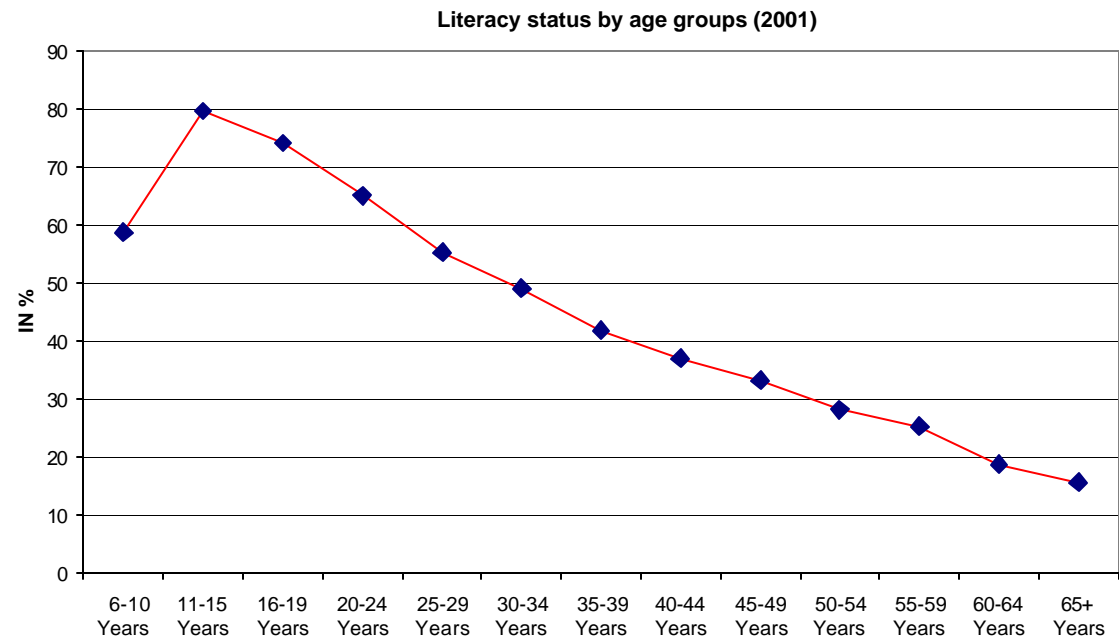


LITERACY SITUATION IN NEPAL

A Thematic Presentation



Ministry of Education
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PREFACE

For the past few decades, Nepal has made various attempts to improve literacy situation across the country. However, the progress toward promoting universal literacy has been less than satisfactory. In this connection, it is necessary to make periodic assessment of literacy situation in the country. This study is undertaken to present an analysis of literacy situation in Nepal on the basis of 2001 census data. It is anticipated that this analysis will serve as a basis for further policy and programmatic development toward promoting literacy in under-served areas and among disadvantaged groups.

The study team is grateful to Non-Formal Education Centre/MoES and DANIDA/PAT for entrusting us to undertake this study. We are particularly thankful to Mr. Satya Bahadur Shrestha and Mr. Hari Bol Khanal of NFEC/MoEs and to Mr. Karsten Jensen, Mr. Ivan Arnbjerg and Mr. Jeet Bahadur Thapa of DANIDA/PAT for their support and helpful suggestions during the course of this study. We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Gambhir Tandhukar and Miss Sunita Shakya for their technical assistance.

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G. M. Shrestha

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The 2001 Census data contain rich data on literacy status of different age and population groups in Nepal. Estimation of literacy status by geographic location and other characteristics provide baseline data for planning of educational programmes, particularly NFE, at the central, Regional, District and sub-district levels. Hence, an analysis of literacy data of the 2001 census is proposed for preparing a thematic presentation on literacy status of Nepal in 2001 with implications for educational planning and programme.

1.2 Objectives

Specific objectives of this thematic presentation on literacy situation in Nepal are to:

- a) assess the spatial distribution of literacy in Nepal; including the literacy status of VDCs and municipalities;
- b) analyse literacy status of different age groups;
- c) identify gender gap in literacy status;
- d) assess literacy status of major population groups;
- e) examine the relationship between efficiency of primary education and literacy; and
- f) draw implication for educational planning and programming.

1.3 Procedure

Definition of Literacy. The definition of literacy for this situation analysis was adopted from the 2001 Census. The 2001 Census defines a literate person as one "who can read and write".

Development of Analytical Framework. In line with the objectives were specifically designed to portray literacy status of different age and population groups and its distribution across the country as well as in different eco zones. Data were obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistic and processed through EXCEL and SPSS utilizing various analytical frameworks.

GIS Presentation. In order to make a visual and easy-to-understand presentation, GIS colour presentation has been made of the literacy status of different districts, eco zones, and different age groups.

Synthesis and Implications. A synthesis of major findings and trends has been made before drawing implications for educational planning and programming.

1.4 Organization of Report

This study report is organized in the following manner:

- Section II presents an overall literacy status and its distribution across the country and in different eco zones as well as inter-census literacy gains;
- Section III contains the literacy status of VDCs and municipalities;
- Section IV portrays the literacy status of different age groups;
- Section V examines gender gaps in literacy;
- Section VI assesses literacy status of major population groups and ethnic minorities;
- Section VII indicates correlation of efficiency of primary education with literacy status; and
- Section VIII attempts to synthesize major findings and draw implications for educational planning and programming

2. LITERACY DISTRIBUTION IN NEPAL

2.1 District Literacy Status

Out of the total 6+ years population of 19, 255, 808, 10, 348, 432, that is, 53.7 percent are found to be literate in 2001. The proportion of literate population (6+ years) ranges from a low percentage of 26.6 in Humla to a high of 77.1 percent in Kathmandu (See Table 2.1).

On the basis of the literacy status, districts are classified into three categories, namely,

- Green** - High level literacy status districts with more than 60 percent of its 6+ years people literate;
- Yellow** - Middle level literacy status districts with 45 percent to 60 percent of its 6+ years people literate; and
- Red** - Low level literacy status districts with 25 percent to 44 percent of its 6+ years people literate.

The classification of districts in terms of their literacy status in 2001 is presented in Fig. 2.1

Table 2.1 Spatial distribution of literacy as reflected in district 6+ years literacy status in Nepal in 2001

High Level Literacy Status (> 60%)		Middle Level Literacy Status (45% to 60%)			Low Level Literacy Status (25% to 44%)		
Sunsari	60.4	Bardiya	45.4	Panchthar	55.3	Humla	26.6
Baglung	61.4	Solukhumbu	45.8	Myagdi	55.7	Mugu*	27.8
Tanahu	61.7	Pyuthan	46.6	Arghakhanchi	55.9	Jumla*	32.4
Surkhet*	62.5	Dilekh	47.4	Lamjung	56.6	Rautahat	32.5
Makwanpur	63.2	Salyan*	48.1	Morang	56.7	Achham	33.4
Kavre	63.7	Dhanusa	48.4	Parbat	56.8	Bajura	33.7
Dhankuta	64.0	Okhaldhunga	49.1	Banke	57.4	Rasuwa	34.0
Rupandehi	66.0	Saptari	49.3	Gulmi	57.5	Mahottari	34.4
Palpa	66.0	Darchaula	49.4	Dang	57.7	Dolpa*	34.7
Ilam	66.2	Khotang	49.9	Terhathum	59.0	Bajhang	35.3
Syangja	66.3	Sindhuli*	50.1	Kanchanpur	59.7	Sarlahi	36.2
Jhapa*	66.9	Dolakha*	50.6	Manang	59.9	Rolpa	37.2
Bhaktapur	70.3	Nuwakot	51.2	(35 districts)		Kalikot*	37.5
Chitawan	70.8	Baitadi	51.5			Ramechhap	39.0
Lalitpur	70.8	Dadeldhura	51.6			Jajarkot	39.4
Kaski	71.9	Mustang	51.8			Rukum	39.7
Kathmandu	77.1	Kailali	52.1			Sindhupalchok*	40.2
(17 districts)		Taplejung	52.2			Siraha*	40.3
		Nawalparasi	53.0			Kapilbastu	41.5
		Udayapur	53.3			Bara	42.4
		Sankhuwasabha	53.8			Parsa	42.4
		Gorkha	53.9			Doti	42.6
		Bhojpur	54.5			Dhading	43.5
						(23districts)	

* Districts where census taking was disturbed in different parts of the districts.

Not only the literacy status of Nepal is low, 53.7 percent literate, Table 2.1 also reveals that only about 23% of 75 districts have achieved a literacy status above sixty percent. None of the district have achieved a literacy status of 80 percent or more.

