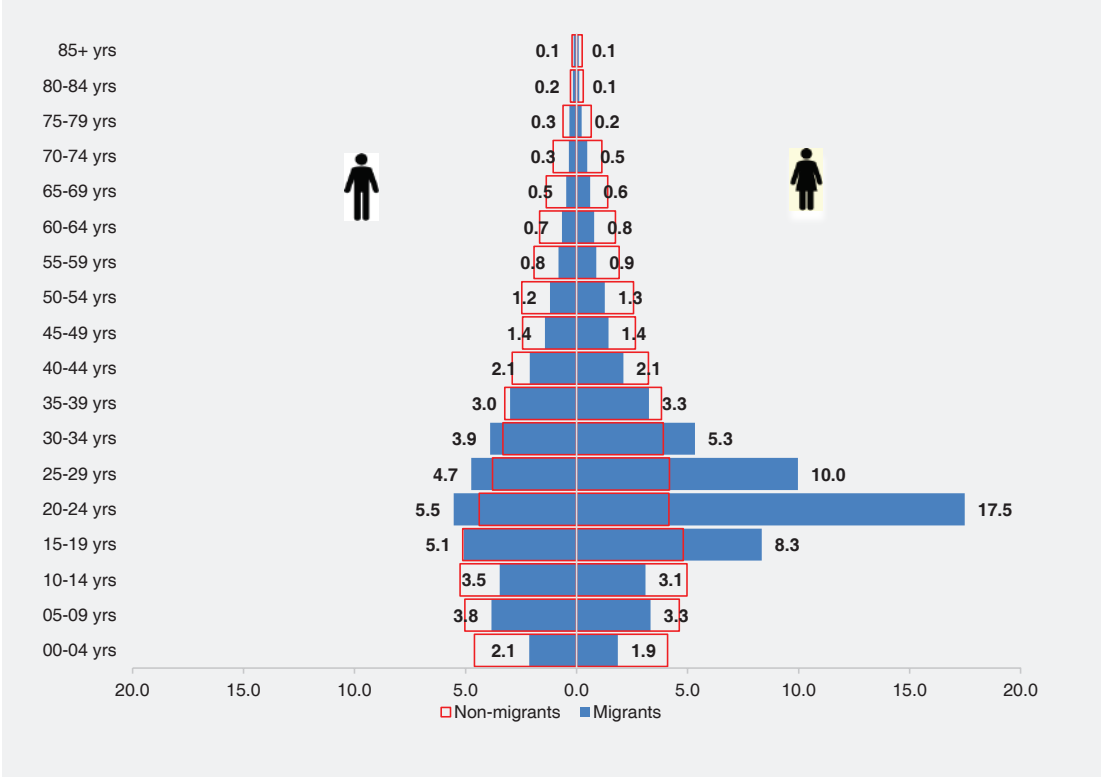
Migration is an age and sex selective process (Ravenstein, 1889), with young adults being the most mobile group. The propensity to migrate typically peaks at young adult ages, then steadily declines with increasing age, rising again among young children and sometimes around the age of retirement (Bernare et al., 2014). The research also states that females tend to migrate more internally and the males tend to migrate more internationally. Therefore, the term feminization of migration has become prominent in migration discourse, especially in internal migration. It refers to both the increase in the number of female migrants and the quality changes in their migration pattern (Ghib, 2018). According to Gouws (2016), feminization of migration refers to the migration of women independent of men. Over the past few decades, there has been a noticeable rise in women migration. Historically, migration studies have predominantly focused on male migration, often overlooking the complexities and contribution of female migration. It is the least understood trend in migration literature (Hofmann & Buckley, 2013). Despite the fact that female migration is not a new issue, it remains understudied for internal migration studies. As women increasingly participate in migration, it is essential to recognize their agency and the complexities of their experiences. Future policies should aim to empower women migrants, address the vulnerabilities they face, and ensure that their contributions to both their families and the economy are acknowledged. This section aims to explore the feminization of internal migration in terms of age and sex composition of migrants based on census data.

5.2.1. Migration and age-sex composition

Age-sex pyramid of migrants and non-migrants is an evident means to show the distribution of male and female migrants and non-migrants across different age groups (Figure 5.3; Annex 8). The pyramid illustrates that proportion of both male and female migrants begins rising from age group 15-19 which picked at age group 20-24 and slowly decreasing. Notably, the pyramid suggests two scenarios: first, proportion of migrants is higher than that of non-migrants in ages 15 to 34 years, the distinction of which is much clearer for females than males, and second, proportion of female migrants is considerably higher than that of males in these ages.

The result clearly demonstrates the younger and young adult groups tend to be highly mobile for which females outnumber the males. This can be attributed to many reasons, such as economic opportunities, educational pursuits, and social changes that enable women to migrate independently or within the confines of family units. The evidence suggests an increasing trend of women towards being major contributors in internal migration, reflecting on the wider societal changes. It has been the cause of an important feminization of migration, including key implications for gender-sensitive policies that must pay attention to the needs and challenges brought about by female migrants.

Figure 5.3: Age-sex pyramid of migrants and non-migrants, NPHC 2021



Note: Percentages displayed are only for migrants.

5.2.2.Migration and sex ratio

Sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females. The sex ratio is one of the most effective measures to inform feminization of internal migration. Table 5.3 uses lifetime migration to show the variation of sex ratio by ecological zone. It is because the past data on recent migration is not available, so the current census 2021 could be compared with the past censuses since 1981. Overall, sex ratio of the migrants has been decreasing over the census years. The sex ratio of migrants was 107.3 in 1981, and it is 81.5 in 2021, with a decrease by about 25 percentage points in the last 40 years. It indicates in 1981 there was excess of males in internal migration, but since 1991 females began to outnumber males and now the males are only 81.5 per 100 females among the internal migrants.

Over the years, the sex ratio of in-migrants has generally decreased in all ecological zones, except in Mountain which shows the most significant decline from 72.2 in 1981 to 42.3 till 2011 and it increased to 49.9 males per 100 females in 2021. In contrast, the sex ratio of Hill and Tarai has continuously

decreased. It stood at 98.7 in 1981 which decreased to 88.0 in 2021 in Hill and 111.5 in 1981 to 80.1 males per 100 females in 2021 in Tarai. For out-migrants, there is fluctuation in sex ratio but shows an overall downward trend. In Mountain, it decreased from 107.1 in 1981 to 85.2 males per 100 females in 2021. Similarly, Hill observed a reduction of sex ratio from 108.2 to 77.6 and the Tarai from 95.3 to 91.5 males per 100 females for 1981 and 2021 respectively. The overall sex ratio, combining both in-migrants and out-migrants, also reflects a declining trend with far less than 100, indicating a shift in the gendered migration from male domination to female domination over the past four decades. This data highlights the changing dynamics of gender relation in migration. Migration patterns between males and females can significantly influence the sex ratio. Historically, males have been more likely to migrate for work, particularly in labor-intensive sectors. However, recent pattern indicates that female migration is in increasing trend and the female migration consistently higher than the male migration (Table 5.3). It is often driven by marriage, employment, education, or family responsibilities.

Table 5.3: Sex ratio of lifetime migrants (in and out) by ecological zone, 1981-2021 Censuses

Year	In-migrants			Out-migrants			Total
	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Mountain	Hill	Tarai	
1981	72.2	98.7	111.5	107.1	108.2	95.3	107.3
1991	53.9	86.9	98.5	88.1	95.6	105.3	95.1
2001	55.3	98.1	96.7	92.5	94.4	107.2	95.8
2011	42.3	94.7	81.7	88.4	78.6	100.4	84.0
2021	49.9	88.0	80.1	85.2	77.6	91.5	81.5

Source: CBS (1987), *Table 7.15,* Niraula (1995), *Table 6.*

The sex ratio of in-migrants and out-migrants across provinces in 2021 reveals significant gender imbalances. Koshi Province shows a nearly balanced migration pattern with a slight female predominance among in-migrants (80.5) and out-migrants (81.1) (Figure 5.4). Madhesh Province, however, has low sex ratio for in-migrants (64.0) and a high ratio for out-migrants (115.7), indicating a higher inflow of females and a higher outflow of males than their counter part. Bagmati Province exhibits an almost balanced sex ratio for in-migrants (96.8) but a higher proportion of females leaving (73.9) this province. Gandaki and Lumbini provinces both have relatively lower sex ratios for in-migrants (78.9 and 75.4, respectively) and out-migrants (about 78 each), suggesting a female predominance in migration. Karnali Province shows a significantly higher females in both outflow (85.7) and inflow (65.8), with a proportion of females is much higher in inflow. Sudurpashchim Province has a high sex ratio for out-migrants (114.8) and a low ratio for in-migrants (69.3), indicating more males leaving and more females entering into the province.

Figure 5.4. Sex ratio of recent migrants by province, NPHC 2021

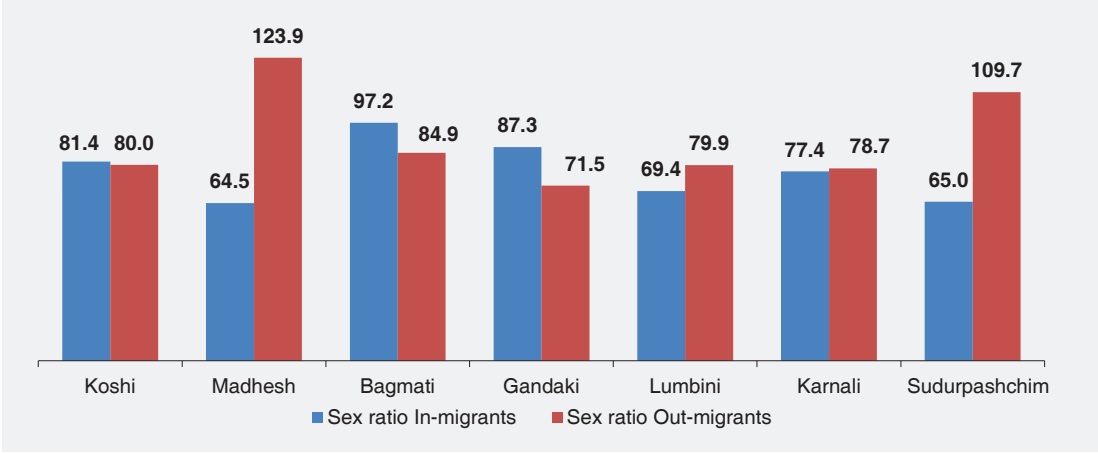
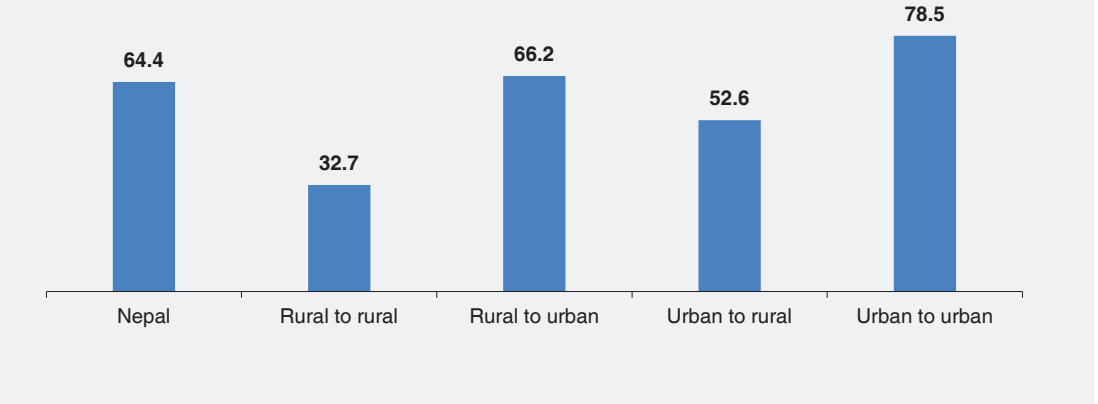


Figure 5.5 shows the sex variation according to magnitude of recent internal migration in terms of rural-urban streams. Out of a total of 1,994,996 migrants, 39 percent are males and about 61 percent are females, with females higher by 1.6 times, and the sex ratio is 64.4. This means that, of the total migrants, males are only 64 per 100 females. Females are predominant in all migration streams. The largest migration stream is from rural to urban areas, accounting for 51.3 percent of the total migration with a notable sex ratio of 66.2 males per 100 females. It indicates that females are 1.5 times more than males moving to urban areas. Urban to urban migration is the second largest stream, comprising 32.8 percent of the total. The sex ratio (78.5 males per 100 females) indicates that females are higher than males in mobility. The lowest sex ratio is among the rural-to-rural migrants (32.7 males per 100 females) indicating that females are three times more than males. The result clearly suggests a feminization of all migration.

Figure 5.5: Sex ratio of migrants by migration stream, NPHC 2021



5.2.3. Migration and dependency ratio

Dependency ratio is the ratio of population of nonworking age to working age, which indicates the age structure of the population. Migration can impact dependency ratio of an area as the migrants are usually among the working age population. In other words, higher in-migration in an area increases the working age population resulting into a lower proportion of dependent population in that area. According to census 2021 data, overall, the dependency ratio for migrants and non-migrants in Nepal reveals significant differences across urban-rural, ecological zone and province (Table 5.4). The dependency ratio is almost three-times lower among migrants (26.1) than that among non-migrants (75.5). This pattern is consistent across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. In case of ecological zone, mountain has the widest gap in dependency ratio between migrants (19.7) and non-migrants (70.7). Likewise, Madhesh has the lowest dependency ratio for migrants (13.1) and highest for non-migrants (90.3) among provinces and the difference is almost seven-fold. The gap in dependency ratio between migrants and non-migrants is smallest in Gandaki. The findings indicate that migrants are typically of working age, more specifically young and young adults, and move for employment opportunities as they are economically active population.

Table 5.4: Dependency ratio by recent migrants and non-migrants, NPHC 2021

Area	Migrants			Non-migrants		
	Child dependency ratio[1]	Old age dependency ratio[2]	Total dependency ratio[3]	Child dependency ratio[1]	Old age dependency ratio[2]	Total dependency ratio[3]
Nepal	22.3	3.7	26.1	65.3	10.1	75.5
Urban/Rural						
Urban	23.8	4.0	27.8	66.2	8.4	74.7
Peri Urban	22.4	4.0	26.4	72.4	8.7	81.1
Rural	17.9	2.7	20.6	58.0	12.4	70.5
Ecological zone						
Mountain	18.0	1.7	19.7	58.2	12.5	70.7
Hill	21.6	3.5	25.2	57.8	12.5	70.3
Tarai	23.5	4.1	27.7	72.2	7.9	80.2
Province						
Koshi	23.8	4.9	28.7	60.9	9.4	70.2
Madhesh	11.5	1.7	13.1	80.5	9.8	90.3
Bagmati	22.0	3.9	25.8	53.9	11.7	65.7
Gandaki	25.6	4.2	29.8	54.0	15.1	69.1

Area	Migrants			Non-migrants		
	Child dependency ratio[1]	Old age dependency ratio[2]	Total dependency ratio[3]	Child dependency ratio[1]	Old age dependency ratio[2]	Total dependency ratio[3]
Lumbini	25.3	3.7	29.0	64.6	8.9	73.6
Karnali	24.1	2.0	26.1	65.3	8.4	73.7
Sudurpashchim	26.0	3.9	29.9	71.2	8.6	79.8

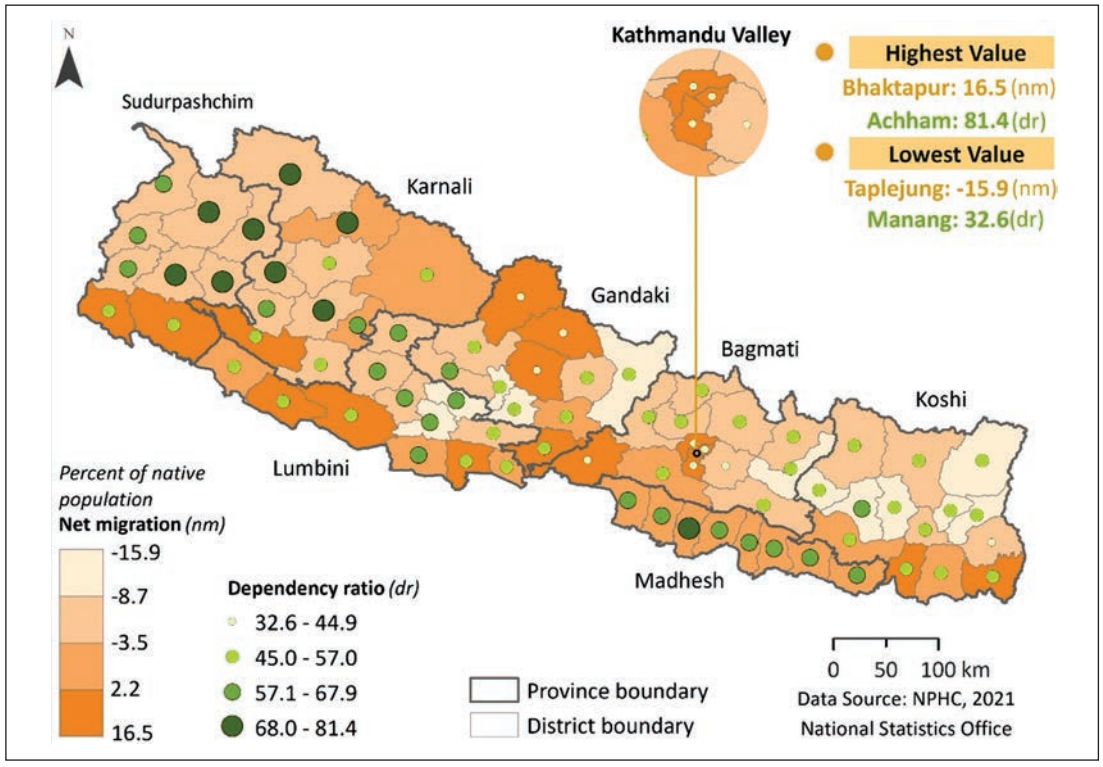
Note: *1. Child dependency ratio = (Children aged 0-14/population aged 15-64)*100*

*2. Old age dependency ratio = (Old population aged 65+/population aged 15-64)*100*

*3. Total dependency ratio = (Children + old age population/population aged 15-64)*100*

Relationship between net-migration and dependency ratio in 77 districts is strong and negative (r= –0.404). Districts with darker areas have higher net-migration and that with bigger spheres have higher dependency ratio (Map 8). With exceptions, the higher the net-migration in a district the lower the dependency ratio and vice-versa.