Figure 2.1 reveals pockets of low, middle and high literacy status districts. Low literacy districts are concentrated mainly in Far western and Mid-western Mountain and Hill districts as well as in Central Terai districts. High literacy status districts are concentrated in Central and Western Hills with a few districts in Eastern Terai.

2.2 Literacy Status of 15+ Years

The literacy status of 15+ years population by district is presented in Table 2.2. 15+ years literacy percentage ranges from about 19 percent in Humla to about 73 percent in Kathmandu.

Districts are classified into 3 categories in terms of 15+ years literacy status, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status districts with more than 50 percent of its 15+ years people literate;
- Yellow** - Middle level literacy status districts with 38 percent to 49 percent of 15+ years people literate; and
- Red** - Low level literacy status districts with less than 38 percent 15+ years people literate.

The classification of districts in terms of 15+ years people literacy percentage is presented in Fig. 2.2.

Table. 2.2 Spatial distribution of literacy as reflected in district 15+ years literacy status in Nepal, 2001

High Level Literacy Status (> 50%)		Medium Level Literacy Status (38% to 49%)		Low Level Literacy Status (< 38%)	
Gulmi	50.45	Parsa	38.02	Humla	19.66
Parbat	51.68	Pyuthan	38.05	Mugu*	23.66
Manang	51.89	Baitadi	38.76	Rautahat	24.57
Dhankuta	51.94	Kailali	38.91	Rasuwa	25.11
Tanahu	52.11	Solukhumbu	39.04	Achham	25.94
Morang	52.42	Banke	39.47	Mahottari	26.74
Palpa	53.72	Dadeldhura	39.50	Bajura	27.01
Terhathum	54.05	Salyan*	39.94	Jumla*	27.10
Syangja	54.29	Gorkha	40.31	Sarlahi	27.26
Ilam	55.99	Darchaula	41.16	Jajarkot	28.05
Chitawan	58.48	Bardiya	41.26	Dolpa*	28.33
Jhapa*	58.77	Okhaldhunga	41.83	Siraha*	28.90
Bhaktapur	62.96	Makwanpur	42.85	Bajhang	29.07
Kaski	64.53	Udayapur	43.29	Rukum	30.08
Lalitpur	66.84	Khotang	43.50	Dhanusa	30.79
Kathmandu	73.73	Sankhuwasabha	43.70	Bara	30.80
		Dang	44.48	Doti	30.96
(16 Districts)		Kavre	44.80	Kalikot*	30.99
		Kanchanpur	45.06	Rolpa	31.24
		Bhojpur	46.55	Sindhupalchok*	31.26
		Nawalparasi	46.77	Ramechhap	31.41
		Surkhet*	46.90	Kapilbastu	32.53
		Mustang	46.94	Dhading	34.04
		Rupandehi	47.88	Sindhuli*	34.40
		Arghakhanchi	47.90	Saptari	34.67
		Taplejung	48.06	Dailekh	34.70
		Myagdi	48.48	Nuwakot	34.87
		Baglung	48.75	Dolakha*	37.03
		Lamjung	49.63		
		Sunsari	49.84		
		Panchthar	49.98		
		(31 Districts)		(28 Districts)	

The average literacy level of 15+ years is 44 percent, 10 percent lower than that of 6+ years population. The literacy status of 15+ years population presents a very dismal picture. There are only 4 districts, i.e., Kathmandu Valley and Kaski, with a literacy status of more than 60 percent. A large number of districts (36) have a literacy status of less than 40 percent

As in the case of 6+ literacy distribution in the country, Mid-western and Far -western Hill and Mountain as well as Central Terai have a large concentration of 15+ years low literacy level districts. The Western Region appears to be in a relatively better position with respect to 15+ years literacy level.

2.3 Inter-Census Literacy Gains (1991 to 2001)

In 1991 the literacy percent of 6+ was 39.6. The literacy percent of 6+ years is 53.7 in 2001. On the whole, the percentage of literate population (6+ years) increased by 14 percent from 1991 to 2001. The inter-Census literacy gains by districts range from a low of 3.3 percentage points in Mustang to a high of 26.1 percent in Rupandehi. (See Table 2.3).

The classification of districts by inter-Census literacy gains is made into 3 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy gains districts with more than 16 percent literacy gains.
- Yellow** - Moderate literacy gains districts with 10 percent to 15 percent literacy gains points; and
- Red** - Low literacy gains districts with less than 10 percent literacy gains.

The classification of districts with different inter-Census literacy gains is presented in Fig. 2.3.

Table 2.3 Inter-census literacy gains (1991 to 2001)

High Literacy Gains (> 16%)		Moderate Literacy Gains (10% to 15%)				Low Literacy Gains (< 10%)	
Bardiya	16.2	Achham	10.0	Doti	14.2	Mustang	3.3
Dolakha*	16.2	Parsa	10.1	Bara	14.5	Terhathum	3.6
Baitadi	16.2	Sarlahi	10.4	Saptari	14.6	Parbat	5.1
Myagdi	16.3	Okhaldhunga	10.5	Dhankuta	15.0	Sankhuwasabha	5.7
Manang	17.0	Gorkha	10.5	Kaski	15.1	Mugu*	6.1
Sindhuli*	17.5	Jhapa*	10.8	Syangja	15.2	Taplejung	6.3
Chitawan	17.9	Gulmi	10.8	Udayapur	15.3	Humla	7.1
Dilekh	18.0	Sindhupalchok*	10.9	Dadeldhura	15.5	Jumla*	7.2
Palpa	18.0	Rukum	11.0	Jajarkot	15.9	Solukhumbu	7.3
Dang	18.0	Rasuwa	11.1	Sunsari	15.9	Kathmandu	7.4
Kalikot*	18.1	Dhading	11.5	(32 districts)		Bajhang	7.9
Dhanusa	18.4	Dolpa*	11.5			Morang	8.1
Salyan*	18.6	Siraha*	11.6			Darchaula	8.5
Kanchanpur	19.1	Panchthar	11.7			Lalitpur	8.5
Nuwakot	19.8	Tanahu	11.7			Mahottari	8.7
Surkhet*	20.0	Bhaktapur	11.8			Bajura	8.8
Baglung	20.9	Kapilbastu	12.9			Rautahat	9.0
Kailali	22.0	Arghakhanchi	12.9			Ramechhap	9.1
Banke	23.0	Bhojpur	13.0			Rolpa	9.7
Kavre	24.5	Ilam	13.9			Lamjung	9.8
Makwanpur	24.8	Nawalparasi	14.0			Khotang	9.9
Rupandehi	26.1	Pyuthan	14.0			(21 districts)	
(22 districts)							

The literacy gain of 6+ years population by 14 percent in ten years, from 1991 to 2001, may not be considered an impressive one. Moreover, 21 districts have achieved low literacy gain of less than 10 percent. An analysis of inter-census literacy gains by districts reveals that Far western and Western Terai Districts, in general, have achieved a high level of inter-census literacy gain. This is a satisfactory achievement. However, it is discouraging to note that Far western and Eastern Mountain districts have failed to gain an acceptable level of literacy during the ten-year period, 1991 to 2001.

2.4 Literacy Status by Eco Zones

In order to indicate a clear location of illiteracy pockets of 6+ years population in different parts of the country, an assessment of literacy status by eco zones is presented in Table 2.4.

Overall, the Hill zone is characterized by a high literacy status whereas the Mountain zone is characterized by a low literacy status. The Terai zone is characterized by a middle literacy status.

Ecological zones are classified into three categories in term of literacy status, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status eco zones with more than 55 percent literacy rate (6+ years)
- Yellow** - Moderate literacy status eco zones with 45 percent to 54 percent literacy rate
- Red** - Low literacy status eco zones with less than 45 percent literacy rate

The classification of ecological zones by literacy status is presented in Fig. 2.4.

Table 2.4 Literacy status by eco zones

Literacy Status					
High (> 55%)		Middle (45-54%)		Low (<45%)	
Total Hill	58.32	Total Terai	50.98	Total Mountain	43.18
Western Terai	55.12	Mid Western Hill	46.86	Mid Western Mountain	30.87
Eastern Hill	56.59	Eastern Mountain	51.10	Far Western Mountain	39.37
Western Hill	61.50	Mid Western Terai	53.76	Central Terai	43.49
Central Hill	63.66	Far Western Terai	54.94	Central Mountain	43.24
Kathmandu Valley	74.85	Western Mountain	54.99	Far Western Hill	44.03
Eastern Terai	55.38				

In general, the Hill Region is characterized by a high literacy status whereas the Mountain Region has a low literacy status.

The relative literacy status of different eco zones is further substantiated by the total member of high, middle and low literacy level districts in the mountains, the hills, and the Terai (See in Table 2.5)

Table 2.5 Total member of high, middle and low literacy level districts in different eco zones

Eco Zone	Literacy Level		
	High	Middle	Low
Mountain	-	5	11
Kathmandu Valley	3	-	-
Hill	10	14	12
Terai	4	6	10
Total	17	25	33

2.5 Observations on Literacy Distribution in Nepal

- A little more than half of the 6+ years population are literate in Nepal in 2001, which indicates a low literacy status for the country.
- The literacy status of 15+ years of population is even lower, that is, 44 percent.
- The literacy distribution in Nepal reveals a district regional and ecological variation.
 - Low literacy districts are concentrated mainly in Far western and Mid-western Mountain and Hill districts as well as in Central Terai districts.
 - The Hill Region of 6+ years population in general is characterized by a high literacy status and the Mountain Region by a low literacy status.
- The inter-Census literacy gain from 1991 to 2001 is 14 percent.
- Far-western and Western Terai districts have achieved a high level of inter-census literacy gains.
- Far-western and Eastern Mountain districts have failed to gain acceptable literacy gain during the ten years period 1991 to 2001.

3. LITERACY STATUS OF VDCs AND MUNICIPALITY

3.1 Literacy Status of VDCs

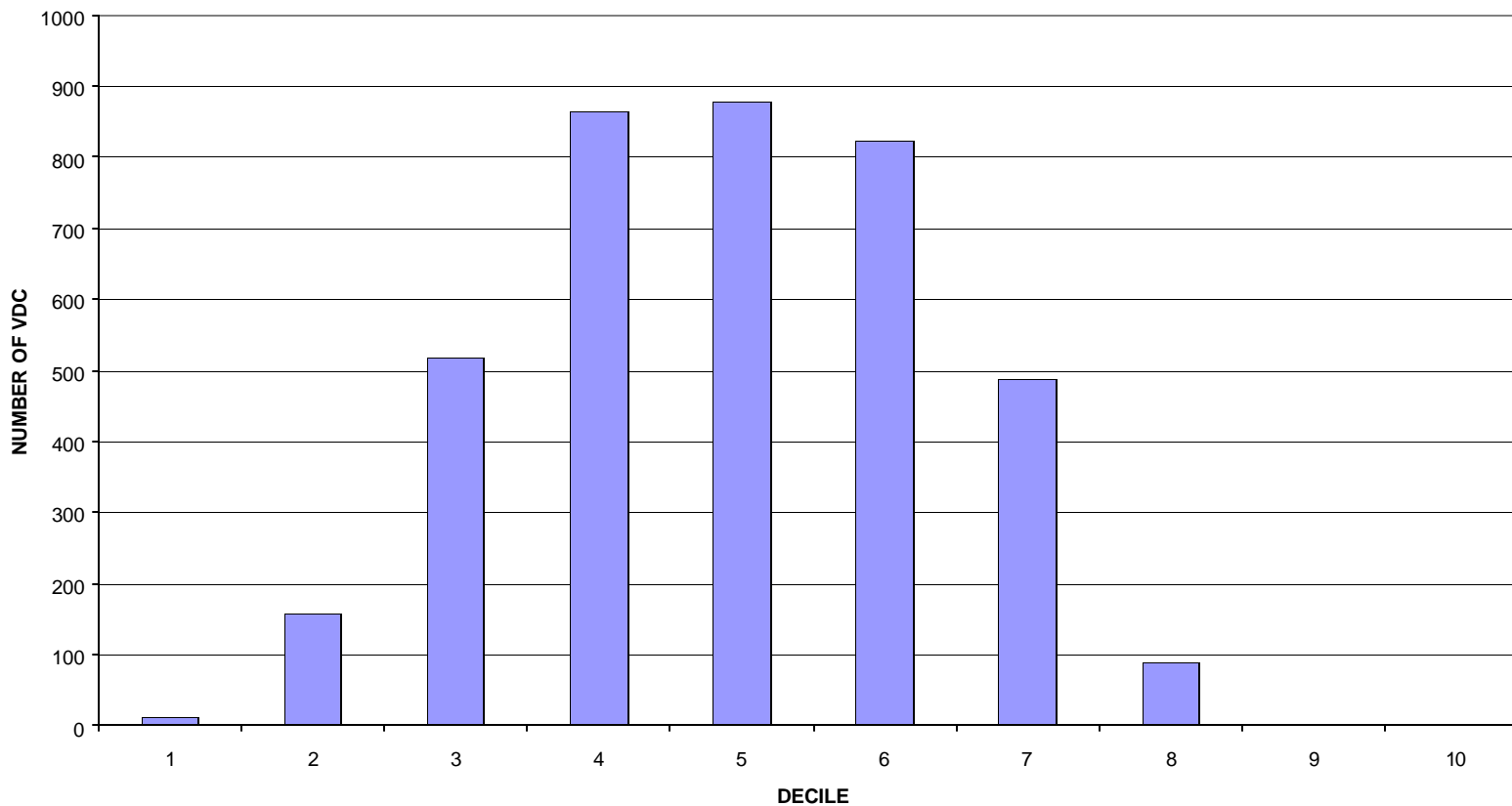
The literacy rate of 6+ years rural population is 50.7 percent. The number of VDCs with respect to their literacy status in deciles is presented in Table 3.1 and in Fig. 3.1.

Table 3.1 6+ Literacy status of VDCs (in deciles)

Deciles	Number of VDCs	Cumulative %
1	12	0.31
2	157	4.41
3	518	17.93
4	864	40.49
5	877	63.39
6	823	84.88
7	487	97.59
8	90	99.94
9	2	100.00
10		
Total	3830	

Nearly two-third of the VDCs have a 6+ years population literacy status of less than 50 percent, that is, only a half of the rural population in these villages are literate.

Fig. 3.1 6+ Years Literacy Status of VDCs (in deciles)



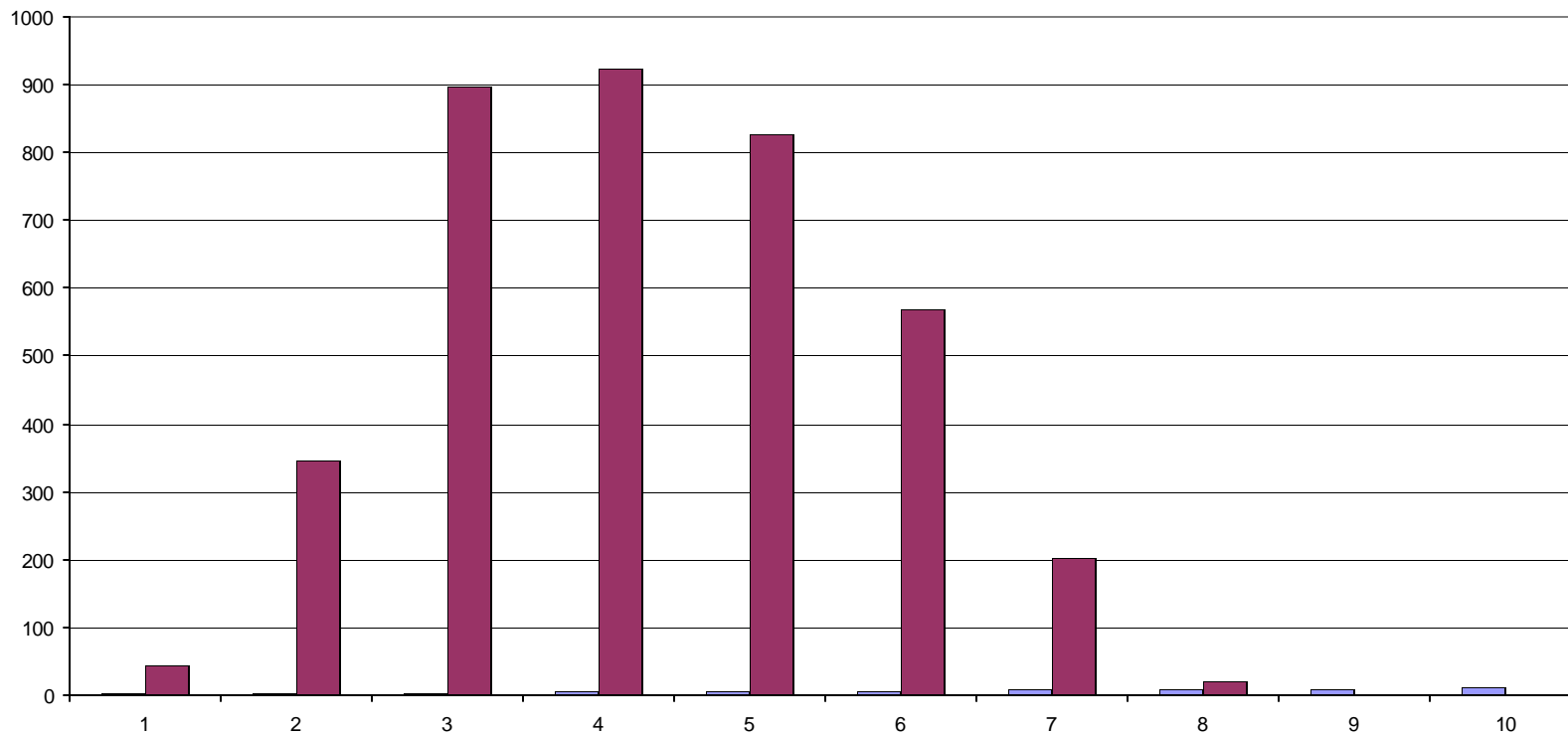
The literacy rate of 15+ years rural population is about 39.4 percent. The number of VDCs with respect to their literacy status (in deciles) is presented in Table 3.2 and Fig. 3.2.