Map 8: Recent net-migration and dependency ratio by district, NPHC 2021



5.3. Migration and social change

Migration is only one of many drivers of socio-cultural change. It has potential to not only enrichen economies but also to transform cultural, political and social life at both migration origin and destination areas. The importance of migration as a component of population change has significance beyond its impact on the changing population size and composition based on geographical locations. Portes (2008) states that migration entails change, and it can lead, in turn, to further transformations of both in sending and receiving societies. Within the last few years, we have experienced demographic milestones which have great significance not only for the remainder of this century, yet also likely for the following century. Declining population growth – which is seen across 34 districts – as well as increases in the size of urban population and the dramatic reversal in population redistribution are prominent patterns within the country. Similarly, migration patterns today are more complex than before and influenced by a combination of factors rather than single cause.

Migration has significantly influenced social change over the years, particularly in terms of the characteristics of migrants and their reasons for migration. According to Van Hear (2010), migration is complexly linked to class, gender, generation, ethnicity and other social cleavages which are embodied in hierarchies of power and social status, in positions within home and host communities, and in work and domestic relationships – all of which may be transformed in the course of the migratory process.

5.3.1. Reasons for migration

The reasons for migration have changed dramatically over the years. Five factors – economic, agriculture, education, marriage and dependency – are the most common reported reasons despite the decline in the percentage (Figure 5.6; Table 5.5). Among males, economic migration has increased from 22.8 percent in 1981 to 36.6 percent in 2021, pointing to the fact that males are inclined to move for better job prospects. While most women were travelling with their partners or joining them (marriage) in the past, data in recent years demonstrates that they have also been migrating on their own and for economic and educational reasons. On the other hand, reporting of agricultural factors as reasons for migration has dropped drastically between the two periods, 1981 and 2021: from 36.3 to 2.3 percent for males, and from 19.4 to 1.6 percent for females. This decline indicates that people's attraction to agricultural factors has been reducing at a tremendous rate. During this period (1981-2021), education has become a much more important factor for migration, growing from 4.0 to 18.9 percent for males and from 1.6 to 10.9 percent for females. Marriage as a primary reason for migration increased from 30.3 percent in 1981 to 42.1 percent in 2001 yet started slowly decreasing thereafter, however the figure still remains high at a rate of 40.3 percent in 2021. This indicates that current female migrants differ from the previous female migrants in the case of migration. It is worth noting that reporting of conflict in 2011 may impact data in 2021 given figures of returnee migration.

Figure 5.6: Reasons for migration by sex, 1981-2021 Censuses

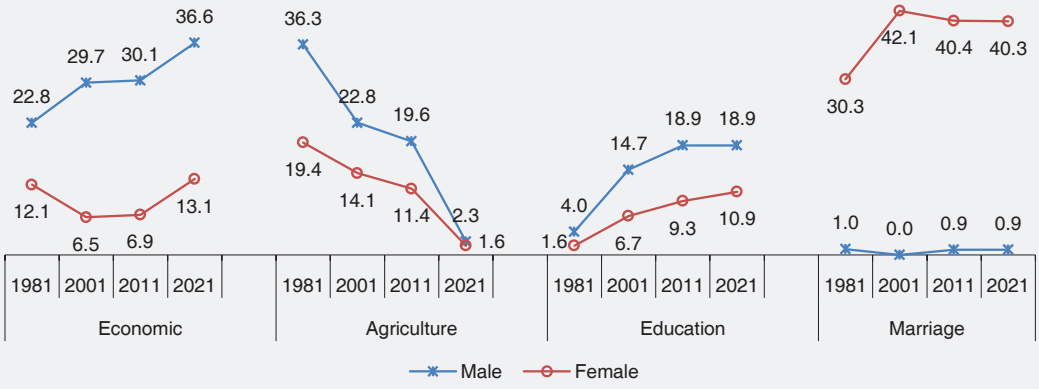


Table 5.5 Reasons for migration by sex, 1981-2021 Censuses

Reasons for migration	Male				% Change	Female				% Change
	1981	2001	2011	2021		1981	2001	2011	2021	
Economic migration	22.8	29.7	30.1	36.6	13.8	12.1	6.5	6.9	13.1	1.0
Agriculture	36.3	22.8	19.6	2.3	-34.0	19.4	14.1	11.4	1.6	-17.8
Education	4.0	14.7	18.9	18.9	14.9	1.6	6.7	9.3	10.9	9.3
Marriage	1.0	0.0	0.9	0.9	-0.1	30.3	42.1	40.4	40.3	10.0
Dependency/ dependent			19.0	28.2	28.2			21.4	24.4	3.0
Conflict			0.7					0.5		
Returnee				4.4					2.2	
Natural disaster				0.6					0.4	
Others		32.7	5.9	7.8			30.6	3.8	6.8	
Not reported	36.0		5.0			36.6		6.3		

Source: CBS (1987), *Table 7.17;* KC (2003), *Table 15.15;* Suwal (2014), *Table 10.13.*

5.3.2. Migration and education

The educational landscape has changed with migration. Migrants have higher rates of education than previous data levels (Table 5.6). For instance, the percentage of males with no schooling dropped drastically from 25.4 percent in 1981 to 12.2 percent in 2021. However, the situation for female migrants is different. In 1981, about 24 percent of female migrants had no education but this figure increased to 34 percent in 2021, suggesting that most of this migration might be from rural-to-rural areas with reasons for marriage and/or accompanying to their family. This indicates that there are still substantial challenges ahead. Likewise, about 57 percent of male migrants possess secondary education in 2021 whereas it remains low for females (41.8%), indicating a gender gap still exists. This gap basically generates a need of an approach that should be non-discriminatory and more inclusive access to education for women.

Table 5.6: Educational level of migrants by sex, 1981-2021 Censuses

Educational level	Male					Female				
	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
No schooling	25.4	20.1	12.1		12.2	23.9	26.5	14.7		34.9
Primary (1-5)	34.0	22.6	21.6	22.4	19.5	45.3	29.9	26.2	23.9	14.2
Secondary (6+)	36.8	47.5	53.8	57.0	53.2	29.3	39.2	55.1	59.1	41.8
Higher (Bachelor+)	3.8	6.8	9.0	13.2	12.8	1.5	1.4	3.7	6.1	5.9
Other*	-	-	0.5	5.9	2.3	-	-	0.2	3.8	3.2

Source: CBS (1987), *Table 7.23;* Niraula (1993), *Table 17;* KC (2003), *Table 15.19;* Suwal (2014), *Table 10.15.*

*Note: * Other includes no level//level not stated/literacy not stated.*

5.3.3. Migration and caste/ethnicity

Nepal is a country represented by caste/ethnic diversity. According to 2021 census data, there are 142 caste/ethnic groups and with this diversity it is obviously implied that variations in household structures, socio-economic structure and age profile exist, which in turn will have implications for internal migration. Table 5.7 provides a caste/ethnic composition of migrants by sex in Nepal over different census years (1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021) (Annex 9). Notably, migration of Brahman (Hill), Kshetri and Newar show a decline, with a more pronounced decrease in females compared to males in the last decade. This trend might indicate shifts in demographic patterns or migration trends. Conversely, groups like Magar, Tamang, and Tharu exhibit an increase, suggesting they are being greater recent mobility. Muslim/Musalman and Yadav/Ahir show significant fluctuations, reflecting changing dynamics within these communities with no linear pattern. Overall, these trends highlight the evolving demographic and social landscape in Nepal. It requires caste/ethnic group projections

to understand the future size and composition of national and sub-national populations by caste/ethnicity in order to ensure equality of opportunity and reduce discrimination.

Table 5.7: Migration by selected caste/ethnicity and sex, 1981-2021 Censuses

Caste/ethnicity	Male				Female			
	1991	2001	2011	2021	1991	2001	2011	2021
Brahman(hill)	26.8	27.6	27.5	22.7	17.0	22.4	24.8	17.0
Kshetri	22.2	19.3	22.1	21.4	18.1	16.8	21.5	18.1
Newa (Newar)	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.1	5.3	7.1	6.9	5.3
Magar	6.3	6.4	7.0	7.6	6.8	5.6	7.1	6.8
Tamang	5.1	4.4	6.8	7.0	5.6	3.7	6.2	5.6
Kami/Bishwokarma	4.2	2.9	3.9	4.6	4.7	2.8	4.3	4.7
Rai	3.4	3.0	3.3	2.9	2.4	2.5	3.1	2.4
Gurung	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.3
Tharu	3.0	2.5	2.6	3.5	5.1	2.4	2.5	5.1
Thakuri	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.5	1.9
Damai/Dholi	2.1	1.4	1.6	0.1	0.2	1.5	1.9	0.2
Limbu/Yakthung	1.9	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.7	2.1	1.8
Yadav/Ahir	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.4	3.5	2.3	1.0	3.5
Sanyasi/Dasnami	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.8
Muslim/Musalman	0.9	2.1	1.0	1.4	2.5	3.4	1.0	2.5
Brahman (Tarai)	0.8	1.2	-	0.9	0.7	1.4	-	0.7
Sarki/Mijar	-	-	0.7	1.1	1.6	-	1.0	1.6
Teli	-	-	0.5	0.7	1.3	-	0.5	1.3
Chamar harijan	-	-	0.1	0.2	1.1	-	0.3	1.1
Kurmi	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.7	-	0.2	0.7
Dhanuk	-	-	0.2	0.2	0.8	-	0.3	0.8
Musahar	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.8	-	0.2	0.8
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.6	-	0.2	0.6
Koiri/Kushwaha	-	-	0.4			-	0.4	0.0
Others	8.4	13.8	6.9	10.2	9.6	20.6	8.4	14.5

Source: Niraula (1993), *Table 20;* KC (2003), *Table 15.20;* Suwal (2014), *Table 10.17; Annex 10.*

Note: Not stated and foreigners are excluded.

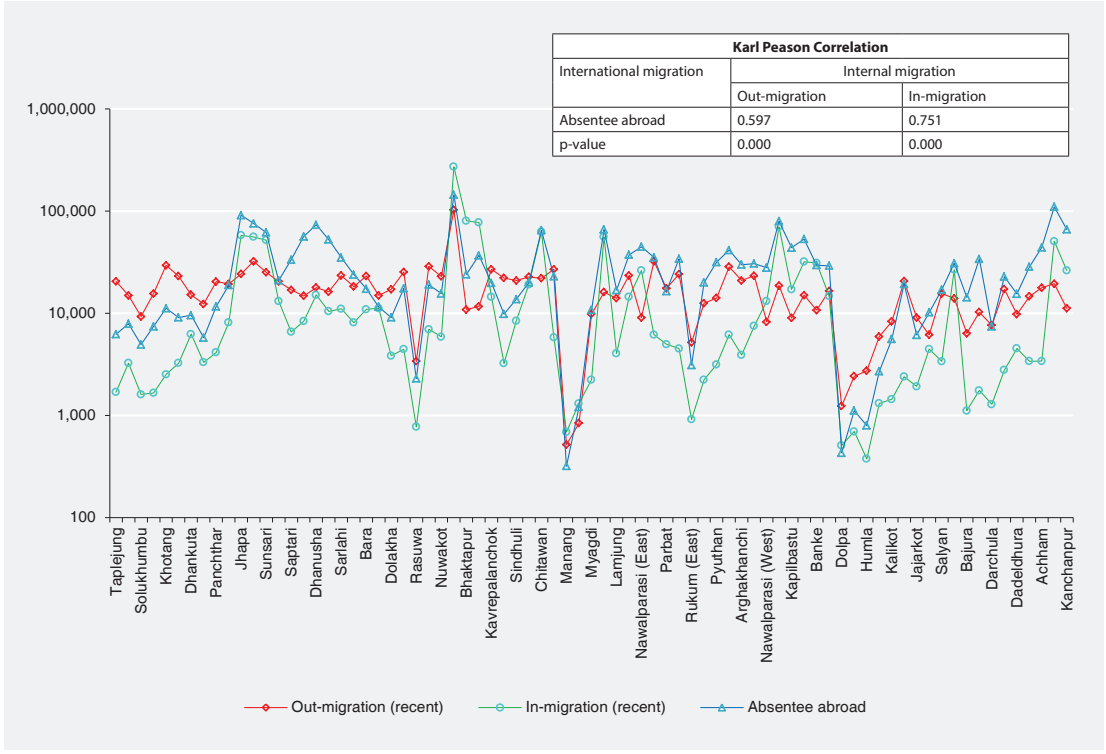
5.4. Internal and international migration

According to 2021 census, a total of 8,239,589 individuals are internal migrants compared to 2,190,592 migrating abroad. KC (2004) states that socio-economic, demographic and political problems are closely associated with the process of both internal and international migration. Selod and Shilpi

(2021) noted that these two types of migration are typically analysed in complete isolation each other and that understanding how they are interconnected is a priority for future research. These two types of migration can thus be analysed in a single framework. This section is an attempt to examine the relationship between internal and international migration in terms of recent in- and out-migration and absentee abroad for 77 districts.

The relationship between internal and international migration is clear enough when the correlation between them is examined (Figure 5.7; Annex 5). The correlation coefficient (r) is computed for 77 districts between volume of internal in- and out-migration and absentee population living broad and plotted in the figure. Both in- (r=0.751) and out migration (r=0.597) are strongly correlated with international migration (absentee abroad) indicating that the higher the volume of absentees abroad, the higher the volume of internal in- and out-migration. The result shows that both internal and international migration are closely associated with each-other. However, it is difficult to identify the causal relationship between internal and international migration because they have two-way relationship.

Figure 5.7: Relationship between internal (in-migration) and international (absentee abroad) migration by 77 district, NPHC 2021



Selection of internal and international destinations can be viewed as competing strategies in a matrix of available opportunities that are conditioned by networks, by personal networks built up by the migrants themselves, and by institutional networks (Skeldon, 2005). They may act as alternatives to each other, but often co-exist, contemporaneously or sequentially, within the same family, neighborhood, local community, and country (Vullnetari, 2020). However, as concluded by Cirillo et al. (2022) the previous internal migration is strongly associated with the intention to migrate abroad and internal migrants to urban areas are the most likely to develop international migration intentions, followed by migrants to rural areas. This is a common phenomenon which Nepal has experienced. People first migrate to urban areas for education and other opportunities, and after some years, they tend to migrate abroad. Another common migration pattern follows that a large proportion of youth populations from rural Nepal migrate to Gulf countries and Malaysia for economic opportunities, which is often followed by aspirations to settle in urban areas and provide a good education to their children, as well as live a more prosperous life in the future.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Major conclusion

Given the distinct geographic characteristics in Nepal, migration patterns vary accordingly. In this context, internal migration is characterized by trends demonstrating an increase in number of female migrants. Rural to urban migration is predominant in Nepal and has been extensively scaled-up in the recent period. Along with this, urban to urban migration is also in a significant trend, especially from smaller to larger cities, such as Kathmandu and Pokhara valley cities and other metropolitan cities. Tarai ecological zone has been a continuous migrant receiver, however, Hill and Bagmati among the provinces seem to be aggressively developing as the prominent migrant receiver area. An increase in Hill ecological zone, Bagmati province and urban is mainly due to the Kathmandu Valley capital cities in three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) where 17 municipalities, including two metropolitan cities (Kathmandu and Lalitpur), are located and other surrounding rural municipalities are also like sub-urban areas. These three districts have share of about 10.5 percent of total country's population. In addition, other metropolitan and sub-metropolitan cities outside Kathmandu valley are equally prominent in receiving migrants.

In addition, data from the 2021 census presents a new phenomenon in Nepal's migration landscape. The bidirectional relationship between internal and international migration has presented itself as an emerging trend. The patterns between internal and international illustrates that mostly men migrate abroad, encouraging their partner and dependent to move to urban and the choice of the cities varies with their aspiration and capabilities.

These dynamics were addressed by the 2014 population policy, which argued for managing urban growth in a sustainable manner, with the core objective of providing housing, infrastructure, and services for the inflow of migrants into urban areas. This policy was an important milestone in addressing demographic challenges and integrating them with development planning. Further, the 16th Periodic Plan (2024/25 - 2028/29) of Nepal has set ambitious goals on balanced regional development, sustainable urbanization, and improved rural living conditions. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive and inclusive policies that address the needs of all population segments, including migrants, destination, and vulnerable groups. In this regard, the result of NPHC 2021 is crucial for policy and planning. Effective management of internal migration should align with sustainable development, addressing the demographic consequences and policy implications that arise from these migration trends.

The NPHC 2021 gave valuable insights into these multidimensional aspects of migration, despite some limitation. It highlights the complex interplay between social and economic factors in shaping migration patterns. Furthermore, the policy promoted social inclusion and equity for all migrants, regardless of their place of origin, by ensuring access to basic services and opportunities for all and addressing the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups among migrants. This section has highlighted the main effect of internal migration including population redistribution, feminization of migration, socio-cultural change and link between internal and international migration in Nepal, as observed by the NPHC 2021. The following paragraphs will delve into these issues followed by and exploration of relevant policy implications.