Table 3.2 15+ years literacy status of VDCs (in deciles)

Deciles	Number of VDCs	Cumulative %
1	43	1.12
2	345	10.13
3	897	33.54
4	925	57.68
5	829	79.32
6	568	94.15
7	203	99.50
8	21	100.0
9	-	
10	-	
Total	3830	

With respect to the literacy rate of 15+ years population, nearly 80 percent of the VDCs have a literacy status of less than 50 percent.

Fig 3.2 15 + Years literacy status of VDCs (in deciles)



The average literacy (6+ years population) of VDCs by district is presented in Table 3.3. The average district level rural literacy rate ranges from 26.62 percent in Humla to 69.91 percent in Bhaktapur.

In terms of average literacy status of their VDCs, districts are classified in 3 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status districts with more 56 percent VDCs literacy status;
- Yellow** - Middle level literacy status districts with 40 percent to 55 percent rural literacy rate; and
- Red** - Low literacy status districts with less than 40 percent rural literacy rate.

The classification of districts in terms of rural literacy status is presented in Fig. 3.3.

Table. 3.3 Classification of district by their rural literacy status (2001)

High Level Literacy Status (>56 %)		Medium Level Literacy Status (40% to 55%)		Low Level Literacy Status (<40 %)			
Bhaktapur	69.9	Arghakhanchi	55.9	Solukhumbu	45.8	Rukum	39.7
Chitawan	69.3	Myagdi	55.7	Bardiya	45.8	Siraha*	39.4
Kathmandu	67.2	Sunsari	55.6	Dhading	43.5	Jajarkot	39.4
Jhapa*	66.2	Panchthar	55.3	Doti	41.7	Ramechhap	39.0
Syangja	66.1	Banke	55.1	Bara	41.5	Kalikot*	37.5
Kaski	65.9	Bhojpur	54.5	Kapilbastu	41.0	Rolpa	37.2
Ilam	65.4	Lamjung	54.4	Sindhupalchok*	40.2	Sarlahi	35.7
Palpa	64.7	Morang	53.3	(35 districts)		Bajhang	35.3
Rupandehi	63.5	Sankhuwasabha	53.1			Dolpa*	34.7
Dhankuta	62.7	Nawalparasi	52.9			Parsa	34.3
Kavre	62.2	Gorkha	52.9			Rasuwa	34.0
Surkhet*	61.2	Udayapur	52.5			Mahottari	33.9
Lalitpur	61.1	Taplejung	52.2			Bajura	33.7
Makwanpur	60.8	Mustang	51.8			Achham	33.4
Tanahu	60.7	Dadeldhura	50.9			Jumla*	32.4
Baglung	60.2	Baitadi	50.8			Rautahat	32.0
Manang	59.9	Kailali	50.8			Mugu*	27.8
Terhathum	59.0	Nuwakot	50.0			Humla	26.6
Kanchanpur	58.2	Khotang	49.9				
Gulmi	57.5	Dolakha*	49.6			(18 districts)	
Parbat	56.8	Darchaula	49.4				
Dang	56.4	Okhaldhunga	49.1				
		Sindhuli*	48.8				
(22districts)		Salyan*	48.1				
		Saptari	47.9				
		Dilekh	46.6				
		Pyuthan	46.6				
		Dhanusa	46.1				

With respect to rural literacy situation, Mid-western and Far-western hill and mountain as well as Central Terai regions have a large concentration of low-level rural literacy districts. Western and Eastern regions have relatively larger number of high and above average rural literacy level districts.

3.2 Literacy Status of Municipalities

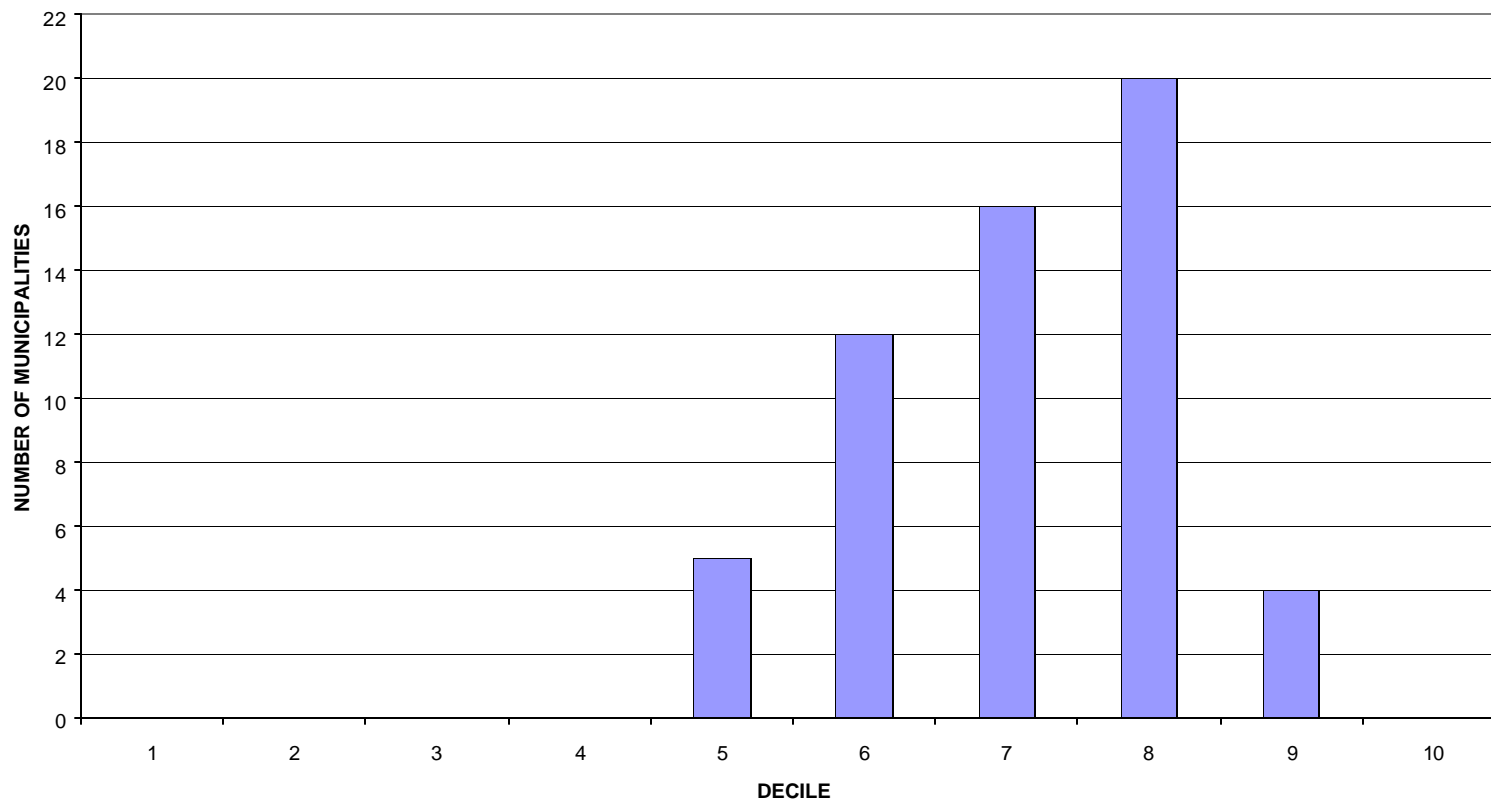
The literacy rate of 6+ years population in municipalities is 71.55 percent. The literacy status of municipalities is presented in Table 3.2 and Fig 3.2.

A significant number of municipalities, 39 out of 38, have a literacy status of more than 60 percent. The hill area municipalities, in general, have a higher literacy status than those municipalities in the Terai area.

Table 3.4 6+ Literacy status of municipalities (in deciles)

Deciles	Number of municipalities	Municipalities
1	-	
2	-	
3	-	
4	-	
5 (41 - 50)	6	Siraha, Jaleswor, Gour, Kapilvastu, Gaulariya and DipayalSilgadhi
6 (51 - 60)	13	Khandhabari, Triyuga, Lahan, Malangawa, Kamalami, Bhimeswor, Kalaiya, Ramgram, Narayan, Dhangadhi, Tikapur, Amargadhi and Dasharathchanda
7 (61 - 70)	18	Mechinagar, Biratnagar, Inaruwa, Itahari, Janakpur, Bhaktapur, Bidur, Birgunj, , Ratnanagar, Prithibinarayana, Byas, Putalibazar, Waling, Siddharthnagar, Tribhuvannagar, Tulsipur, Nepalgunj, and Mahendranagar.
8 (71 - 80)	19	Ilam, Bhadrapur, Damak, Dharan, Dhankuta, Rajbiraj, Banepa, Dhulikhel, Panauti, Lalitpur, Bharatpur, Madhyapur Thimi, Kirtipur, Hetauda, Lekhnath, Pokhara, Kalika, Tansen and Birendranagar.
9 (81 - 90)	2	Kathmandu and Butwal
10 (91 - 100)		
Total	58	

Fig. 3.4 6+ Years literacy status of municipalities (in deciles)



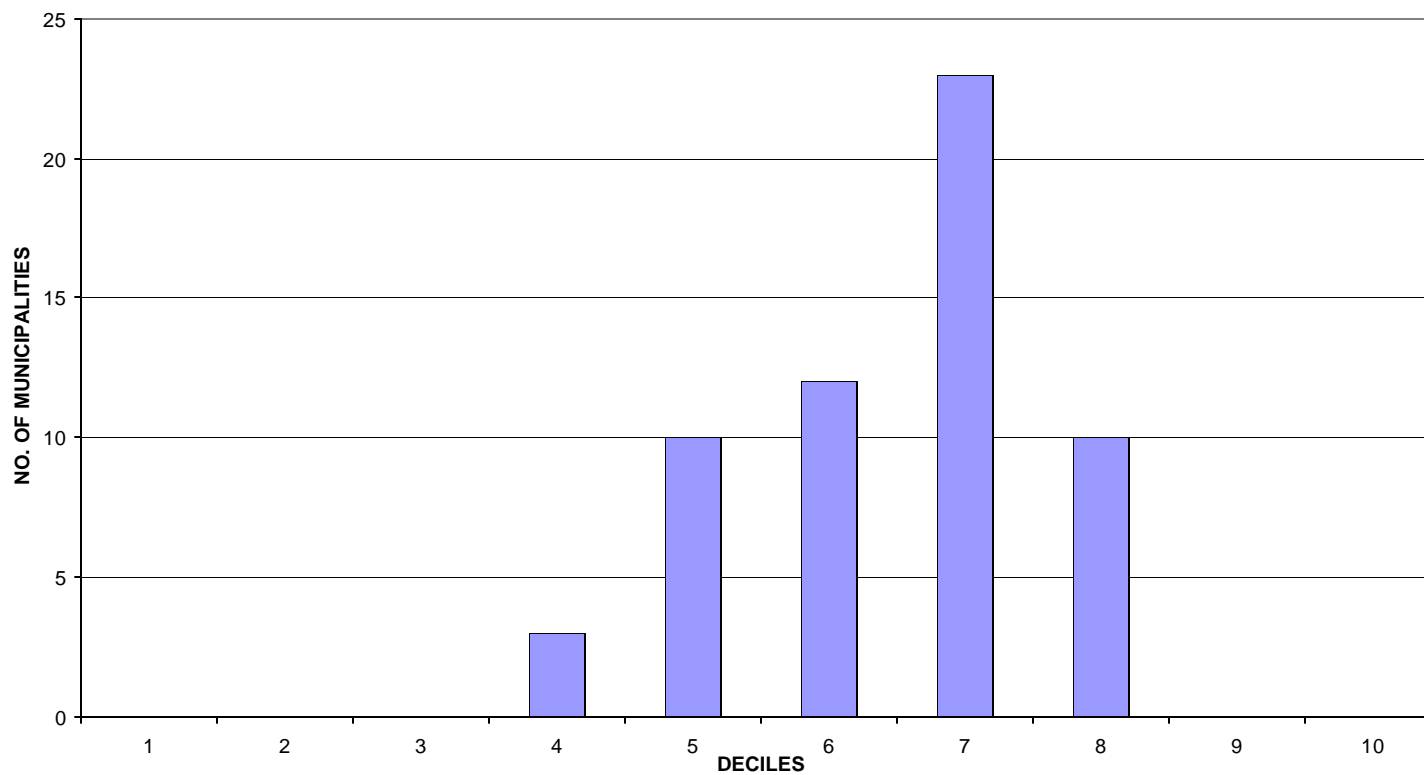
The literacy status of 15+ years of population in municipalities is presented in Table 3.5 and Fig. 3.5.

Table 3.5 15+ literacy status of municipalities (in deciles)

Deciles	Number of municipalities	Municipalities
1	-	
2	-	
3	-	
4	3	Siraha, Gulariya and Gaur
5	10	Dipayalsilgadhi, Jaleswor, Kapilbastu, Malangawa, Amargadhi, Narayan, Ramgram, Bhimeswor, Tikapur and Kalaiya
6	12	Triyuga, Khandbari, Kamalami, Lahan, Dasharthchanda, Dhangadhi, Prithvinarayan, Bidur, Tulsipur, Mahendranagar, Tribhuwannagar and Waling
7	23	Byas, Putalibazar, Bhaktapur, Ratnanagar, Mechinagar, Janakpur, Panauti, Inaruwa, Itahari, Birgunj, Nepalgunj, Birendranagar, Madhyapurthimi, Damak, Siddharthnagar, Lekhnath, Biratnagar, Dhulikhel, Rajbiraj, Dhankuta, Kirtipur, Hetauda and Baglung.
8	10	Banepa, Bhadrapur, Dharan, Bharatpur, Pokhara, Ilam, Tansen, Lalitpur, Butawal and Kathmandu.
9	-	
10	-	
Total	58	

With respect to the literacy status of 15+ years population in municipalities, sixty percent of the municipalities have achieved a literacy status of more than 60 percent.

Fig 3.5 15+ Literacy status of municipalities (in deciles)



3.3 Observation on Rural Urban Literacy Situation

- The gap between the rural and urban literacy rate is about 20.9 percentage points in 6+ years age groups.
- About two-third of the VDCs have a 6+ literacy status of less than 50 percent. In case of 15+ years population, nearly 80 percent of the VDCs have a literacy status of less than 50 percent.
- Mid-western and Far-western hill and mountain regions as well as Central Terai region have a large concentration of low level rural literacy districts.
- About two-third of the municipalities have a literacy status of more than 60 percent.
- Municipalities in the Hills, in general, have a higher literacy status than those in the Terai.

4. AGE AND LITERACY

4.1 Literacy Status of 6-10 years Population

The literacy status of 6-10 years population group is presented in Table 4.1. Mugu has the lowest literacy rate of 30.1 percent whereas Kathmandu has the highest literacy rate of 88.5 percent.

With respect to literacy status of 6-10 years, districts are classified into 4 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status districts with more than 70 percent literate in the 6-10 population group;
- Light Green** - Above average literacy status district with 60 percent to 70 percent literacy level;
- Yellow** - Below average literacy status district with 50 percent to 59 percent literacy level; and
- Red** - Low literacy status districts with less than 50 percent literacy level.

The classification of districts in terms of 6-10 years literacy level is presented in Fig. 4.1.