6.1.1. Population redistribution

Internal migration in Nepal has been effective in population redistribution which led to regional imbalance and depopulation in many regions. Tarai is the biggest gainer with an increase from 6.6 million in 1981 to 15.6 million in 2021. In addition, Tarai ecological zone occupies only 23 percent of the total land area but had 44 percent in 1981 which reached to 54 percent of the total population in 2021. The most increase is observed during the last decade that the Tarai population increased by six percentage points. However, recent trends in internal migration shows a new pattern that internal migration to Hill has surpassed that to the Tarai, which is an indication of reverse migration. Traditional migration to Tarai areas has been somewhat diverted to urban areas, to the larger and emerging new urban cities. It is reflected by the linear growth of population in this hill area, from 7.2 million in 1981 to 11.8 million in 2021, concurrently with changing patterns of migration towards urban areas. This pattern is evident by high migration to Hill from Mountain and Tarai among ecological zones in one hand, and high migration to Bagmati from other provinces on the other. This shift is mainly because the hills include the places like Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys which are the main destinations for migrants in the country. Further disaggregating Kathmandu Valley from ecological zone, province and rural/urban residence illustrates much clearer picture to support such migration feature. Kathmandu Valley among ecological zone is found to be second biggest gainer of population through migration mainly from other districts of hills. Kathmandu Valley has the highest migration rate (60.3% of native born population) and received a share of 20 percent out of total rural-urban migrants, 40 percent out of total ecological zonal migrants, and 52 percent out of provincial migrants. On the other hand, Kathmandu Valley is the loser of the least proportion of population through migration among both ecological zones and provinces.

The main reason why Kathmandu Valley is the most attractive hub for migration is because that It is the capital valley city located in Hill ecological zone with three districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) which includes 21 municipalities (two metropolitan cities, 16 urban and three rural municipalities). It alone holds 10.4 percent of the total population of the country with each three districts having high annual population growth (Kathmandu-1.51%, Lalitpur-1.58% and

Bhaktapur-3.35%). Outside Kathmandu Valley, Chitawan is another metropolitan city receiving a larger volume of migrants which belongs to Bagmati among the provinces. Hetauda also belongs to Bagmati is an emerging city and receiving a significant number of migrants. Gandaki, in addition to Bagmati, is also prominent province to receive migrants as it has Pokhara metropolitan city, which is also located Hill zone.

Even having evident this pattern of internal migration, migration to Tarai is still significant. Looking into inter-zonal and inter-provincial migration together, it is clear that Tarai zone is receiving significant volume of internal migration but mostly targeted to larger and newly emerging urban areas. The Tarai part of Koshi and Lumbini have prominent large and newly emerging urban cities. Koshi has one metropolitan city (Biratnagar), and two sub-metropolitan cities (Itahari and Dharan) located in Tarai and receiving higher number of migrants. Lumbini has four sub-metropolitan cities (Nepalgunj, Tulsipur, Gorahi and Butwal) and a number of newly emerged urban municipalities including provincial capital city, Dang. At the result, urban population was 6 percent in 1981 and now it is 27 percent in 2021. The increment of urban population is significant during the last decade (2011-2021) that urban population increased by 10 percentage points. It is to note here that if the urban municipalities or peri-urban and urban areas are considered as urban area, the share of population would be two-third of the total population. The presence of better economic opportunities and infrastructural facilities, along with the more hospitable climatic environment, has constituted it as the most potential place to be migrated to.

There is a marginal decline in Mountain's population during the last decade, from 1.78 to 1.77 million with a negative growth rate (-0.05% per annum), and it suffered a negative net-migration rate of -6.4 percent in 2021. There are 34 districts which have negative population growth, undergoing with a process of depopulation. The adverse climate and topography and, effect of high magnitude earthquake 2015 in the mountainous region has contributed to its continuous outflow of people, thus having a low population density and a fluctuating growth rate. High out-migration rates in some districts within the hills like Bhojpur, Khotang and Tehrathum have also been observed. Overall, all districts have some level of out-migrants that led to decreased population density in rural areas but increased in urban areas, hence requiring effective planning and policy interventions in managing resources and infrastructure demands.

The 2021 census data on internal migration indicates that the population movement within the country has been increasing with a scale of influencing the population size and growth of each region of residence such as rural/urban, ecological zone, province and districts. The evidence provides an insight that the traditional migration trend that intended towards Tarai has been changing over the years. The inter-zonal and inter-provincial migration are largely among its adjoining areas, but at the same time, reciprocity in internal migration among all zones, provinces, rural/urban area and districts are equally emerging. Even though the internal migration is largely destined to those provinces that

have bigger and/or emerging bigger urban areas, migration from urban to rural areas, Tarai to Hill and Mountain, and especially from Kathmandu Valley to other parts of the country – such as Koshi and Bagmati-outside Kathmandu Valley, Madhesh, Gandaki, Sudurpashchim and Karnali – are also in a significant proportion. This evidence provides a sense of diversification of migration destination in one hand and increasing tendency of reverse migration.

Three key reasons – the restructuring of the country, the devastating earthquake in 2015, and international migration – may have crucial role in accelerating an increase in internal migration and thereby increasing migration in Tarai and urban population. Firstly, following the ending of the 10-year long Maoist insurgency 2006, a mass influx of migration in larger urban areas was observed following the formation of a new government in 2011, especially targeting Kathmandu Valley city. The migrants from both insurgent and civilian groups were equally involved in the influx, largely in search of peace and security. In order to end the Maoist Insurgency, the country has been restructured through the promulgation of a new inclusive democratic Constitution in 2015. This event emerged hope for political stability and increased aspirations for opportunities, which ultimately led to migration to larger urban areas largely in search of opportunities. Secondly, the devastating earthquake of 2015 and its continuous aftershocks are also a large contributing factor for mass internal migration due to the fleeing of people from the affected districts to largely Kathmandu Valley cities. Most of the 34 districts with negative population growth are from Hill and Mountain zones; the same zones which were amongst the most affected districts of the 2015 earthquake. Finally, in recent years, foreign labour migration and work and study migration opportunities have increased tremendously for Nepali citizens. Along with increased international migration, internal migration has equally been increasing. It has been a common observation in the country that people migrate first to urban areas where education and other skill training opportunities are available. Following this pattern, individuals aspire to go to foreign countries for study and/or work opportunities. Alternatively, individuals initially go to foreign countries for work or/and study and, after having earned a sufficient sustenance amount, migrate to large urban areas to settle permanently. Both ways of relationship between internal and international migration commonly exist in Nepal.

6.1.2. Feminization of internal migration

The feminization of internal migration in Nepal is evident through the declining sex ratio of migrants, where more females are migrating compared to males. Although there was initially a significant gap between male and female migration, this gap is narrowing. Data shows that marriage is a predominant reason for female migration, reflecting traditional societal norms. Low sex ratio in all ecological zones in 2021 indicates that females are more mobile than male. Particularly, higher inflow of females in Mountain (49.9 males per 100 females) and higher outflow of females in Hill (77.6 male per 100 females) indicates a need for female focused policy. In Tarai, until 2011 more males were out-migrants, but by 2021 this proportion has decreased. Likewise, rural-urban migration also high among females.

Provinces like Koshi, Bagmati, Lumbini, Gandaki and Karnali show slight female predominance among migrants while Madhesh and Sudurpashchim exhibit significant gender imbalances. This shift suggests a move from male dominated to female dominated migration patterns. Joint or extended families are more likely to have female absentees compared to nuclear families. This can be linked with Martone et al., (2011) findings where the authors note that a male partner's migration can significantly impact family dynamics. Remittances sent home may enable the wife and children to acquire their own property and gain independence from in-laws, often leading to the separation of the nuclear family from the extended family.

The age-sex pyramid of migrants clearly shows a high proportion of females in the 15 to 34 years of age indicating the increasing role of women, especially the working age and economically active women in internal migration. Therefore, it is crucial to create an inclusive environment that promote gender equality and supports the socio-economic development of all migrants.

6.1.3. Migration and social change

Internal migration in Nepal has shown a major factor in changing, reshaping and influencing the demographic, socio-cultural and economic dynamics. The mobility of people, especially women, has altered the distribution of population, leading to increased urban density and female labour force participation, in contrast depopulation in rural areas. These shifts have brought changes in family structure, gender roles, and economic activities are emerging, as more women migrate for education, employment, and other opportunities than men.

According to Dyer and Rajan (2021), young people during the life transition and choice regarding education, employment and family formation are more likely to migrate than older people. Migrants contribute positively to the labor force by bringing new skill and perspective to their destination. The age selective nature of migrants and lower dependency ratio compared to non-migrants underlines the economic potential of this group and the need for policies that support their integration and maximize their contributions, ensuring that benefits of migration are fully realized for both the migrants and the communities they join.

However, migrants are a heterogeneous group, and their mobility depends on their specific priorities, supporting the recommendation given by NSO (2024a). Economic migration among males is rising, while agriculture-related migration is declining. Education as a motive for migration has also become more important, particularly among the younger age groups. The educational attainment of migrants has improved, with more migrants having secondary education. The occupations have gradually shifted from farming and fishing to skilled agriculture, forestry, and fishing, along with elementary ones. This situation calls for the further demographic and socio-economic analysis to determine the dividend of Nepal and can achieve it by focusing on migrant's demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Migration is much more than just mobility; it concerns who migrates, where they migrate to and how many individuals migrate. It extends beyond reallocation of labour. It is a fundamental process of social and economic transformation. Migration involves the movement of individuals who often have different preferences than the native population and as a result, it has the potential to reshape societies. Recently, it has become a highly debated topic due to its significant implications for economic and social development, particularly in less developed countries (Franco Gavonel, 2022). Migration and development share a two-way relationship. Evidence suggests that population movement within country has been increasing along with diversified migration destination, which is an indication of increased, widened and diversified economic opportunities in the country. On the other hand, an increase of migrants can burden existing social services and infrastructure too, requiring adjustments in healthcare, education, and housing to accommodate the changing population.

6.1.4. Internal and international migration

Moreover, the link between internal and international migration also provides a clear insight on the overall internal migration as it has a strong correlation. Skeldon (2005) emphasizes that migration, whether internal or international, often occurs when individuals cannot fulfill their aspirations within the existing opportunity structures of their locality or country. This is prevalent in Nepal, where people migrate internally to urban areas like Kathmandu and Pokhara in search of better opportunities. When these internal opportunities are exhausted or insufficient, they migrate abroad. According to Cirillo et al. (2022) an individual's past migration experiences are a key factor in predicting their likelihood of migrating abroad in the future. In this way, there is a two-way relationship between internal and international migration, but it is unexplored that which causes which.

Recognizing this policy in Nepal should address both internal and international migration accordingly. By understanding and addressing the interconnected nature of migration, Nepal can better manage its migration dynamics and harness the potential benefits for socio-economic development.

6.2. Policy recommendations

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees all citizens the fundamental right to freely move, live, work, and settle anywhere within the country without any restrictions. In comparison to international migration, there is lack of internal migration related policies in South Asian countries including Nepal (Srivastava & Pandey, 2017). In the absence of proper policies and plan, migrants remain vulnerable especially the poor and marginalized migrants. The 'leave no-one behind' agenda urges us to consider the serious concern among the left behind migrant's children and older population. Nepal has three hierarchical levels of political/ administrative structure – National, Province, and Municipality (local level). Therefore, we need a coordination between national and local governments, civil society and migration related organizations, as well as the private sector.

Evidence from the 2021 Census highlights the importance of addressing this issue in policy discussions. Based on the data especially the internal migration and demographic change can be used for policy recommendation. Evidence suggests that a growing number of areas of the country are entering into the demographic window of opportunity. However, the country faces many policy challenges to make the most of the potential boost to its economy. Further demographic and economic analyses are needed to inform what level of demographic dividend Nepal can attain (NSO, 2024b). The resettlement policy was initially the sole government strategy designed at addressing migration issues. However, in the current time, the government needs to consider different approaches as internal migration motives have changed over time. In light of this, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

- Urban planning and infrastructure: Migration flow is high to urban areas largely in metropolitan cities like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitawan. Tarai is still dominant for in-migrants but low in out-migrants. This demands the emergence of severe deprivations in urban areas and addressing these deprivations should be a primary policy concern.

- Gender sensitive policies: Females are a large proportion of internal migrants which demands a separate policy. This demands concrete policy implications, since all migrants are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation but female migrants particularly at risk, they face double discrimination – as women and as migrants. Policy should aim to empower them, address the challenges they face, and ensure that their contributions to both their families and the economy are acknowledged.

- Education and employment: The increase in migration for study/training, especially among younger age groups, suggests a growing emphasis on education. The policy should focus on investing in educational infrastructure and create more opportunities for higher quality education and vocational training at local level to reduce the influx in big particularly capital cities. The consistent migration for work/job highlights the need for robust employment policies as most of the migrants are economically active.

- Migration is age and sex selective: Different age group have different needs and demands. Therefore, polices need to be tailored to the specific needs of different age groups to ensure effective service provisions and address population redistribution impact.

    - For individuals aged 65 years and over, it is essential to plan for effective social protection at the local level.

    - Similarly, the 45-64 years age group remains a vital part of the workforce and policy should be focused on the labour market to ensure their engagement. One immediate important step that can be taken is to prolong the service year in the formal sectors by increasing retirement age.

- The 25-44 years age group, a parent group, play a crucial role in the future labour market, especially female labour force and policies should focus to support their work-life balance and career development.

- The 15-24 years age group is diverse and has important implication for mobility. This group is at a critical stage of life with regard to education, work transitions, and entrance into family life. Policy needs to focus more strongly on these groups by providing education, both secondary and tertiary facility, in their own place of birth and with employment opportunities.

- Finally, the 0-14 year age group, the main pillar of demographic shift, demands special attention in health and education policies to ensure their overall development.

Migration is a cross-cutting issue with various outcomes. As per the World Bank (2023), three types of migrants exist: better-matched, weak-matched, and distressed migrants. Migration should not be considered solely as brain drain, yet also as brain circulation for the benefit of both origin and destination areas of migration. There is therefore a necessity to implement a holistic migration support program which integrates all aspects and provides support services for better-matched migrants, vocational training, and job placement for weakly-matched migrants, as well as a safe migration path for female and dependent migrants. This holistic approach would ensure that both origin and destination areas benefit from migration, contributing to sustainable development.

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ANNEXES I: TABLES

Annex 1: Internal migration policies in periodic plan

A. Before 1990: Nepal's periodic plans did not explicitly prioritize internal migration before 1990. Instead, policies mainly focused on population redistribution through resettlement programs aiming to alleviate population pressure in the hills and mountains by relocating people to the fertile Tarai region. Consequently, some plans indirectly addressed internal migration issues by emphasizing rural development, infrastructure, and employment opportunities.		
Periodic plan (year)	**Internal migration policy**	**Gap**
1. First Plan (1956-1961)	Primary concern on resettlement policies and infrastructure development, which indirectly influenced migration patterns by improving connectivity.	Indirectly influenced migration pattern by improving connectivity, but lacked explicit focus on internal migration
2. Second Plan (1962-1965)	Continuity of resettlement policies, increase agricultural production, which could reduce rural-to-urban migration by improving rural livelihoods.	Aimed to reduce rural-to-urban migration by improving rural livelihoods, but still lacked a direct approach to internal migration
3. Third Plan (1965-1970)	Addressed the population density in the hill regions through resettlement to the Tarai areas, along with a strategic shift of labor from agriculture to construction and industry, Industrial development, potentially attracting people to urban areas for employment.	Addressed the population density in the hills, but industrial development might have attracted more people to urban areas without sufficient planning
4. Fourth Plan (1970-1975)	Focused on increasing population pressure on land in Nepal, particularly in the hilly regions, which led to a growing movement into the Tarai forests following malaria eradication. Focused on rural development and poverty alleviation, aiming to reduce migration by improving rural conditions.	Focused on improving rural conditions, but the eradication of malaria led to unplanned migration into Tarai.

5. Fifth Plan (1975-1980)	Continued emphasis on rural development and introduced measures for social services improvement, which could impact migration patterns.	Positive impact on rural areas, but still lacked comprehensive internal migration policies
6. Sixth Plan (1980-1985)	Included a resettlement program aimed at boosting agricultural growth by bringing additional arable land under cultivation. Achieving self-reliance and reducing dependency on foreign aid, indirectly affecting migration by promoting local employment.	Promoted local employment, but resettlement programs were not always sustainable.
7. Seventh Plan (1985-1990)	Promoted private-sector involvement and aimed to increase productivity across all sectors, which could influence migration by creating job opportunities.	Created job opportunities, but did not fully address the complexities of internal migration.

B.	1990-2015: After restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepal's periodic plans started to explicitly address internal migration through strategies focused on rural development and urbanization. There was a strong emphasis on decentralization and local governance to better manage internal migration. Additionally, policies during this period also concentrated on the rehabilitation and reintegration of internally displaced persons.	
8. Eight Plan (1992-1997)	Implemented internal migration policies to address the challenges posed by excessive migration and unplanned settlements in the Tarai. Focused to reduce rural-to-urban migration by improving rural infrastructure, promoting agricultural development, and creating employment opportunities in rural areas.	Addressed excessive migration and unplanned settlement, but implementation was challenging.
9. Ninth Plan (1997-2002)	Balanced regional development to reduce disparities between urban and rural areas. It included measures to develop small towns and improve rural livelihoods.	Aimed to reduce urban-rural disparities, but small towns often laced sufficient resources.
10. Tenth Plan (2002-2007)	Poverty reduction and aimed to create employment opportunities in rural areas to curb migration to urban centers. It also focused on improving basic services in rural areas.	Focused on curbing migration to urban centers, but rural areas still faced significant challenges.