Table 4.1 Classification of districts by 6-10 years literacy level (2001)

High Literacy Status (> 70%)		Above Average Literacy Status (60% to 70%)		Below Average Literacy Status (50% to 59%)		Low Literacy Status (30% to 49%)	
Jhapa*	73.7	Jajarkot	60.1	Bara	50.4	Mugu*	30.1
Kavre	74.9	Dang	60.2	Dhanusa	50.9	Humla	38.6
Syangja	79.2	Morang	60.3	Khotang	51.3	Mahottari	39.0
Chitawan	79.5	Banke	60.5	Panchthar	51.7	Rolpa	39.2
Lalitpur	79.9	Arghakhanchi	60.7	Pyuthan	52.4	Rautahat	39.3
Kaski	80.3	Myagdi	60.8	Sindhupalchok*	52.6	Bajhang	39.5
Manang	87.2	Bhojpur	61.6	Dilekh	53.5	Bajura	39.7
Bhaktapur	87.4	Dolakha*	61.6	Doti	53.9	Jumla*	40.2
Kathmandu	88.5	Sunsari	62.9	Dhading	54.3	Achham	41.8
(9 districts)		Nuwakot	63.3	Okhaldhunga	54.5	Ramechhap	43.2
		Lamjung	63.8	Salyan*	55.1	Kalikot*	43.3
		Baglung	64.8	Parbat	55.3	Dolpa*	43.5
		Kanchanpur	65.0	Rukum	55.4	Sarlahi	45.5
		Gorkha	65.5	Baitadi	55.4	Taplejung	48.1
		Makwanpur	66.3	Sankhuwasabha	56.0	Parsa	48.1
		Ilam	67.0	Udayapur	56.2	Solukhumbu	48.5
		Palpa	67.2	Kailali	56.3	Siraha*	48.8
		Surkhet*	68.5	Darchaula	56.6	Kapilbastu	49.0
		Rupandehi	68.7	Mustang	57.3	Bardiya	49.3
		Dhankuta	69.3	Saptari	57.3	Rasuwa	49.7
		Tanahu	70.0	Nawalparasi	58.0	(20 districts)	
		(21 districts)		Gulmi	58.4		
				Terhathum	58.8		
				Dadeldhura	58.9		
				Sindhuli*	58.9		
				(25 districts)			

Further analysis of literacy status of 6-10 years by 6-8 years and 9-10 years age groups reveal that the 9-10 years population group displays a slightly higher literacy level than that of 6-8 years age group which is mainly an artefact of primary education (See Tables 4.2 and 4.3.)

Classification of districts
by 6-8 and 9-10 literacy status

Districts are classified in 4 categories in terms of 6-8 and 9-10 years literacy status, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status districts with more than 70 percent literate in 6-8 years and in 9-10 years population group
- Light Green** - Above average literacy status districts with 60 percent to 70 percent literacy level;
- Yellow** - Below average literacy status districts with 50 percent to 59 percent literacy level; and
- Red** - Low literacy status districts with less than 50 percent literacy level.

The classification of districts by 6-8 years literacy status and 9-10 years literacy status is presented in Fig 4.2 and Fig 4.3 respectively.

Table 4.2 Classification of districts by 6 - 8 years literacy level (2001)

High Literacy Status (> 70%)		Above Average Literacy Level (60% to 70%)		Below Average Literacy Status (50% to 59.9%)		Low Literacy Status (20% to 49.9%)	
Kavre	73.5	Banke	60.2	Bara	50.0	Mugu*	28.9
Jhapa*	73.6	Jajarkot	60.6	Dhading	51.0	Rolpa	33.7
Syangja	79.3	Sunsari	61.6	Dhanusa	51.3	Bajhang	35.1
Kaski	80.0	Nuwakot	62.3	Salyan*	51.8	Humla	35.9
Lalitpur	80.5	Lamjung	62.6	Okhaldhunga	52.8	Ramechhap	37.9
Chitawan	80.9	Kanchanpur	62.9	Baitadi	52.8	Jumla*	38.2
Manang	85.3	Baglung	63.2	Doti	53.1	Bajura	39.4
Bhaktapur	87.7	Palpa	64.5	Sankhuwasabha	53.6	Achham	39.4
Kathmandu	89.5	Ilam	65.0	Darchaula	53.8	Mahottari	39.4
(9 districts)		Gorkha	65.2	Gulmi	53.8	Rautahat	39.6
		Makwanpur	66.0	Udayapur	54.3	Dolpa*	40.9
		Dhankuta	67.1	Dilekh	54.3	Taplejung	42.1
		Rupandehi	68.7	Rukum	54.6	Solukhumbu	43.4
		Tanahu	69.3	Mustang	54.7	Sarlahi	45.0
		Surkhet*	70.0	Kailali	54.8	Kalikot*	45.6
		(15 districts)		Dadeldhura	55.8	Bardiya	46.9
				Nawalparasi	56.2	Rasuwa	47.6
				Terhathum	56.6	Panchthar	47.9
				Myagdi	56.9	Siraha*	48.5
				Dang	57.5	Kapilbastu	49.0
				Bhojpur	57.8	Parbat	49.2
				Sindhuli*	57.8	Pyuthan	49.5
				Saptari	57.8	Khotang	49.5
				Arghakhanchi	58.4	Parsa	49.6
				Dolakha*	59.3	Sindhupalchok*	49.7
				Morang	59.5	(25 districts)	
				(26 districts)			

Table 4.3 Classification of districts by 9-10 years literacy status (2001)

High Literacy Status (> 70%)		Above Literacy Level (60% to 70%)		Below Literacy Status (50% to 59.9%)		Low Literacy Status (31% to 49%)	
Tanahu	70.4	Terhathum	60.3	Dhanusa	50.7	Mugu*	31.0
Dhankuta	70.9	Banke	60.7	Bara	50.7	Mahottari	38.8
Jhapa*	73.8	Morang	60.9	Bardiya	50.9	Rautahat	39.0
Kavre	75.9	Dadeldhura	61.0	Rasuwa	51.1	Bajura	39.9
Chitawan	78.6	Gulmi	61.5	Solukhumbu	52.2	Humla	40.4
Syangja	79.1	Dang	62.1	Taplejung	52.3	Jumla*	41.5
Lalitpur	79.6	Arghakhanchi	62.3	Khotang	52.6	Kalikot*	41.6
Kaski	80.4	Dolakha*	63.2	Dilekh	53.0	Bajhang	42.5
Bhaktapur	87.2	Myagdi	63.4	Pyuthan	54.3	Rolpa	42.8
Kathmandu	87.9	Sunsari	63.8	Doti	54.3	Achham	43.4
Manang	88.3	Nuwakot	64.0	Panchthar	54.5	Dolpa*	45.4
(11 Districts)		Bhojpur	64.2	Sindhupalchok*	54.5	Sarlahi	45.9
		Lamjung	64.6	Okhaldhunga	55.7	Ramechhap	46.8
		Gorkha	65.7	Rukum	55.9	Parsa	47.1
		Baglung	65.9	Dhading	56.4	Kapilbastu	48.9
		Kanchanpur	66.3	Saptari	57.0	Siraha*	48.9
		Makwanpur	66.6	Baitadi	57.2	(16 Districts)	
		Surkhet*	67.5	Kailali	57.2		
		Ilam	68.4	Salyan*	57.3		
		Rupandehi	68.8	Udayapur	57.5		
		Palpa	69.0	Sankhuwasabha	57.6		
		(21 Districts)		Darchaula	58.6		
				Mustang	59.0		
				Nawalparasi	59.2		
				Parbat	59.3		
				Sindhuli*	59.7		
				Jajarkot	59.8		
				(27 Districts)			

The average literacy rate of 6-10 years population is about 59 percent. The literacy of 9-10 years population is higher (about 73 percent) than that of 6-8 years population group.

4.2 Literacy Status of 11 to 14 Years Population

The 11 to 14 years population group contains greater proportion of literate persons than in other age groups. The percentage of literacy in 11 - 14 years ranges from 65.4 percent in Kapilvastu to 96.6 percent in Manang (Table 4.4). A note of explanation is in order here. An exceptional high literacy status of Manang is mainly due to exceptional movement of Manangi people from other districts to their own district during the census period.

Districts are classified in terms of 11 - 14 years literacy status into 4 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status with more than 90 percent literacy rate in 11-14 years age group;
- Light Green** - Above average literacy status with 81 percent to 90 percent literacy rate;
- Yellow** - Below average literacy status with 66 percent to 80 percent literacy rate; and
- Red** - Low literacy status with less than 66 percent literacy rate.