11. Eleventh Plan (2007-2010)	Continued to focus on rural development and aimed to decentralize economic activities to reduce the pressure on urban areas.	Reduced pressure on urban areas, but decentralization efforts were uneven.
12. Twelfth Plan (2010-2013)	Promoting inclusive development and reducing regional disparities. It included strategies to improve rural infrastructure and services.	Improved rural infrastructures, but disparities persisted
13. Thirteenth Plan (2013-2016)	Sustainable development and aimed to create job opportunities in rural areas to reduce migration to urban centers.	The plan aimed to create job opportunities in rural areas to reduce migration to urban centers. While it focused on sustainable development, the sustainability of rural jobs remained a concern. The plan made strides in promoting balanced regional development but faced challenges in effectively addressing the root causes of migration.
C. After 2015: After restructuring and federalization of the country in 2015, the policies were focused to balance regional/provincial development, reducing urban-rural disparities, and promoting sustainable urbanization. These objectives align well with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 global goals established by the United Nations in 2015. In 16th periodic plan even features a separate chapter about issues concerning the SDGs.		
14. Fourteenth Plan (2016-2019)	This plan aimed to reduce regional disparities by promoting inclusive economic growth and improving infrastructure in rural areas. It focused on creating employment opportunities in rural regions to curb migration to urban centers.	It focused on creating employment opportunities in rural regions to curb migration to urban centers. However, rural areas still needed more support to fully address the push factors driving migration. The plan's success was limited by uneven implementation and resource allocation.
15. Fifteenth Plan (2019-2024)	Emphasized sustainable development and aimed to achieve balanced regional development. It included strategies to improve rural infrastructure, enhance agricultural productivity, and create job opportunities in rural areas to reduce migration pressures on urban centers.	Despite the efforts, urban centers continued to attract migrants due to better opportunities and services. The plan highlighted the need for more comprehensive and integrated approaches to manage internal migration effectively.

16. Sixteenth Plan (2024-2028)	The 16th Periodic Plan of Nepal (2024/25 - 2028/29) addresses internal migration through several key strategies aimed at promoting balanced regional development and improving rural livelihoods.	These strategies are comprehensive, their success depends on effective implementation and coordination among various government agencies and stakeholders. The plan also needs to address environmental factors and climate change, which are increasingly influencing migration patterns.
	Rural Development: The plan emphasizes improving rural infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation, and electricity, to enhance living conditions and economic opportunities in rural areas. This aims to reduce the push factors driving people to migrate to urban centers.	
	Employment Generation: Creating job opportunities in rural areas is a major focus. The plan promotes agricultural development, tourism, and small-scale industries to provide employment and reduce the need for rural residents to move to cities for work.	
	Urban Planning: The plan includes measures to manage urbanization effectively, ensuring that urban areas can accommodate incoming migrants without overburdening infrastructure and services.	
	Decentralization: Efforts to decentralize economic activities and governance are intended to distribute development benefits more evenly across the country, reducing regional disparities that often drive internal migration.	
	Social Services: Improving access to education, healthcare, and other social services in rural areas is a priority, aiming to make rural living more attractive and sustainable. These strategies are designed to create a more balanced and sustainable development across Nepal, addressing the root causes of internal migration by improving conditions in rural areas and promoting regional equity.	

Annex 2: Migration data quality and its analysis

Dimension	Description	Current practices in census	Explanation	Recommendation
Relevance	Assesses whether the data meets the needs of users.	The 2021 census questionnaire includes questions on place of birth (lifetime migration), prior place of residence (recent migration), duration of stay and current place of residence which are relevant for understanding migration patterns	The data collected is relevant for understanding internal migration patterns, but it could be more comprehensive.	Enhance relevance including more detailed questions on local-level migration and prior residence along with comprehensive demographic information. Evaluate the framing of migration questions to ensure they capture the necessary information effectively. Such as question 23 in census questionnaire is not relevant should be revised or adding question multiple moves. Likewise, recent migration emphases on changes in residence within the last 12 months preceding the census.
Accuracy	Measure how well the data represents the true situation.	The accuracy of the census data can be affected by underreporting, misreporting, and difficulties in reaching remote areas. The 2021 census had used mobile app, help desk, use of social media, and form collection desk for progress monitoring. Census observation team from different agencies also help to maintain to improve accuracy of data.	Despite efforts improve accuracy, challenges like underreporting and misreporting still exist. The PES report highlights the need for continuous improvement in census methodologies to ensure accurate and reliable data.	Focus on minimizing underreporting and misreporting by providing more rigorous training for enumerators. Ensure enumerators are clear on questions. Utilize technology for real-time data validation like mobile app and web application to guide data entry and ensure accuracy.

Dimension	Description	Current practices in census	Explanation	Recommendation
Timeliness	Assesses how promptly data is collected and published	The decennial nature of the census means there are significant gaps between data collection periods. While 2021 census provides recent insights, but updates are infrequent.	The infrequent updates due to the decennial nature of the census result in significant gaps between data collection periods.	Improve timeliness by integrating administrative records and enhancing the use of continuous data collection methods. This approach will help keep the data up-to-date and relevant for timely decision-making.
Accessibility	Looks at how easily users can obtain the data.	Census data is generally accessible through government publications and online databases. Enhancing digital access and creating user-friendly interfaces can further improve accessibility. The NSO provides online access to migration data, making it easier for users to obtain the information they need.	The data is generally accessible, but there is room for improvement in digital access and user-friendliness.	Enhance digital access by developing user-friendly interfaces and ensuring data is available in multiple formats for diverse user needs at local level.
Consistency	Ensures the data is reliable and comparable over time and across sources.	Consistent data collection methods and definitions are crucial for reliable trend analysis. The 2021 census maintained consistent methodologies with previous censuses, ensuring reliable and comparable data over time. Any changes in methodology were clearly documented.	This report aims to make foundation for next census to compare the recent migration data based on most recent migration.	Document any methodological changes clearly and ensure that future censuses use standardized procedures to maintain data coherence. Regularly review and update methodologies to reflect best practices, ensuring that data remains consistent and comparable over time.

Annex 3: Age and duration of stay of lifetime migrants (single year), NPHC 2021

Age/ duration of migration	Sex						Migrants by duration of stay in years (0-60+)	
	Female	%	Male	%	Both sexes	%	No.	%
0	2,077	0.9	2,371	1.0	4,448	1.8	282,757	3.2
1	1,710	0.7	1,895	0.8	3,605	1.5	567,747	6.3
2	1,579	0.7	1,652	0.7	3,231	1.3	482,030	5.4
3	1,606	0.7	1,828	0.8	3,434	1.4	466,454	5.2
4	1,648	0.7	1,761	0.7	3,409	1.4	440,700	4.9
5	1,666	0.7	1,941	0.8	3,607	1.5	498,181	5.6
6	1,668	0.7	1,907	0.8	3,575	1.5	348,126	3.9
7	1,461	0.6	1,697	0.7	3,158	1.3	308,759	3.4
8	1,385	0.6	1,672	0.7	3,057	1.3	322,798	3.6
9	1,351	0.6	1,509	0.6	2,860	1.2	212,465	2.4
10	1,400	0.6	1,475	0.6	2,875	1.2	488,870	5.5
11	1,225	0.5	1,338	0.6	2,563	1.1	159,804	1.8
12	1,348	0.6	1,629	0.7	2,977	1.2	271,132	3.0
13	1,402	0.6	1,496	0.6	2,898	1.2	186,378	2.1
14	1,713	0.7	1,626	0.7	3,339	1.4	172,343	1.9
15	2,683	1.1	2,177	0.9	4,860	2.0	302,060	3.4
16	4,466	1.8	2,848	1.2	7,314	3.0	164,663	1.8
17	5,843	2.4	3,365	1.4	9,208	3.8	142,693	1.6
18	9,164	3.8	3,913	1.6	13,077	5.4	201,558	2.3
19	7,615	3.1	3,388	1.4	11,003	4.5	111,579	1.2
20	10,807	4.4	3,800	1.6	14,607	6.0	335,084	3.7
21	6,479	2.7	3,023	1.2	9,502	3.9	97,789	1.1
22	6,799	2.8	3,179	1.3	9,978	4.1	140,799	1.6
23	5,701	2.3	2,881	1.2	8,582	3.5	92,586	1.0
24	5,377	2.2	3,033	1.2	8,410	3.4	91,939	1.0
25	5,279	2.2	3,055	1.3	8,334	3.4	179,881	2.0
26	4,276	1.8	2,738	1.1	7,014	2.9	90,329	1.0
27	3,373	1.4	2,378	1.0	5,751	2.4	78,735	0.9
28	3,966	1.6	2,783	1.1	6,749	2.8	105,257	1.2
29	2,586	1.1	2,054	0.8	4,640	1.9	55,429	0.6
30	3,016	1.2	2,503	1.0	5,519	2.3	200,392	2.2
31	1,811	0.7	1,764	0.7	3,575	1.5	47,383	0.5
32	2,034	0.8	1,965	0.8	3,999	1.6	76,475	0.9

Age/ duration of migration	Sex						Migrants by duration of stay in years (0-60+)	
	Female	%	Male	%	Both sexes	%	No.	%
33	1,807	0.7	1,820	0.8	3,627	1.5	57,284	0.6
34	1,486	0.6	1,642	0.7	3,128	1.3	52,957	0.6
35	1,726	0.7	1,926	0.8	3,652	1.5	110,187	1.2
36	1,301	0.5	1,423	0.6	2,724	1.1	51,531	0.6
37	1,113	0.5	1,216	0.5	2,329	1.0	42,227	0.5
38	1,286	0.5	1,380	0.6	2,666	1.1	66,081	0.7
39	863	0.4	1,030	0.4	1,893	0.8	33,086	0.4
40	1,265	0.5	1,489	0.6	2,754	1.1	142,945	1.6
41	616	0.3	819	0.3	1,435	0.6	28,877	0.3
42	809	0.3	1,059	0.4	1,868	0.8	50,423	0.6
43	713	0.3	819	0.3	1,532	0.6	35,010	0.4
44	567	0.2	672	0.3	1,239	0.5	31,928	0.4
45	815	0.3	853	0.4	1,668	0.7	64,310	0.7
46	563	0.2	593	0.2	1,156	0.5	31,965	0.4
47	434	0.2	515	0.2	949	0.4	24,592	0.3
48	617	0.3	614	0.3	1,231	0.5	34,417	0.4
49	424	0.2	508	0.2	932	0.4	22,316	0.3
50	784	0.3	795	0.3	1,579	0.7	92,091	1.0
51	401	0.2	418	0.2	819	0.3	20,364	0.2
52	477	0.2	560	0.2	1,037	0.4	26,114	0.3
53	422	0.2	452	0.2	874	0.4	20,000	0.2
54	395	0.2	374	0.2	769	0.3	22,061	0.3
55	438	0.2	523	0.2	961	0.4	30,564	0.3
56	360	0.2	396	0.2	756	0.3	18,354	0.2
57	279	0.1	291	0.1	570	0.2	14,020	0.2
58	391	0.2	371	0.2	762	0.3	15,639	0.2
59	266	0.1	281	0.1	547	0.2	9,616	0.1
60	551	0.2	431	0.2	982	0.4	102,079	1.1
61	268	0.1	221	0.1	489	0.2	8,974,213	100.0
62	335	0.1	279	0.1	614	0.3		
63	279	0.1	219	0.1	498	0.2		
64	273	0.1	188	0.1	461	0.2		
65	360	0.2	254	0.1	614	0.3		
66	282	0.1	179	0.1	461	0.2		

Age/ duration of migration	Sex						Migrants by duration of stay in years (0-60+)	
	Female	%	Male	%	Both sexes	%	No.	%
67	227	0.1	170	0.1	397	0.2		
68	267	0.1	192	0.1	459	0.2		
69	224	0.1	169	0.1	393	0.2		
70	324	0.1	224	0.1	548	0.2		
71	196	0.1	150	0.1	346	0.1		
72	201	0.1	153	0.1	354	0.1		
73	172	0.1	121	0.1	293	0.1		
74	164	0.1	114	0.1	278	0.1		
75	252	0.1	126	0.1	378	0.2		
76	177	0.1	134	0.1	311	0.1		
77	193	0.1	109	0.0	302	0.1		
78	121	0.1	98	0.0	219	0.1		
79	62	0.0	55	0.0	117	0.1		
80	128	0.1	90	0.0	218	0.1		
81	63	0.0	48	0.0	111	0.1		
82	74	0.0	56	0.0	130	0.1		
83	61	0.0	49	0.0	110	0.1		
84	61	0.0	60	0.0	121	0.1		
85	46	0.0	41	0.0	87	0.0		
86	33	0.0	38	0.0	71	0.0		
87	40	0.0	20	0.0	60	0.0		
88	53	0.0	29	0.0	82	0.0		
89	21	0.0	15	0.0	36	0.0		
90 and above	120	0.1	15	0.0	40	0.0		
Total	140,760	57.6	103,530	42.4	2,442,195	100.0		

Note: *Age of 90 years and above are lumped in 90 years and duration of stay of 60 years and above are lumped in 60 years.*

Annex 4: Lifetime migration rate (in-, out- and net-migration) as a percentage of native-born population by districts, NPHC 2021

District	Native born	In migration rate		Out migration rate		Net-migration rate	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Taplejung	119,901	6,798	5.7	93,450	77.9	-86,652	-72.3
Sankhuwasabha	155,684	13,498	8.7	78,792	50.6	-65,294	-41.9
Solukhumbu	104,651	5,782	5.5	54,331	51.9	-48,549	-46.4
Okhaldhunga	139,347	6,788	4.9	91,644	65.8	-84,856	-60.9
Khotang	175,007	8,880	5.1	158,488	90.6	-149,608	-85.5
Bhojpur	157,404	11,851	7.5	146,952	93.4	-135,101	-85.8
Dhankuta	149,584	20,972	14.0	80,597	53.9	-59,625	-39.9
Tehrathum	88,212	12,210	13.8	79,872	90.5	-67,662	-76.7
Panchthar	171,514	16,428	9.6	111,950	65.3	-95,522	-55.7
Ilam	275,822	37,097	13.4	79,365	28.8	-42,268	-15.3
Jhapa	944,352	294,052	31.1	97,757	10.4	196,295	20.8
Morang	1,100,053	296,911	27.0	118,735	10.8	178,176	16.2
Sunsari	895,276	246,529	27.5	91,066	10.2	155,463	17.4
Udayapur	338,710	67,589	20.0	81,182	24.0	-13,593	-4.0
Saptari	681,737	37,914	5.6	77,320	11.3	-39,406	-5.8
Siraha	717,826	46,628	6.5	75,917	10.6	-29,289	-4.1
Dhanusha	835,447	84,798	10.2	96,413	11.5	-11,615	-1.4
Mahottari	677,354	57,643	8.5	83,206	12.3	-25,563	-3.8
Sarlahi	835,189	80,300	9.6	93,593	11.2	-13,293	-1.6
Rautahat	786,748	50,302	6.4	70,752	9.0	-20,450	-2.6
Bara	732,746	71,183	9.7	86,629	11.8	-15,446	-2.1
Parsa	610,111	46,275	7.6	57,755	9.5	-11,480	-1.9
Dolakha	172,146	11,361	6.6	86,596	50.3	-75,235	-43.7
Sindhupalchok	261,579	15,662	6.0	126,206	48.2	-110,544	-42.3
Rasuwa	46,605	4,139	8.9	13,286	28.5	-9,147	-19.6
Dhading	324,172	26,585	8.2	134,279	41.4	-107,694	-33.2
Nuwakot	262,643	18,983	7.2	109,594	41.7	-90,611	-34.5
Kathmandu	1,989,582	1,138,426	57.2	124,410	6.3	1,014,016	51.0
Bhaktapur	428,439	215,117	50.2	37,276	8.7	177,841	41.5
Lalitpur	541,323	250,283	46.2	39,073	7.2	211,210	39.0
Kavrepalanchok	362,710	49,226	13.6	150,591	41.5	-101,365	-27.9
Ramechhap	169,932	12,027	7.1	119,513	70.3	-107,486	-63.3
Sindhuli	299,057	33,577	11.2	96,851	32.4	-63,274	-21.2
Makwanpur	462,030	82,035	17.8	97,161	21.0	-15,126	-3.3

District	Native born	In migration rate		Out migration rate		Net-migration rate	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Chitawan	701,120	275,585	39.3	76,914	11.0	198,671	28.3
Gorkha	249,291	19,856	8.0	132,015	53.0	-112,159	-45.0
Manang	5,632	2,176	38.6	3,396	60.3	-1,220	-21.7
Mustang	14,342	4,743	33.1	4,517	31.5	226	1.6
Myagdi	105,633	8,155	7.7	42,876	40.6	-34,721	-32.9
Kaski	583,285	217,111	37.2	58,783	10.1	158,328	27.1
Lamjung	154,469	18,138	11.7	77,988	50.5	-59,850	-38.7
Tanahu	314,875	59,962	19.0	111,975	35.6	-52,013	-16.5
Nawalparasi (East)	367,350	122,711	33.4	32,475	8.8	90,236	24.6
Syangja	250,119	24,406	9.8	177,759	71.1	-153,353	-61.3
Parbat	129,280	20,211	15.6	97,711	75.6	-77,500	-59.9
Baglung	246,983	17,840	7.2	118,864	48.1	-101,024	-40.9
Rukum (East)	56,451	2,203	3.9	21,627	38.3	-19,424	-34.4
Rolpa	234,230	6,981	3.0	55,274	23.6	-48,293	-20.6
Pyuthan	230,608	10,596	4.6	63,506	27.5	-52,910	-22.9
Gulmi	243,673	20,528	8.4	144,926	59.5	-124,398	-51.1
Arghakhanchi	174,921	15,392	8.8	90,023	51.5	-74,631	-42.7
Palpa	241,734	28,121	11.6	117,142	48.5	-89,021	-36.8
Nawalparasi (West)	356,956	69,880	19.6	29,223	8.2	40,657	11.4
Rupandehi	1,055,077	304,365	28.8	55,979	5.3	248,386	23.5
Kapilbastu	641,513	82,317	12.8	28,345	4.4	53,972	8.4
Dang	666,523	132,559	19.9	64,158	9.6	68,401	10.3
Banke	578,461	136,222	23.5	29,598	5.1	106,624	18.4
Bardiya	451,910	87,679	19.4	51,386	11.4	36,293	8.0
Dolpa	42,739	1,694	4.0	4,608	10.8	-2,914	-6.8
Mugu	64,479	2,409	3.7	9,300	14.4	-6,891	-10.7
Humla	55,346	1,888	3.4	8,118	14.7	-6,230	-11.3
Jumla	118,215	5,213	4.4	22,746	19.2	-17,533	-14.8
Kalikot	145,170	5,320	3.7	29,879	20.6	-24,559	-16.9
Dailekh	251,959	7,201	2.9	91,374	36.3	-84,173	-33.4
Jajarkot	189,009	20,378	10.8	49,072	26.0	-28,694	-15.2
Rukum (West)	165,835	8,978	5.4	24,842	15.0	-15,864	-9.6
Salyan	237,841	11,139	4.7	73,789	31.0	-62,650	-26.3
Surkhet	411,627	94,423	22.9	61,331	14.9	33,092	8.0
Bajura	138,345	3,914	2.8	26,258	19.0	-22,344	-16.2
Bajhang	188,806	5,446	2.9	41,127	21.8	-35,681	-18.9

District	Native born	In migration rate		Out migration rate		Net-migration rate	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Darchula	132,324	5,759	4.4	37,159	28.1	-31,400	-23.7
Baitadi	241,466	9,591	4.0	94,168	39.0	-84,577	-35.0
Dadeldhura	138,890	21,053	15.2	48,475	34.9	-27,422	-19.7
Doti	204,201	11,927	5.8	77,421	37.9	-65,494	-32.1
Achham	227,841	10,278	4.5	89,174	39.1	-78,896	-34.6
Kailali	888,520	245,712	27.7	48,919	5.5	196,793	22.1
Kanchanpur	503,756	159,872	31.7	32,959	6.5	126,913	25.2

Note: Foreign born and place of birth not stated are not included.

Annex 5: The recent migration rates (in-, out- and net) and absentee abroad by district, NPHC 2021

District	Native population (non- inst.)	In-migrants	In-migration rate	out migrants	Out-migration rate	Net-migration	Net-migration rate	Absentee abroad
Taplejung	118,896	1,688	1.4	20,584	17.3	-18,896	-15.9	6,237
Sankhuwasabha	153,783	3,257	2.1	14,937	9.7	-11,680	-7.6	7,904
Solukhumbu	102,826	1,606	1.6	9,304	9.0	-7,698	-7.5	4,948
Okhaldhunga	138,802	1,660	1.2	15,572	11.2	-13,912	-10.0	7,449
Khotang	173,656	2,522	1.5	29,489	17.0	-26,967	-15.5	11,207
Bhojpur	156,098	3,251	2.1	23,096	14.8	-19,845	-12.7	9,109
Dhankuta	147,729	6,249	4.2	15,181	10.3	-8,932	-6.0	9,592
Tehrathum	87,767	3,313	3.8	12,350	14.1	-9,037	-10.3	5,772
Panchthar	170,179	4,136	2.4	20,447	12.0	-16,311	-9.6	11,701
Ilam	274,440	8,120	3.0	19,371	7.1	-11,251	-4.1	18,845
Jhapa	940,117	57,971	6.2	24,239	2.6	33,732	3.6	91,314
Morang	1,094,927	55,934	5.1	32,305	3.0	23,629	2.2	75,868
Sunsari	889,919	52,147	5.9	25,213	2.8	26,934	3.0	62,071
Udayapur	337,193	13,169	3.9	20,533	6.1	-7,364	-2.2	21,017
Saptari	679,888	6,584	1.0	16,950	2.5	-10,366	-1.5	33,510
Siraha	717,252	8,380	1.2	14,836	2.1	-6,456	-0.9	56,491
Dhanusha	832,800	15,141	1.8	17,880	2.1	-2,739	-0.3	73,688
Mahottari	676,353	10,465	1.5	16,251	2.4	-5,786	-0.9	52,674
Sarlahi	833,083	11,084	1.3	23,408	2.8	-12,324	-1.5	35,084
Rautahat	786,529	8,120	1.0	18,308	2.3	-10,188	-1.3	23,892

District	Native population (non- inst.)	In-migrants	In-migration rate	out migrants	Out-migration rate	Net-migration	Net-migration rate	Absentee abroad
Bara	731,024	10,923	1.5	23,216	3.2	-12,293	-1.7	17,357
Parsa	607,195	11,214	1.8	14,967	2.5	-3,753	-0.6	11,590
Dolakha	170,719	3,837	2.2	17,159	10.1	-13,322	-7.8	9,100
Sindhupalchok	259,365	4,452	1.7	25,359	9.8	-20,907	-8.1	17,532
Rasuwa	45,396	773	1.7	3,399	7.5	-2,626	-5.8	2,302
Dhading	322,415	6,967	2.2	28,786	8.9	-21,819	-6.8	19,063
Nuwakot	259,915	5,884	2.3	22,998	8.8	-17,114	-6.6	15,608
Kathmandu	1,948,029	272,261	14.0	102,961	5.3	169,300	8.7	144,884
Bhaktapur	423,536	80,591	19.0	10,885	2.6	69,706	16.5	24,039
Lalitpur	533,516	77,535	14.5	11,696	2.2	65,839	12.3	36,874
Kavrepalanchok	357,422	14,471	4.0	26,985	7.5	-12,514	-3.5	19,858
Ramechhap	168,684	3,236	1.9	22,150	13.1	-18,914	-11.2	9,853
Sindhuli	296,179	8,447	2.9	20,943	7.1	-12,496	-4.2	13,733
Makwanpur	454,760	19,118	4.2	22,717	5.0	-3,599	-0.8	20,020
Chitawan	692,792	62,817	9.1	22,029	3.2	40,788	5.9	65,064
Gorkha	246,578	5,793	2.3	26,975	10.9	-21,182	-8.6	23,068
Manang	4,914	688	14.0	517	10.5	171	3.5	319
Mustang	11,257	1,307	11.6	842	7.5	465	4.1	1,207
Myagdi	103,946	2,235	2.2	9,780	9.4	-7,545	-7.3	10,766
Kaski	573,462	56,057	9.8	16,138	2.8	39,919	7.0	66,327
Lamjung	152,989	4,049	2.6	14,058	9.2	-10,009	-6.5	16,871
Tanahu	311,573	14,466	4.6	23,466	7.5	-9,000	-2.9	37,372
Nawalparasi (East)	365,586	26,227	7.2	9,049	2.5	17,178	4.7	44,771
Syangja	249,178	6,175	2.5	32,244	12.9	-26,069	-10.5	35,289
Parbat	128,562	4,980	3.9	17,546	13.6	-12,566	-9.8	16,446
Baglung	244,926	4,520	1.8	24,188	9.9	-19,668	-8.0	34,157
Rukum (East)	56,338	914	1.6	5,171	9.2	-4,257	-7.6	3,108
Rolpa	232,787	2,234	1.0	12,574	5.4	-10,340	-4.4	20,024
Pyuthan	229,276	3,147	1.4	14,104	6.2	-10,957	-4.8	31,720
Gulmi	243,069	6,172	2.5	28,558	11.7	-22,386	-9.2	41,550
Arghakhanchi	174,270	3,907	2.2	20,959	12.0	-17,052	-9.8	29,934
Palpa	239,260	7,503	3.1	23,300	9.7	-15,797	-6.6	30,698
Nawalparasi (West)	354,024	13,180	3.7	8,235	2.3	4,945	1.4	27,942

District	Native population (non- inst.)	In-migrants	In-migration rate	out migrants	Out-migration rate	Net-migration	Net-migration rate	Absentee abroad
Rupandehi	1,047,117	70,429	6.7	18,704	1.8	51,725	4.9	79,818
Kapilbastu	637,949	17,170	2.7	9,006	1.4	8,164	1.3	43,881
Dang	663,090	32,041	4.8	15,055	2.3	16,986	2.6	53,394
Banke	573,006	31,123	5.4	10,738	1.9	20,385	3.6	29,594
Bardiya	449,634	14,708	3.3	16,585	3.7	-1,877	-0.4	29,243
Dolpa	42,129	509	1.2	1,238	2.9	-729	-1.7	430
Mugu	63,788	695	1.1	2,426	3.8	-1,731	-2.7	1,116
Humla	53,848	376	0.7	2,734	5.1	-2,358	-4.4	796
Jumla	117,137	1,311	1.1	5,924	5.1	-4,613	-3.9	2,703
Kalikot	144,708	1,441	1.0	8,330	5.8	-6,889	-4.8	5,586
Dailekh	251,297	2,397	1.0	20,628	8.2	-18,231	-7.3	19,343
Jajarkot	187,960	1,924	1.0	9,085	4.8	-7,161	-3.8	6,136
Rukum (West)	164,562	4,470	2.7	6,153	3.7	-1,683	-1.0	10,193
Salyan	236,724	3,386	1.4	15,606	6.6	-12,220	-5.2	17,024
Surkhet	406,982	26,740	6.6	13,998	3.4	12,742	3.1	30,993
Bajura	137,554	1,113	0.8	6,363	4.6	-5,250	-3.8	14,339
Bajhang	188,457	1,759	0.9	10,271	5.5	-8,512	-4.5	34,093
Darchula	131,268	1,284	1.0	7,652	5.8	-6,368	-4.9	7,448
Baitadi	240,760	2,780	1.2	17,245	7.2	-14,465	-6.0	22,821
Dadeldhura	137,832	4,527	3.3	9,788	7.1	-5,261	-3.8	15,518
Doti	201,151	3,398	1.7	14,641	7.3	-11,243	-5.6	28,574
Achham	226,726	3,410	1.5	17,808	7.9	-14,398	-6.4	44,167
Kailali	883,587	50,764	5.7	19,507	2.2	31,257	3.5	110,328
Kanchanpur	501,059	26,235	5.2	11,174	2.2	15,061	3.0	66,235

Annex 6: Age and duration of stay (calendar year) by ecological zone and urban/rural, NPHC 2021

Duration (year)	Calendar Year	Ecological zone			Urban/rural			Total	Total (%)
		Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Urban	Peri-urban	Rural		
0	2021	2.2	56.2	41.5	51.9	29.0	19.1	282,757	3.1
1	2020	3.0	53.4	43.6	51.1	30.0	18.9	567,747	6.2
2	2019	2.8	51.9	45.3	50.7	30.8	18.5	482,030	5.3
3	2018	2.6	50.2	47.2	51.1	31.5	17.3	466,454	5.1
4	2017	2.6	48.8	48.6	49.5	33.0	17.5	440,700	4.8
5	2016	2.4	49.5	48.1	52.5	31.8	15.7	498,181	5.5
6	2015	2.6	48.7	48.7	49.3	33.6	17.1	348,126	3.8
7	2014	2.6	45.8	51.7	47.5	35.0	17.4	308,759	3.4
8	2013	2.6	43.8	53.6	46.5	35.6	17.8	322,798	3.5
9	2012	2.7	42.8	54.4	42.5	37.6	19.9	212,465	2.3
10	2011	2.2	42.4	55.4	48.9	35.8	15.3	488,870	5.4
11	2010	2.6	40.0	57.4	39.9	40.0	20.1	159,804	1.8
12	2009	2.3	40.2	57.5	44.4	38.5	17.1	271,132	3.0
13	2008	2.4	40.0	57.5	42.0	39.0	19.0	186,378	2.0
14	2007	2.5	38.9	58.5	41.0	40.0	19.0	172,343	1.9
15	2006	2.0	41.2	56.8	47.5	37.0	15.5	302,060	3.3
16	2005	2.6	38.2	59.2	39.9	40.6	19.6	164,663	1.8
17	2004	2.5	38.1	59.4	38.6	41.6	19.9	142,693	1.6
18	2003	2.6	39.0	58.3	41.3	39.3	19.4	201,558	2.2
19	2002	2.9	36.5	60.5	34.4	43.1	22.5	111,579	1.2
20	2001	2.3	37.1	60.6	42.5	40.7	16.8	335,084	3.7
21	2000	3.1	35.7	61.2	31.0	44.5	24.5	97,789	1.1
22	1999	2.8	35.3	61.9	33.2	44.9	21.9	140,799	1.5
23	1998	3.2	36.3	60.5	30.5	44.5	25.0	92,586	1.0
24	1997	3.2	34.3	62.5	29.1	46.5	24.4	91,939	1.0
25	1996	2.4	36.5	61.0	38.2	41.9	19.9	179,881	2.0
26	1995	3.0	36.4	60.6	30.6	44.6	24.8	90,329	1.0
27	1994	3.1	35.4	61.5	29.1	45.9	24.9	78,735	0.9
28	1993	2.9	36.5	60.5	31.1	43.8	25.1	105,257	1.2
29	1992	3.4	35.6	61.0	26.1	46.4	27.5	55,429	0.6
30	1991	2.6	34.3	63.1	34.4	44.2	21.4	200,392	2.2
31	1990	3.8	36.9	59.3	25.3	45.9	28.8	47,383	0.5
32	1989	3.4	33.9	62.7	26.2	47.5	26.3	76,475	0.8

Duration (year)	Calendar Year	Ecological zone			Urban/rural			Total	Total (%)
		Mountain	Hill	Tarai	Urban	Peri-urban	Rural		
33	1988	3.3	35.8	60.9	25.7	45.4	28.9	57,284	0.6
34	1987	3.7	34.5	61.9	23.7	47.3	29.0	52,957	0.6
35	1986	2.8	32.2	65.0	28.7	47.1	24.3	110,187	1.2
36	1985	3.5	34.7	61.8	24.1	47.1	28.8	51,531	0.6
37	1984	3.6	33.9	62.5	20.6	49.6	29.8	42,227	0.5
38	1983	3.0	32.9	64.1	22.7	48.4	28.9	66,081	0.7
39	1982	4.0	33.9	62.1	20.3	49.3	30.5	33,086	0.4
40	1981	2.6	28.9	68.5	26.9	49.0	24.0	142,945	1.6
41	1980	4.0	34.5	61.5	20.0	48.6	31.5	28,877	0.3
42	1979	3.1	28.9	68.0	19.9	53.2	26.8	50,423	0.6
43	1978	3.5	32.0	64.5	19.5	50.9	29.6	35,010	0.4
44	1977	3.8	31.8	64.4	19.3	51.2	29.6	31,928	0.4
45	1976	2.9	28.1	69.1	22.1	52.2	25.6	64,310	0.7
46	1975	3.4	32.1	64.6	19.0	51.6	29.4	31,965	0.4
47	1974	3.8	33.1	63.1	18.3	51.1	30.6	24,592	0.3
48	1973	3.4	32.4	64.2	20.0	50.3	29.6	34,417	0.4
49	1972	3.5	32.4	64.1	17.2	51.7	31.1	22,316	0.2
50	1971	2.5	26.5	71.0	22.1	53.4	24.4	92,091	1.0
51	1970	3.4	33.3	63.3	17.0	51.9	31.1	20,364	0.2
52	1969	3.3	30.6	66.0	18.1	53.5	28.4	26,114	0.3
53	1968	3.5	32.9	63.6	17.4	52.0	30.7	20,000	0.2
54	1967	3.4	30.3	66.3	16.8	54.5	28.7	22,061	0.2
55	1966	3.4	27.1	69.5	18.9	54.8	26.3	30,564	0.3
56	1965	3.5	31.3	65.2	18.1	52.2	29.6	18,354	0.2
57	1964	4.0	32.9	63.1	17.8	51.7	30.6	14,020	0.2
58	1963	4.2	33.7	62.0	18.9	49.9	31.2	15,639	0.2
59	1962	5.0	39.0	56.0	17.5	47.4	35.1	9,616	0.1
60+								1,02,079	1.1
NS								1,58,323	1.7
Total								91,32,536	100.0

Annex 7: Net-migration rate (recent) and population growth by district, NPHC 2021

Net migration gain and population gain			Net migration loss and population gain			Net migration loss and population loss		
District	**NMR**	**PGR**	**District**	**NMR**	**PGR**	**District**	**NMR**	**PGR**
Bhaktapur	16.5	3.35	Rautahat	-1.3	1.63	Darchula	-4.9	0.00
Lalitpur	12.3	1.58	Mugu	-2.7	1.49	Sankhuwasabha	-7.6	-0.04
Kathmandu	8.7	1.51	Dolpa	-1.7	1.47	Tanahu	-2.9	-0.06
Kaski	7.0	1.90	Siraha	-0.9	1.43	Solukhumbu	-7.5	-0.09
Chitawan	5.9	2.07	Dhanusha	-0.3	1.34	Salyan	-5.2	-0.16
Rupandehi	5.0	2.33	Mahottari	-0.9	1.14	Dadeldhura	-3.9	-0.17
Nawalparasi (East)	4.7	1.86	Sarlahi	-1.5	1.09	Bajhang	-4.5	-0.30
Mustang	4.1	0.69	Bara	-1.7	1.00	Dhading	-6.8	-0.30
Jhapa	3.6	1.97	Makwanpur	-0.8	0.99	Doti	-5.7	-0.32
Banke	3.6	1.97	Saptari	-1.5	0.96	Baitadi	-6.0	-0.34
Kailali	3.6	1.48	Jajarkot	-3.8	0.96	Dailekh	-7.3	-0.35
Surkhet	3.1	1.62	Parsa	-0.6	0.82	Ilam	-4.1	-0.36
Kanchanpur	3.1	1.25	Humla	-4.4	0.82	Kavrepalanchok	-3.5	-0.46
Sunsari	3.0	1.86	Jumla	-3.9	0.80	Nuwakot	-6.6	-0.50
Dang	2.6	1.92	Bardiya	-0.4	0.72	Taplejung	-15.9	-0.53
Morang	2.2	1.66	Rasuwa	-5.8	0.72	Okhaldhunga	-10.0	-0.56
Nawalparasi (West)	1.4	1.47	Rukum (West)	-1.1	0.68	Myagdi	-7.4	-0.57
Kapilbastu	1.3	1.70	Udayapur	-2.2	0.68	Palpa	-6.7	-0.61
Mustang	1.6	0.69	Rukum (East)	-7.7	0.63	Lamjung	-6.6	-0.70
			Kalikot	-4.8	0.57	Baglung	-8.1	-0.72
			Rolpa	-4.5	0.43	Dolakha	-7.9	-0.74
			Bajura	-3.8	0.25	Gorkha	-8.7	-0.74
Net migration gain and population loss			Pyuthan	-4.8	0.16	Dhankuta	-6.2	-0.78
Manang	3.5	-1.39	Sindhuli	-4.2	0.12	Sindhupalchok	-8.1	-0.88
						Panchthar	-9.7	-1.02
						Arghakhanchi	-10.0	-1.05
						Parbat	-9.9	-1.09
						Achham	-6.5	-1.13
						Gulmi	-9.5	-1.23
						Syangja	-10.6	-1.28