The classification of districts in terms of 11-14 years literacy status is presented in Fig. 4.4.

Table 4.4 Classification of districts by 11-14 years literacy level (2001)

High Literacy Status (> 90%)		Above Average Literacy Status (81% to 90%) (81% to 90%)				Below Average Literacy Status (66% to 80%)		Low Literacy Status (< 66%)	
Dhankuta	91.0	Udayapur	81.2	Makwanpur	86.6	Rasuwa	67.0	Mugu*	48.6
Lalitpur	91.0	Salyan*	81.5	Surkhet*	87.8	Rolpa	67.7	Jumla*	54.2
Kavre	91.3	Morang	81.7	Bhojpur	88.2	Bara	67.7	Rautahat	54.5
Lamjung	91.8	Nawalparasi	81.8	Terhathum	88.4	Doti	69.4	Humla	54.6
Chitawan	92.6	Okhaldhunga	81.9	Panchthar	88.5	Dhanusa	69.9	Kalikot*	55.5
Ilam	92.7	Baitadi	82.3	Arghakhanchi	88.6	Saptari	73.1	Mahottari	57.9
Kathm andu	94.6	Nuwakot	83.1	Gorkha	88.9	Rukum	73.7	Dolpa*	59.6
Kaski	95.0	Mustang	83.2	Parbat	89.3	Ramechhap	73.7	Sarlahi	60.7
Bhaktapur	96.1	Sunsari	83.5	Myagdi	89.5	Bardiya	73.8	Achham	62.1
Syangja	96.5	Dang	83.8	Gulmi	89.8	Jajarkot	73.9	Bajhang	63.1
Manang	96.6	Khotang	83.9	Jhapa*	90.3	Banke	76.3	Bajura	63.6
(11 districts)		Dadeldhura	84.3	Baglung	90.3	Sindhupalchok*	76.3	Parsa	64.7
		Dolakha*	84.7	Palpa	90.7	Kailali	76.8	Siraha*	65.2
		Rupandehi	85.0	Tanahu	90.9	Dilekh	77.1	Kapilbastu	65.4
		Darchaula	85.0	(32 districts)		Sindhuli*	79.0	(14 districts)	
		Taplejung	85.4			Dhading	80.3		
		Kanchanpur	85.8			Pyuthan	80.4		
		Sankhuwasabha	86.1			Solukhumbu	80.4		
						(18 districts)			

The average literacy status of 11-14 years age group is 81 percent, which is 27 percentage points higher than the literacy level of 6+ age group. This is a clear indication of a significant contribution of basic and primary education to the literacy situation in the country. A significantly higher level of literacy of 11-14 years age group than that of 6-10 years age group is mainly due to the fact that a significant proportion (about 25 percent) of primary school population is overage children.

With respect to 11-14 years literacy level more than 60 percent of districts (46 out of 75) have a literacy status of more than 80 percent. This is a positive trend towards promoting a literate citizenry through the medium of basic and primary education.

4.3 Literacy Status of 15 to 24 Years Population

The percentage of literate persons in 15 to 24 years population group ranges from 34.7 percent in Humla to 91.3 percent in Syanja (Table 4.5).

Districts are classified in terms of 15 to 24 years literacy rate into 4 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status districts with more than 80 percent literacy rate in 15 to 24 years population;
- Light Green** - Above average literacy status with 70 percent to 80 percent literacy rate;
- Yellow** - Below average literacy status with 60 percent to 70 percent literacy rate; and
- Red** - Low literacy status with less than 60 percent literacy rate.

The classification of districts in terms of 15-24 years literacy rate is presented in Fig. 4.5.

Table 4.5 Classification of districts by 15-24 years literacy level

High Literacy Status (> 80%)		Above Average Literacy Status (71% to 80%)		Below Average Literacy Status (60% to 70%)		Low Literacy Status (< 60%)	
Myagdi	80.3	Khotang	72.8	Saptari	60.2	Humla	34.7
Kavre	81.3	Morang	74.1	Dilekh	60.5	Mugu*	35.1
Panchthar	82.1	Dang	74.4	Dhanusa	61.0	Jumla*	38.3
Lamjung	82.2	Mustang	74.6	Salyan*	62.1	Achham	40.7
Gulmi	82.9	Kanchanpur	74.6	Pyuthan	63.2	Dolpa*	41.1
Tanahu	83.3	Sunsari	75.8	Dhading	63.8	Rautahat	41.7
Jhapa*	83.7	Sankhuwasabha	76.3	Kailali	64.4	Kalikot*	41.8
Parbat	83.7	Taplejung	76.7	Sindhuli*	65.0	Bajhang	42.3
Baglung	84.0	Surkhet*	78.2	Darchaula	65.7	Bajura	44.9
Lalitpur	84.6	Arghakhanchi	78.4	Dadeldhura	65.7	Rasuwa	45.2
Terhathum	85.3	Bhojpur	79.1	Baitadi	66.7	Mahotta ri	45.4
Bhaktapur	86.0	Gorkha	79.4	Solukhumbu	67.7	Sarlahi	46.1
Manang	86.3	Makwanpur	79.5	Nuwakot	67.7	Jajarkot	48.6
Dhankuta	86.3	Rupandehi	79.6	Banke	68.3	Doti	50.3
Chitawan	86.8	(14 districts)		Okhaldhunga	68.6	Kapilbastu	51.1
Palpa	87.5			Dolakha*	69.6	Rolpa	51.5
Ilam	87.7			Nawalparasi	69.7	Parsa	52.0
Kathmandu	88.6			Udayapur	69.8	Rukum	52.0
Kaski	91.2			(18 districts)		Siraha*	52.2
Syangja	91.3					Bara	52.7
(20 districts)						Ramechhap	56.6
						Sindhupalchok*	57.0
						Bardiya	57.9
						(23 districts)	

The average literacy status of 15-24 years age group is approximately 72 percent, which is about 8 percentage points lower than that of 11-14 years population group.

In the case of 15-24 years literacy status, the number of districts with a literacy level of 80 percent dropped to 20 districts as compared with 46 districts having a literacy status of more than 80 percent in the case of 11-14 years literacy status.

4.4 Literacy Status of 15 to 45 Years Population

The literacy status of 15 to 45 years in different districts is presented in Table 4.6. It ranges from a low of 24.5 percent in Humla to a high of 79.9 percent in Kathmandu.

In terms of literacy status of 15 to 45 years, districts are classified into 4 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy status with 70 percent or above literacy rate of 15 to 45 years population group;
- Light Green** - Above average literacy status with 57 percent to 69 percent literacy rates;
- Yellow** - Below average literacy status with 41 percent to 56 percent literacy rates; and
- Red** - Low literacy status with 24 percent to 40 percent literacy rates.

The classification of districts in terms of 15-45 years literacy status is presented in Fig 4.6.

Table 4.6 Classification of districts by 15-45 years literacy level

High Literacy Status (70% & above)		Above Average Literacy Status (57% to 70%)		Below Average Literacy Status (41% to 56%)		Low Literacy Status (24% to 40%)	
Rupandehi	70.0	Taplejung	57.4	Doti	41.1	Humla	24.5
Jhapa*	70.9	Gorkha	57.7	Kapilbastu	41.3	Mugu*	29.2
Ilam	71.9	Sankhuwasabha	58.7	Bara	41.4	Jumla*	30.4
Syangja	73.0	Bhojpur	58.8	Parsa	41.9	Achham	31.0
Palpa	73.5	Arghakhanchi	58.9	Dhading	43.7	Rautahat	32.1
Bhaktapur	74.0	Banke	59.0	Bardiya	45.3	Rasuwa	32.3
Lalitpur	74.8	Morang	59.2	Pyuthan	46.0	Jajarkot	32.6
Chitawan	75.0	Dang	60.0	Dilekh	46.7	Bajura	33.1
Kaski	78.2	Kanchanpur	60.5	Salyan*	46.9	Dolpa*	33.9
Kathmandu	79.9	Mustang	60.7	Solukhumbu	48.1	Mahottari	34.0
(10 districts)		Myagdi	61.6	Saptari	49.0	Bajhang	34.5
		Lamjung	61.6	Darchaula	49.5	Sarlahi	34.7
		Panchthar	61.7	Dhanusa	49.6	Rukum	36.0
		Sunsari	62.8	Sindhuli*	50.4	Kalikot*	36.2
		Gulmi	63.3	Dadeldhura	51.2	Rolpa	38.0
		Parbat	64.5	Okhaldhunga	51.6	Ramechhap	39.4
		Surkhet*	64.9	Nuwakot	51.6	Sindhupalchok*	39.5
		Kavre	65.9	Dolakha*	52.0	Siraha*	39.6
		Manang	65.9	Kailali	52.4	(18 districts)	
		Terhathum	66.3	Baitadi	52.4		
		Tanahu	66.9	Khotang	53.8		
		Makwanpur	66.9	Nawalparasi	55.0		
		Baglung	67.5	Udayapur	55.2		
		Dhankuta	69.8	(23 districts)			
		(24 districts)					

Average literacy level of 15-45 years age group is 56 percent. This literacy level is a sharp decline, by about 25 per cent point, from the average literacy level of 11-15 years age group, which is about 80 percent. Further, with respect to 15-45 years age group literacy level, no district has a literacy level of 80 percent or above.