Net migration gain and population gain			Net migration loss and population gain			Net migration loss and population loss		
District	NMR	PGR	District	NMR	PGR	District	NMR	PGR
						Tehrathum	-10.7	-1.30
						Bhojpur	-12.8	-1.39
						Khotang	-15.6	-1.56
						Ramechhap	-11.3	-1.67

Annex 8: Recent in-migrants (duration<5 years) and non-migrants by five-year age and sex, NPHC 2021

Age Group	Male		Female		Total recent in-migrants	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
In-migrants						
00-04 Yrs	42,851	2.1	37,470	1.9	80,321	4.0
05-09 Yrs	77,229	3.8	67,083	3.3	144,312	7.2
10-14 Yrs	69,787	3.5	62,525	3.1	132,312	6.6
15-19 Yrs	102,314	5.1	167,925	8.3	270,239	13.4
20-24 Yrs	111,525	5.5	352,135	17.5	463,660	23.0
25-29 Yrs	95,559	4.7	200,940	10.0	296,499	14.7
30-34 Yrs	78,510	3.9	107,316	5.3	185,826	9.2
35-39 Yrs	60,381	3.0	65,692	3.3	126,073	6.3
40-44 Yrs	42,536	2.1	42,411	2.1	84,947	4.2
45-49 Yrs	28,602	1.4	28,864	1.4	57,466	2.9
50-54 Yrs	24,110	1.2	25,539	1.3	49,649	2.5
55-59 Yrs	16,412	0.8	17,870	0.9	34,282	1.7
60-64 Yrs	13,323	0.7	15,934	0.8	29,257	1.5
65-69 Yrs	9,488	0.5	12,215	0.6	21,703	1.1
70-74 Yrs	7,049	0.3	9,549	0.5	16,598	0.8
75-79 Yrs	6,591	0.3	4,592	0.2	11,183	0.6
80-84 Yrs	3,268	0.2	2,519	0.1	5,787	0.3
85+ Yrs	2,618	0.1	1,957	0.1	4,570	0.2
Total	**788,744**	**39.1**	**1,225,945**	**60.9**	**2,014,689**	**100.0**
Non-migrants						
00-04 Yrs	1,247,674	4.6	1,111,288	4.1	2,358,962	8.7
05-09 Yrs	1,366,176	5.0	1,255,939	4.6	2,622,115	9.7
10-14 Yrs	1,426,167	5.3	1,351,386	5.0	2,777,553	10.2

15-19 Yrs	1,392,209	5.1	1,303,956	4.8	2,696,165	9.9
20-24 Yrs	1,189,493	4.4	1,129,907	4.2	2,319,400	8.5
25-29 Yrs	1,026,683	3.8	1,136,167	4.2	2,162,850	8.0
30-34 Yrs	900,466	3.3	1,061,420	3.9	1,961,886	7.2
35-39 Yrs	876,550	3.2	1,038,869	3.8	1,915,419	7.1
40-44 Yrs	785,957	2.9	876,928	3.2	1,662,885	6.1
45-49 Yrs	658,923	2.4	719,651	2.7	1,378,574	5.1
50-54 Yrs	668,384	2.5	695,819	2.6	1,364,203	5.0
55-59 Yrs	521,146	1.9	520,516	1.9	1,041,662	3.8
60-64 Yrs	452,639	1.7	473,708	1.7	926,347	3.4
65-69 Yrs	370,201	1.4	379,714	1.4	749,915	2.8
70-74 Yrs	285,005	1.0	307,767	1.1	592,772	2.2
75-79 Yrs	164,407	0.6	177,613	0.7	342,020	1.3
80-84 Yrs	75,047	0.3	80,722	0.3	155,769	0.6
85+ Yrs	54,271	0.2	67,121	0.2	121,397	0.4
Total	13,461,398	49.6	13,688,491	50.4	27,149,894	100.0

Annex 9: Migrants (recent) by caste/ethnicity and sex, NPHC 2021

Caste/ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kshetri	590,938	21.4	990,759	18.1	1,581,697	19.2
Brahman - Hill	625,594	22.7	929,034	17.0	1,554,628	18.9
Magar	209,686	7.6	374,264	6.9	583,950	7.1
Tamang	194,002	7.0	306,813	5.6	500,815	6.1
Newa (Newar)	167,345	6.1	288,030	5.3	455,375	5.5
Bishwokarma	127,953	4.6	254,438	4.7	382,391	4.7
Tharu	97,602	3.5	278,484	5.1	376,086	4.6
Yadav	39,464	1.4	192,494	3.5	231,958	2.8
Rai	79,786	2.9	132,665	2.4	212,451	2.6
Gurung	74,356	2.7	123,452	2.3	197,808	2.4
Musalman	38,404	1.4	138,543	2.5	176,947	2.2
Pariyar	53,015	1.9	111,567	2.0	164,582	2.0
Thakuri	55,988	2.0	102,325	1.9	158,313	1.9
Yakthung/Limbu	49,791	1.8	98,804	1.8	148,595	1.8
Mijar	30,961	1.1	85,650	1.6	116,611	1.4
Teli	20,497	0.7	70,957	1.3	91,454	1.1
Koiri/Kushwaha	13,928	0.5	55,726	1.0	69,654	0.9
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	6,842	0.3	60,011	1.1	66,853	0.8

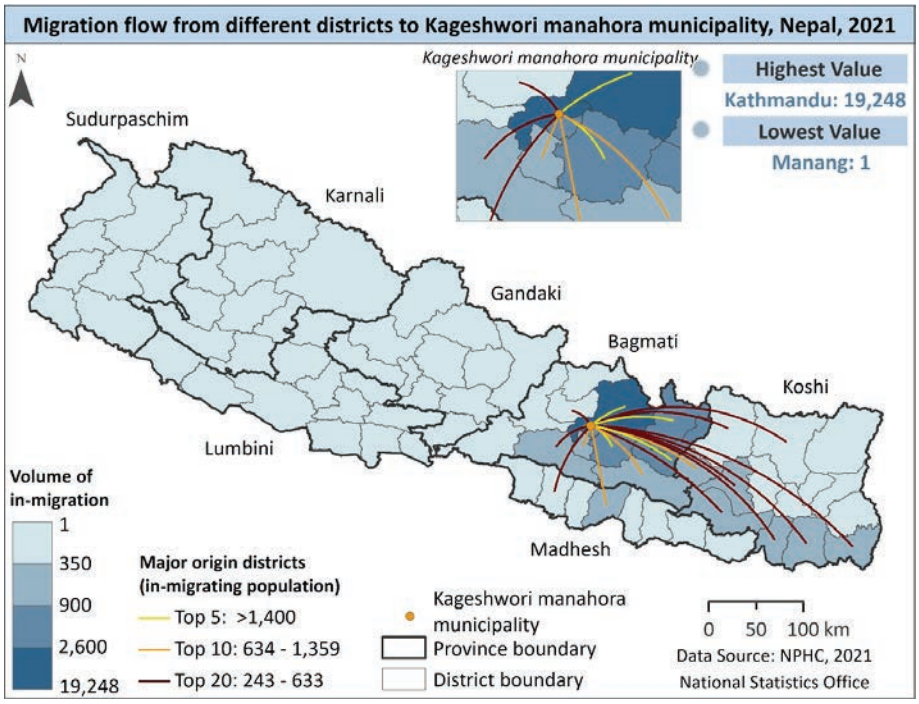
Caste/ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Brahman - Tarai	26,107	1.0	37,958	0.7	64,065	0.8
Sanyasi/Dasnami	19,914	0.7	41,107	0.8	61,021	0.7
Dhanuk	6,668	0.2	41,680	0.8	48,348	0.6
Musahar	4,501	0.2	41,272	0.8	45,773	0.6
Kurmi	6,277	0.2	37,235	0.7	43,512	0.5
Dusadh/Paswan/Pasi	4,639	0.2	34,926	0.6	39,565	0.5
Sherpa	16,045	0.6	23,377	0.4	39,422	0.5
Gharti/Bhujel	11,389	0.4	24,931	0.5	36,320	0.4
Mallah	4,577	0.2	27,843	0.5	32,420	0.4
Kewat	3,592	0.1	27,539	0.5	31,131	0.4
Hajam/Thakur	7,769	0.3	22,435	0.4	30,204	0.4
Kalwar	9,167	0.3	20,582	0.4	29,749	0.4
Kumal	7,486	0.3	20,039	0.4	27,525	0.3
Majhi	8,524	0.3	18,798	0.3	27,322	0.3
Sunda	6,913	0.3	19,707	0.4	26,620	0.3
Sunuwar	9,679	0.4	15,601	0.3	25,280	0.3
Kanu	5,068	0.2	20,192	0.4	25,260	0.3
Khatwe	1,865	0.1	23,386	0.4	25,251	0.3
Rajbansi	6,372	0.2	18,741	0.3	25,113	0.3
Tatma/Tatwa	3,172	0.1	21,449	0.4	24,621	0.3
Lohar	4,682	0.2	15,735	0.3	20,417	0.3
Sonar	6,537	0.2	13,682	0.3	20,219	0.3
Bin	2,117	0.1	15,488	0.3	17,605	0.2
Nuniya	2,193	0.1	14,011	0.3	16,204	0.2
Ranatharu	3,234	0.1	12,754	0.2	15,988	0.2
Kumhar	2,075	0.1	13,864	0.3	15,939	0.2
Danuwar	2,983	0.1	12,736	0.2	15,719	0.2
Dhobi	2,091	0.1	13,336	0.2	15,427	0.2
Haluwai	3,633	0.1	11,375	0.2	15,008	0.2
Bantar/Sardar	1,675	0.1	10,803	0.2	12,478	0.2
Baraee	2,470	0.1	9,285	0.2	11,755	0.1
Chepang/Praja	3,889	0.1	6,544	0.1	10,433	0.1
Santhal	2,964	0.1	7,124	0.1	10,088	0.1
Kayastha	4,413	0.2	5,612	0.1	10,025	0.1
Badhaee/Badhee	1,821	0.1	8,103	0.2	9,924	0.1
Kathabaniyan	2,778	0.1	6,898	0.1	9,676	0.1

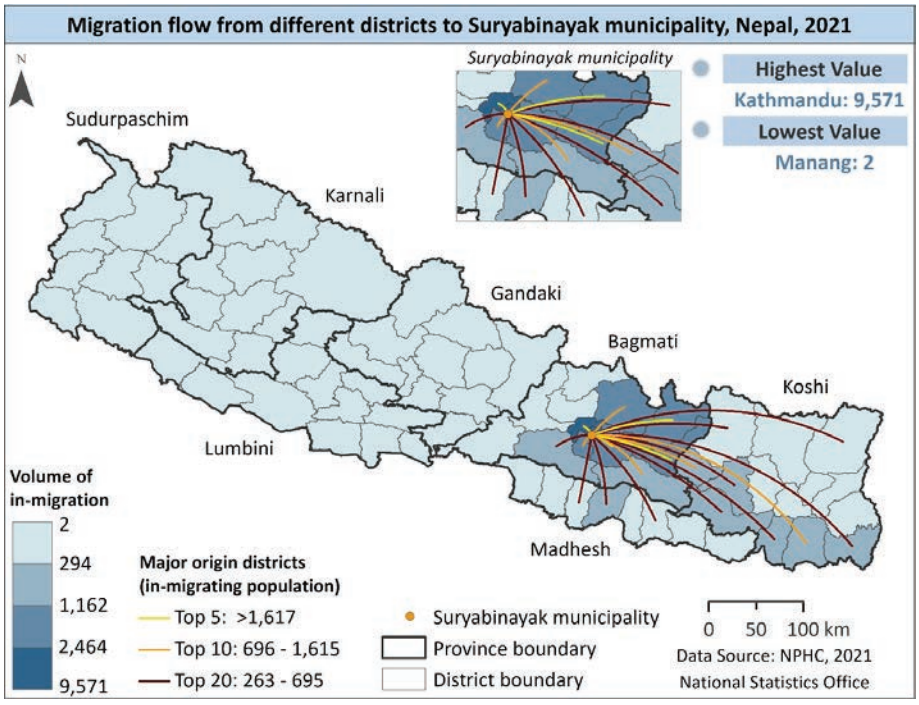
Caste/ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Oraon/Kudukh	1,857	0.1	7,685	0.1	9,542	0.1
Ghale	3,438	0.1	5,657	0.1	9,095	0.1
Rajput	3,317	0.1	5,144	0.1	8,461	0.1
Baniyan	2,609	0.1	5,470	0.1	8,079	0.1
Marwadi	4,160	0.2	3,892	0.1	8,052	0.1
Amat	1,051	0.0	6,740	0.1	7,791	0.1
Bhumihar	2,233	0.1	5,487	0.1	7,720	0.1
Kahar	951	0.0	6,634	0.1	7,585	0.1
Kulung	3,110	0.1	4,091	0.1	7,201	0.1
Dhimal	1,828	0.1	5,094	0.1	6,922	0.1
Bantawa	2,203	0.1	3,860	0.1	6,063	0.1
Gaderi/Bhediyar	757	0.0	5,161	0.1	5,918	0.1
Rauniyar	2,029	0.1	3,887	0.1	5,916	0.1
Thakali	2,320	0.1	3,195	0.1	5,515	0.1
Lodh	435	0.0	5,018	0.1	5,453	0.1
Khawas	1,285	0.1	4,146	0.1	5,431	0.1
Thami	1,917	0.1	3,381	0.1	5,298	0.1
Chamling	2,099	0.1	3,046	0.1	5,145	0.1
Yakkha	1,508	0.1	3,522	0.1	5,030	0.1
Chhantyal/Chhantel	1,762	0.1	2,720	0.1	4,482	0.1
Darai	1,071	0.0	3,409	0.1	4,480	0.1
Gangai	596	0.0	3,668	0.1	4,264	0.1
Tajpuriya	853	0.0	2,884	0.1	3,737	0.1
Rajdhob	768	0.0	2,660	0.1	3,428	0.0
Pun	1,293	0.1	2,087	0.0	3,380	0.0
Rajbhar	390	0.0	2,948	0.1	3,338	0.0
Dom	708	0.0	2,605	0.1	3,313	0.0
Bhote	1,552	0.1	1,677	0.0	3,229	0.0
Mali	477	0.0	2,589	0.1	3,066	0.0
Badi	1,005	0.0	1,904	0.0	2,909	0.0
Hyolmo/Yholmopa	1,192	0.0	1,659	0.0	2,851	0.0
Pahari	754	0.0	1,789	0.0	2,543	0.0
Dev	1,143	0.0	1,325	0.0	2,468	0.0
Kori	360	0.0	2,074	0.0	2,434	0.0
Bote	682	0.0	1,735	0.0	2,417	0.0
Dura	760	0.0	1,384	0.0	2,144	0.0

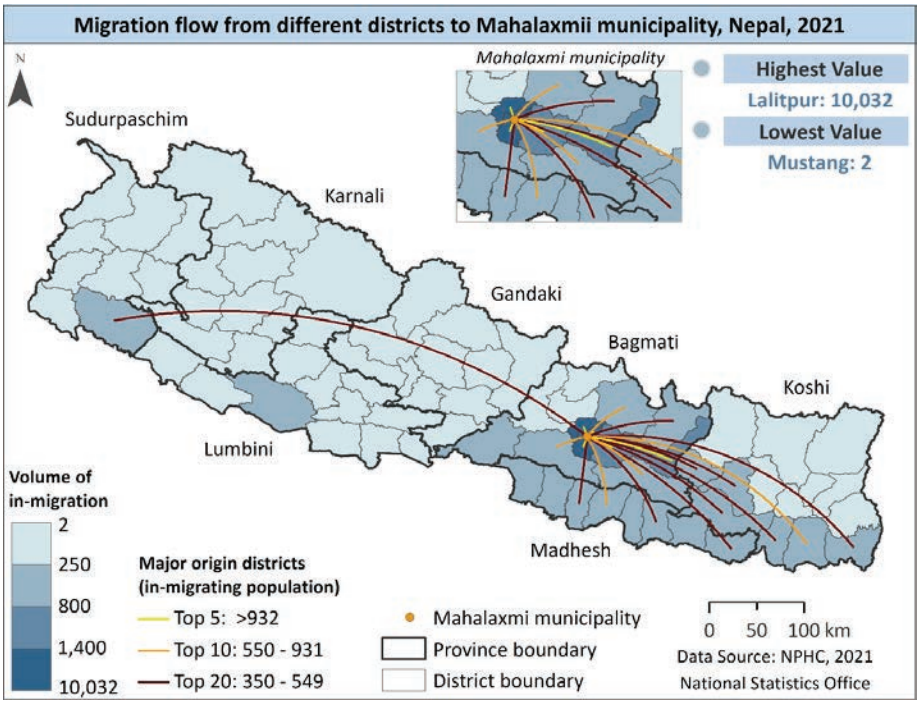
Caste/ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bangali	811	0.0	1,270	0.0	2,081	0.0
Dhunia	211	0.0	1,807	0.0	2,018	0.0
Gaine	650	0.0	1,333	0.0	1,983	0.0
Sampang	781	0.0	1,177	0.0	1,958	0.0
Thulung	669	0.0	1,179	0.0	1,848	0.0
Baram / Baramu	548	0.0	1,144	0.0	1,692	0.0
Yamphu	542	0.0	1,138	0.0	1,680	0.0
Jirel	624	0.0	925	0.0	1,549	0.0
Khaling	534	0.0	940	0.0	1,474	0.0
Gondh/Gond	150	0.0	1,216	0.0	1,366	0.0
Nachhiring	413	0.0	866	0.0	1,279	0.0
Bahing	442	0.0	820	0.0	1,262	0.0
Mewahang	342	0.0	727	0.0	1,069	0.0
Raji	298	0.0	655	0.0	953	0.0
Sarbaria	143	0.0	770	0.0	913	0.0
Chai/Khulaut	139	0.0	687	0.0	826	0.0
Meche	196	0.0	585	0.0	781	0.0
Aathpahariya	164	0.0	580	0.0	744	0.0
Khatik	87	0.0	657	0.0	744	0.0
Munda	157	0.0	559	0.0	716	0.0
Loharung	214	0.0	474	0.0	688	0.0
Lepcha	153	0.0	517	0.0	670	0.0
Byasi/Sauka	295	0.0	359	0.0	654	0.0
Hayu	195	0.0	457	0.0	652	0.0
Kamar	161	0.0	451	0.0	612	0.0
Dhankar/ Dharikar	68	0.0	494	0.0	562	0.0
Kewarat	102	0.0	446	0.0	548	0.0
Patharkatt/ Kushwadiya	179	0.0	306	0.0	485	0.0
Punjabi/Sikh	201	0.0	218	0.0	419	0.0
Dolpo	173	0.0	235	0.0	408	0.0
Beldar	11	0.0	369	0.0	380	0.0
Natuwa	50	0.0	292	0.0	342	0.0
Dhandi	57	0.0	276	0.0	333	0.0
Kalar	110	0.0	186	0.0	296	0.0
Halkhor	60	0.0	211	0.0	271	0.0
Done	39	0.0	179	0.0	218	0.0

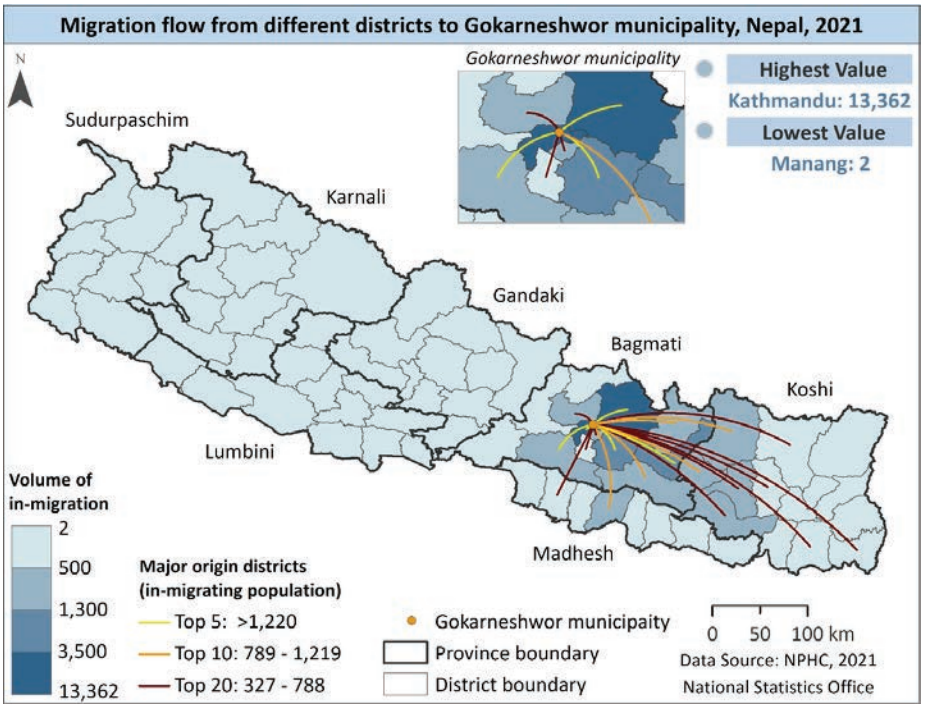
Caste/ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mugal/Mugum	88	0.0	122	0.0	210	0.0
Kisan	80	0.0	124	0.0	204	0.0
Raute	85	0.0	108	0.0	193	0.0
Walung	82	0.0	110	0.0	192	0.0
Chumba/Nubri	89	0.0	90	0.0	179	0.0
Phree	34	0.0	138	0.0	172	0.0
Lhomi	81	0.0	88	0.0	169	0.0
Lhopa	52	0.0	115	0.0	167	0.0
Koche	43	0.0	103	0.0	146	0.0
Surel	43	0.0	68	0.0	111	0.0
Kusunda	44	0.0	54	0.0	98	0.0
Karmarong	36	0.0	60	0.0	96	0.0
Chidimar	30	0.0	64	0.0	94	0.0
Bankariya	33	0.0	57	0.0	90	0.0
Topkegola	18	0.0	60	0.0	78	0.0
Nurang	2	0.0	3	0.0	5	0.0
Others	320	0.0	607	0.0	927	0.0
Total native population	2,761,033	100.0	5,466,867	100.0	8,227,900	100.0
Foreigner	6,070	0.2	4,089	0.1	10,159	0.1
Not stated	780	0.0	750	0.0	1,530	0.0

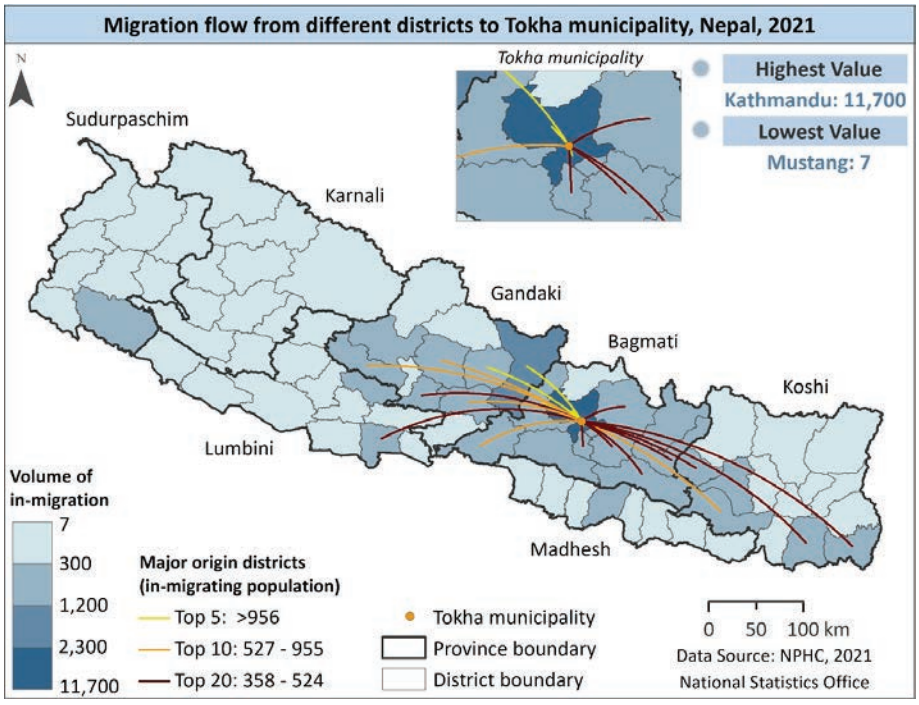
ANNEXES II: MAPS

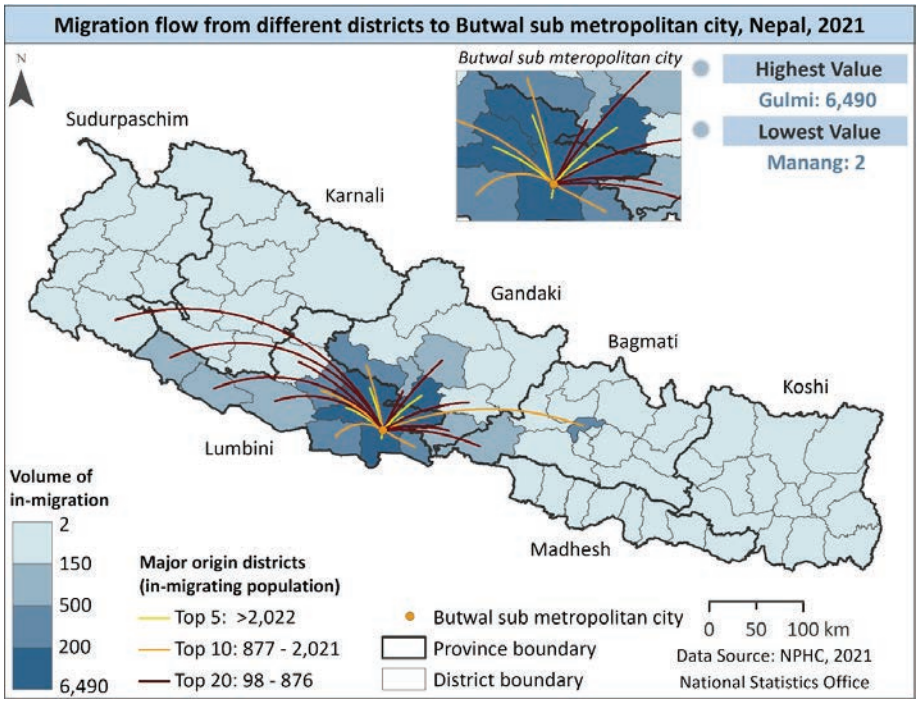


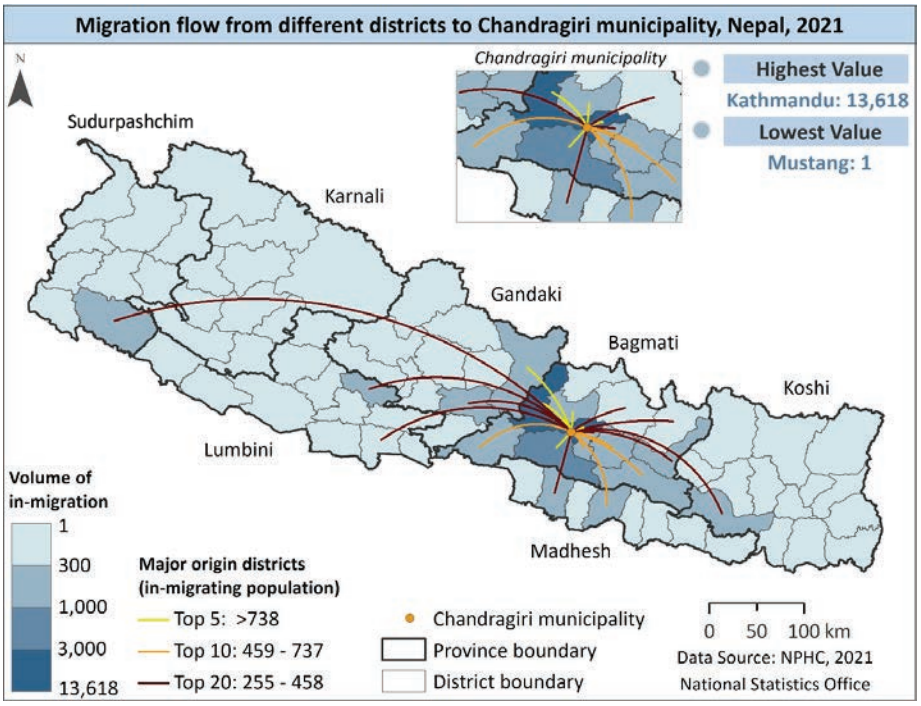


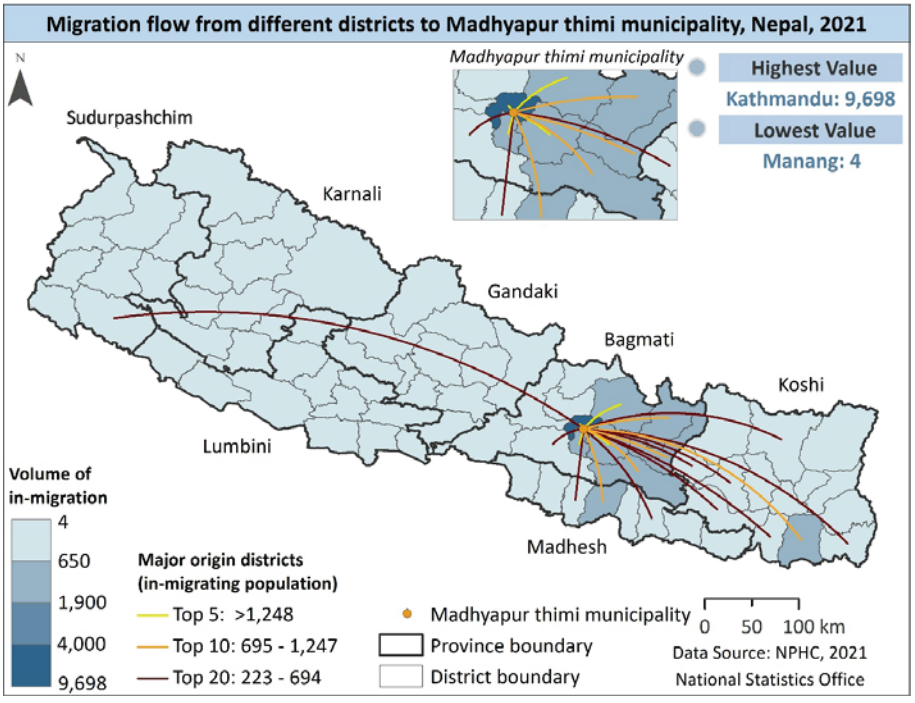

Migration flow from different districts to Mahalaxmii municipality, Nepal, 2021
Mahalaxmi municipality
Highest Value
Lalitpur: 10,032
Lowest Value
Mustang: 2
Sudurpaschim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
2
250
800
1,400
10,032
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >932
Top 10: 550 - 931
Top 20: 350 - 549
Mahalaxmi municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

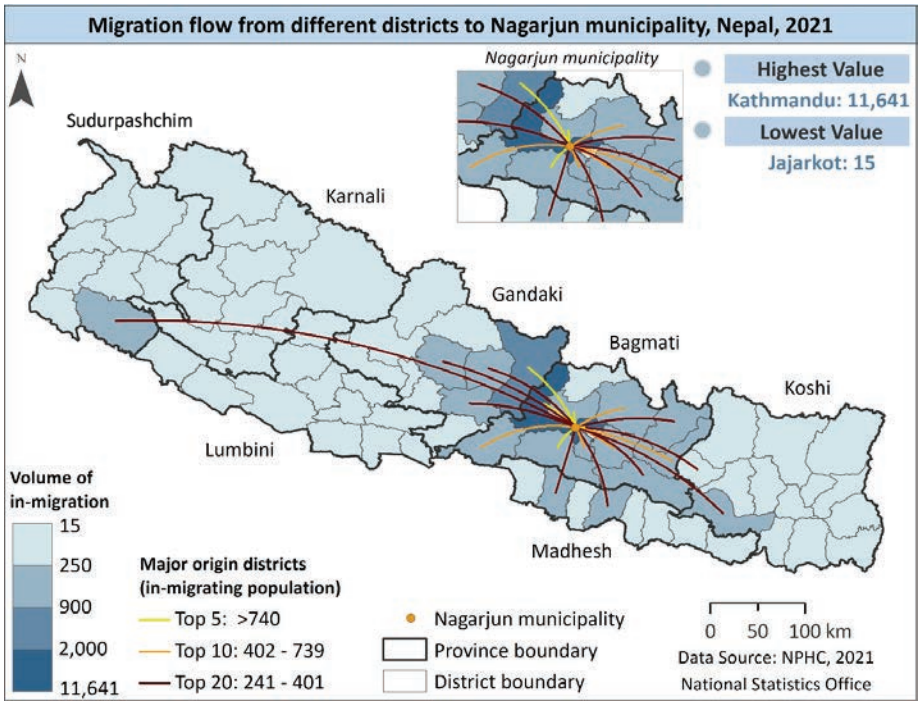

Migration flow from different districts to Gokarneshwor municipality, Nepal, 2021
Gokarneshwor municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 13,362
Lowest Value
Manang: 2
Sudurpaschim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
2
500
1,300
3,500
13,362
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >1,220
Top 10: 789 - 1,219
Top 20: 327 - 788
Gokarneshwor municipaity
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

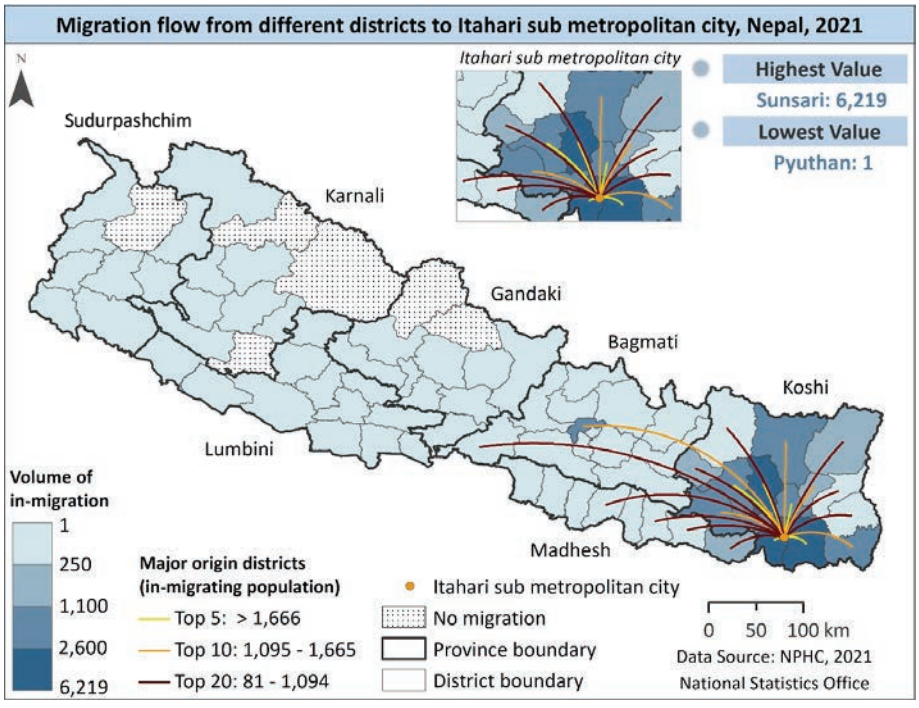

Migration flow from different districts to Tokha municipality, Nepal, 2021
N
Tokha municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 11,700
Lowest Value
Mustang: 7
Sudurpaschim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
7
300
1,200
2,300
11,700
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >956
Top 10: 527 - 955
Top 20: 358 - 524
Tokha municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

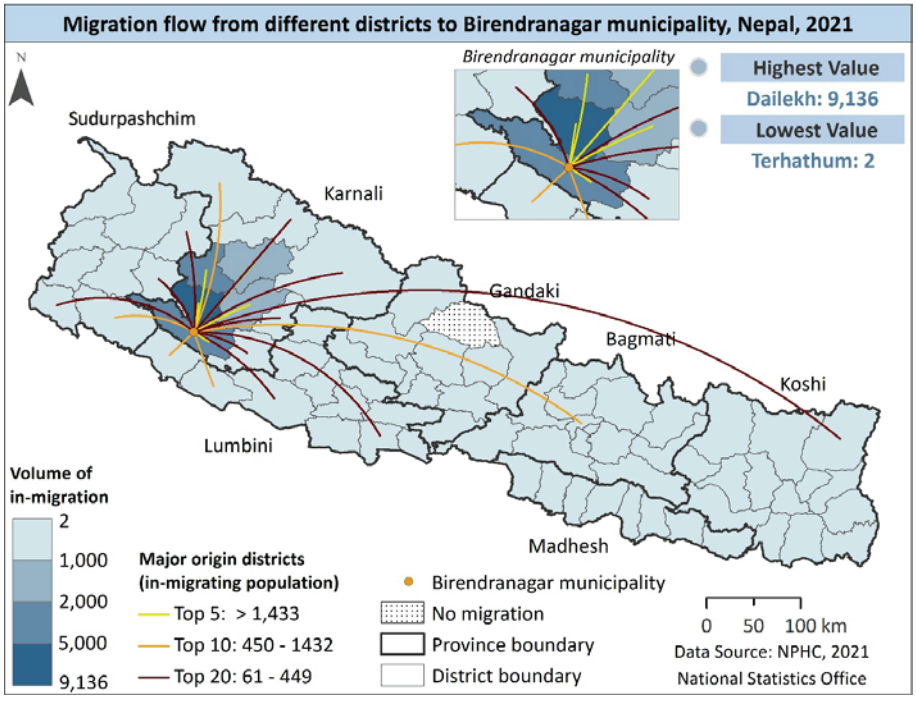

Migration flow from different districts to Butwal sub metropolitan city, Nepal, 2021
N
Butwal sub mteropolitan city
Highest Value
Gulmi: 6,490
Lowest Value
Manang: 2
Sudurpaschim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
2
150
500
200
6,490
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >2,022
Top 10: 877 - 2,021
Top 20: 98 - 876
Butwal sub metropolitan city
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

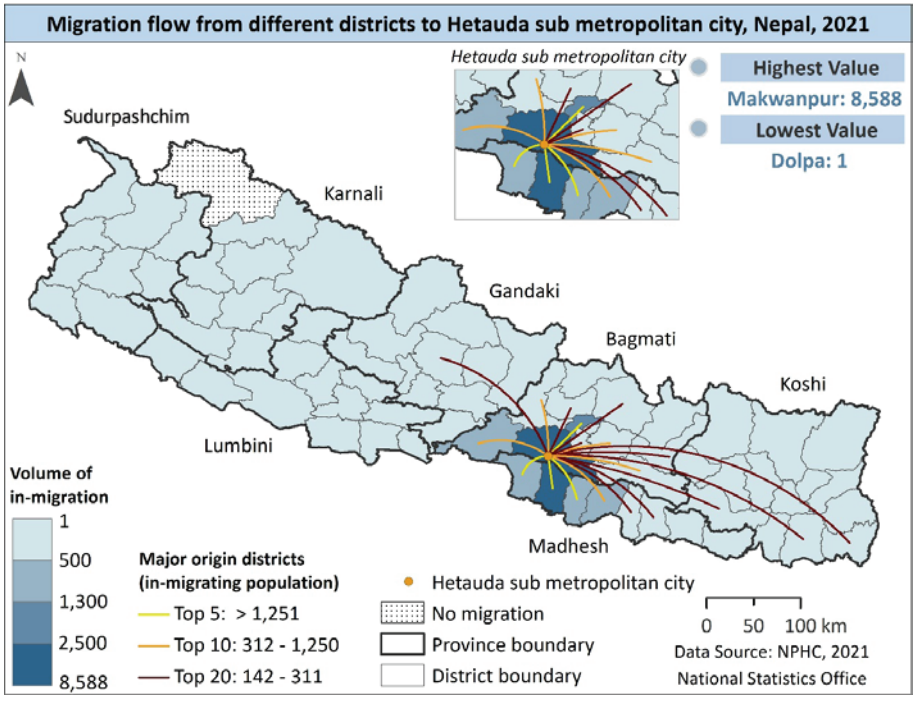

Migration flow from different districts to Chandragiri municipality, Nepal, 2021
Chandragiri municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 13,618
Lowest Value
Mustang: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
300
1,000
3,000
13,618
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >738
Top 10: 459 - 737
Top 20: 255 - 458
Chandragiri municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

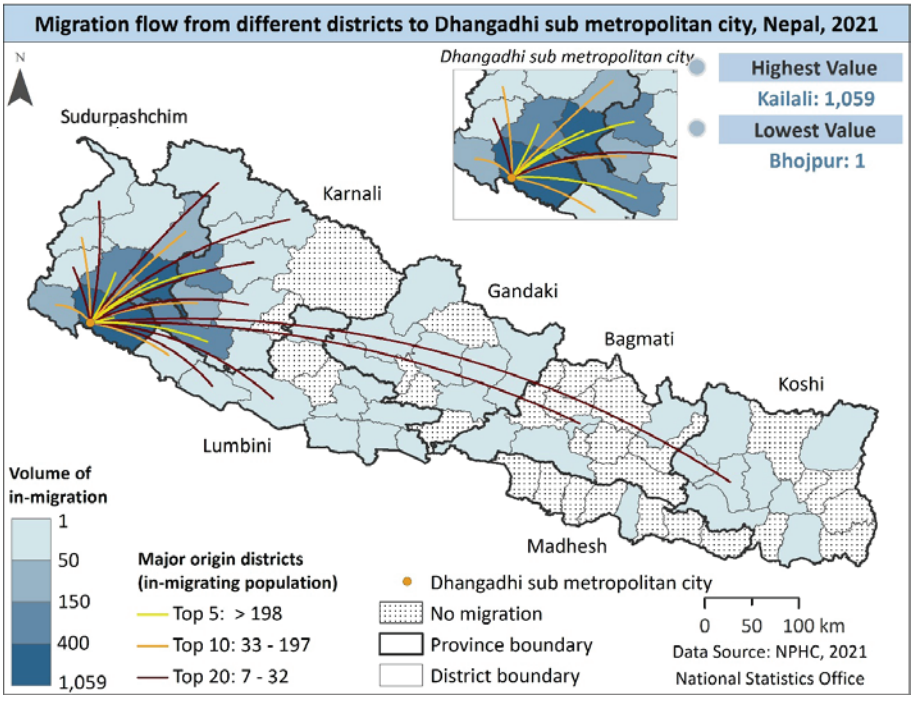

Migration flow from different districts to Madhyapur thimi municipality, Nepal, 2021
Madhyapur thimi municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 9,698
Lowest Value
Manang: 4
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
4
650
1,900
4,000
9,698
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >1,248
Top 10: 695 - 1,247
Top 20: 223 - 694
Madhyapur thimi municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

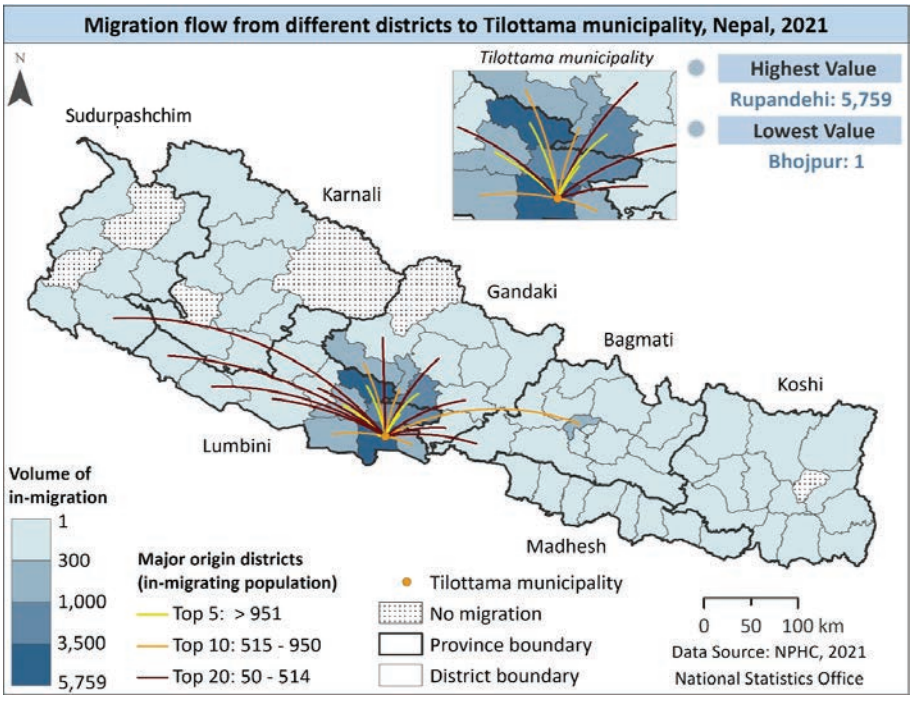

Migration flow from different districts to Nagarjun municipality, Nepal, 2021
N
Nagarjun municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 11,641
Lowest Value
Jajarkot: 15
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
15
250
900
2,000
11,641
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >740
Top 10: 402 - 739
Top 20: 241 - 401
Nagarjun municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

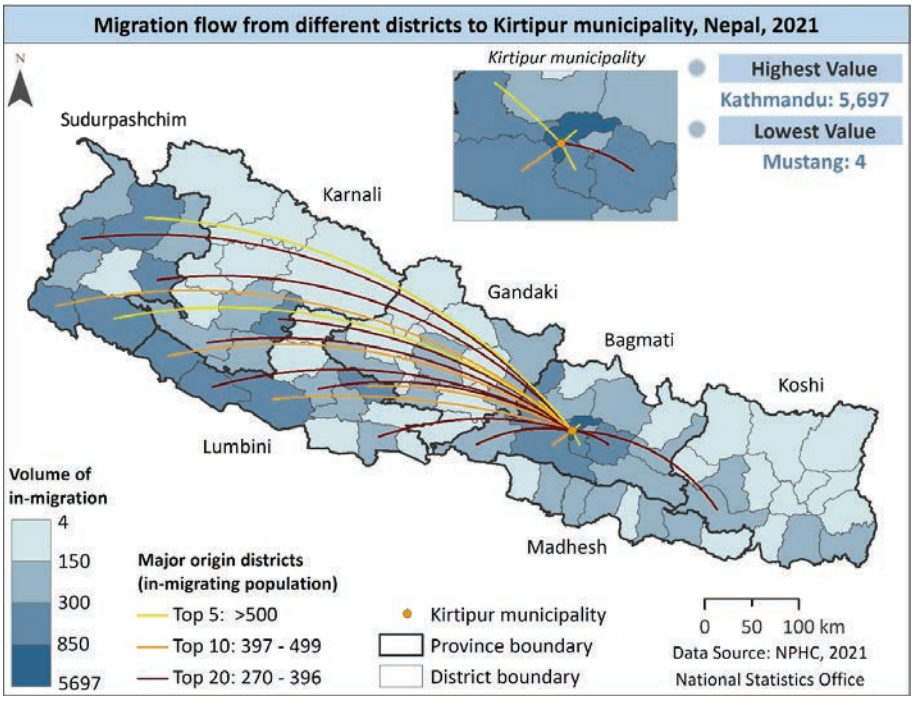

Migration flow from different districts to Itahari sub metropolitan city, Nepal, 2021
N
Itahari sub metropolitan city
Highest Value
Sunsari: 6,219
Lowest Value
Pyuthan: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
250
1,100
2,600
6,219
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 1,666
Top 10: 1,095 - 1,665
Top 20: 81 - 1,094
Itahari sub metropolitan city
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office

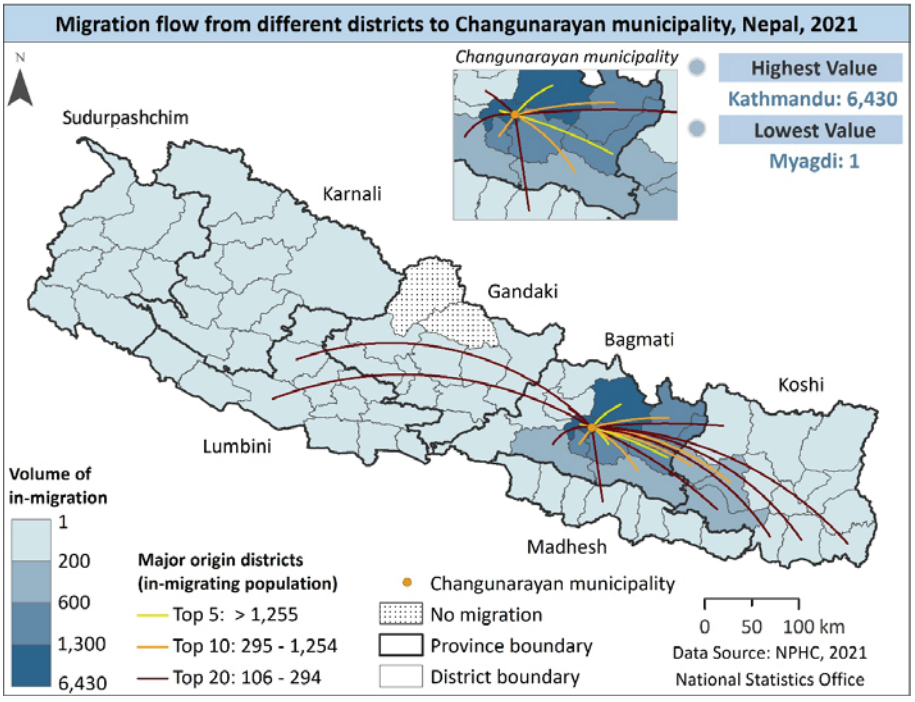

Migration flow from different districts to Birendranagar municipality, Nepal, 2021
Birendranagar municipality
Highest Value
Dailekh: 9,136
Lowest Value
Terhathum: 2
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
2
1,000
2,000
5,000
9,136
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 1,433
Top 10: 450 - 1432
Top 20: 61 - 449
Birendranagar municipality
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office


Migration flow from different districts to Hetauda sub metropolitan city, Nepal, 2021
Hetauda sub metropolitan city
Highest Value
Makwanpur: 8,588
Lowest Value
Dolpa: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
500
1,300
2,500
8,588
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 1,251
Top 10: 312 - 1,250
Top 20: 142 - 311
Hetauda sub metropolitan city
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office


Migration flow from different districts to Dhangadhi sub metropolitan city, Nepal, 2021
Dhangadhi sub metropolitan city
Highest Value
Kailali: 1,059
Lowest Value
Bhojpur: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
50
150
400
1,059
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 198
Top 10: 33 - 197
Top 20: 7 - 32
Dhangadhi sub metropolitan city
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office


Migration flow from different districts to Tilottama municipality, Nepal, 2021
Tilottama municipality
Highest Value
Rupandehi: 5,759
Lowest Value
Bhojpur: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
300
1,000
3,500
5,759
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 951
Top 10: 515 - 950
Top 20: 50 - 514
Tilottama municipality
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office


Migration flow from different districts to Kirtipur municipality, Nepal, 2021
N
Kirtipur municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 5,697
Lowest Value
Mustang: 4
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
4
150
300
850
5697
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: >500
Top 10: 397 - 499
Top 20: 270 - 396
Kirtipur municipality
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
National Statistics Office


Migration flow from different districts to Changunarayan municipality, Nepal, 2021
N
Changunarayan municipality
Highest Value
Kathmandu: 6,430
Lowest Value
Myagdi: 1
Sudurpashchim
Karnali
Gandaki
Bagmati
Koshi
Lumbini
Madhesh
Volume of in-migration
1
200
600
1,300
6,430
Major origin districts (in-migrating population)
Top 5: > 1,255
Top 10: 295 - 1,254
Top 20: 106 - 294
Changunarayan municipality
No migration
Province boundary
District boundary
0 50 100 km
Data Source: NPHC, 2021
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