4.5 Literacy Status of 6 to 44 Years and 44+ Years

A comparative picture of literacy status of 6 to 44 years and 44+ years' population groups is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 A comparative picture of 6-44 years and 44+ years literacy status by districts (2001)

6-44 Years High Literacy Status (70% to 83%)	44+ Years High Literacy Status (25% to 46%)	6-44 Years Middle Literacy Status (50% to 69%)		44+ Years Middle Literacy Status (18% to 24%)	6-44 Years Low Literacy Status (32% to 49%)	44+ Years Low Literacy Status (6% to 17%)
Baglung	Baglung	Arghakhanchi	Salyan*	Arghakhanchi	Achham	Achham
Bhaktapur	Banke	Baitadi	Sankhuwasabha	Baitadi	Bajhang	Bajhang
Chitawan	Bhaktapur	Banke	Saptari	Bara	Bajura	Bajura
Dhankuta	Chitawan	Bardiya	Sindhuli*	Bhojpur	Bara	Bardiya
Ilam	Dhankuta	Bhojpur	Solukhumbu	Dadeldhura	Dolpa*	Dhading
Jhapa*	Dhanusa	Dadeldhura	Sunsari	Dang	Doti	Dolakha*
Kaski	Ilam	Dang	Surkhet*	Darchaula	Humla	Dolpa*
Kathmandu	Jhapa*	Darchaula	Taplejung	Dilekh	Jajarkot	Doti
Kavre	Kanchanpur	Dhading	Terhathum	Gulmi	Jumla*	Gorkha
Lalitpur	Kaski	Dhanusa	Udayapur	Kailali	Kalikot*	Humla
Makwanpur	Kathmandu	Dilekh	(37 districts)	Kapilbastu	Kapilbastu	Jajarkot
Manang	Kavre	Dolakha*		Lamjung	Mahottari	Jumla*
Palpa	Lalitpur	Gorkha		Mahottari	Mugu*	Kalikot*
Rupandehi	Makwanpur	Gulmi		Myagdi	Parsa	Khotang
Syangja	Morang	Kailali		Nawalparasi	Ramechhap	Manang
Tanahu	Palpa	Kanchanpur		Nuwakot	Rasuwa	Mugu*
(16 districts)	Rupandehi	Khotang		Okhaldhunga	Rautahat	Mustang
	Saptari	Lamjung		Panchthar	Rolpa	Pyuthan
	Sunsari	Morang		Parbat	Rukum	Ramechhap
	Surkhet*	Mustang		Parsa	Sarlahi	Rasuwa
	Syangja	Myagdi		Sankhuwasabha	Sindhupalchok*	Rautahat
	(21 districts)	Nawalparasi		Sindhuli*	Siraha*	Rolpa
		Nuwakot		Siraha*	(22 districts)	Rukum
		Okhaldhunga		Tanahu		Salyan*
		Panchthar		Taplejung		Sarlahi
		Parbat		Terhathum		Sindhupalchok*
		Pyuthan		Udayapur		Solukhumbu
				(27 districts)		(27 districts)

Table 4.7 reveals that the younger generation Nepalese population have a relatively better literacy status than the older generation.

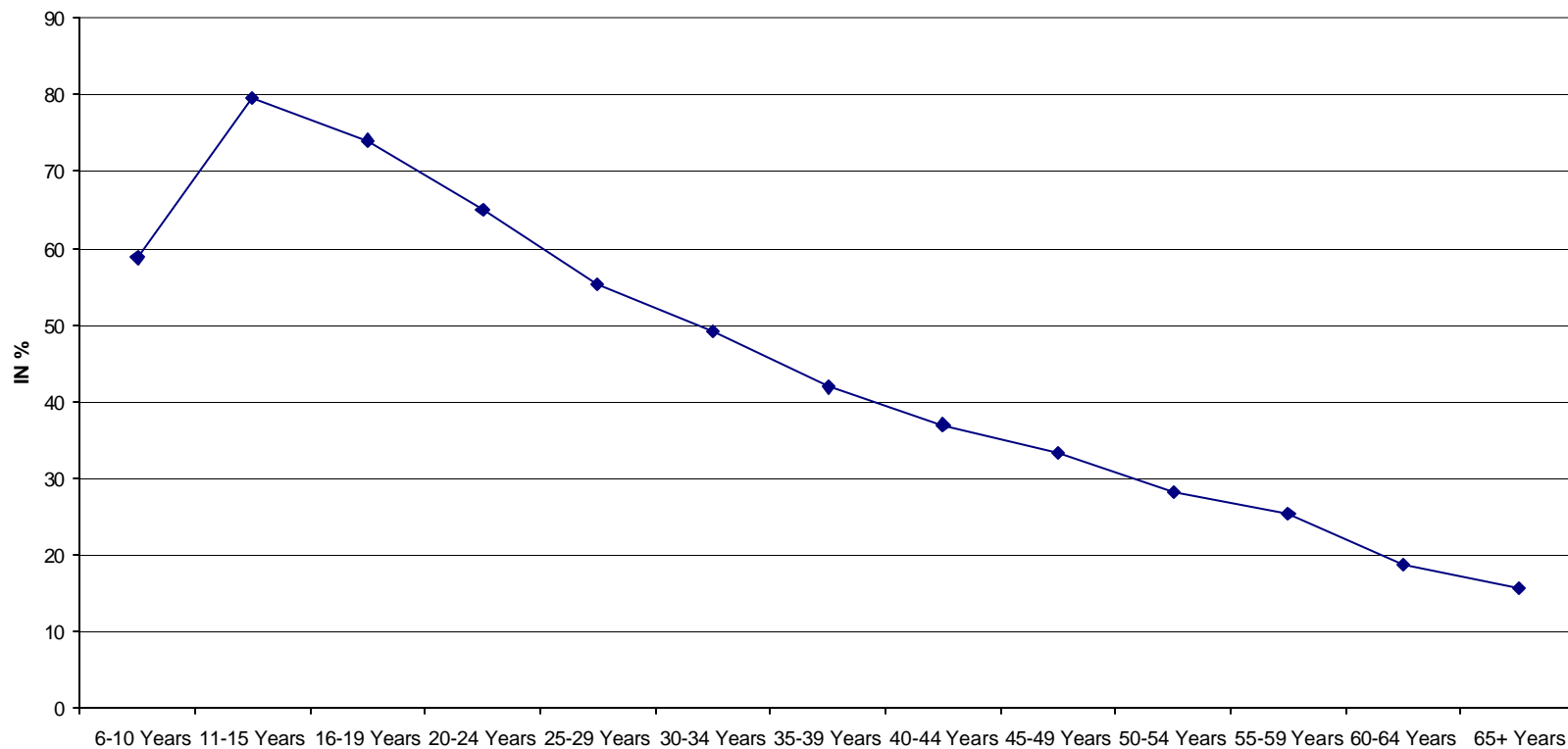
4.6 Literacy Status by Age Groups

The literacy status of different age groups is presented in Table 4.8 and in Fig 4.8.

Table 4.8 Literacy status by age groups (2001)

Age Groups	Population	Literate	Literacy %
6 - 10 Years	3232424	1900251	58.79
11 - 15 Years	2762346	2198684	79.59
16 - 19 Years	1861691	1378714	74.06
20 - 24 Years	2016768	1311467	65.03
25 - 29 Years	1725478	953698	55.27
30 - 34 Years	1489503	731745	49.13
35 - 39 Years	1310653	548859	41.88
40 - 44 Years	1088044	402413	36.98
45 - 49 Years	923373	306996	33.25
50 - 54 Years	766054	215692	28.16
55 - 59 Years	602093	152432	25.32
60 - 64 Years	520908	97868	18.79
65+ Years	956471	149609	15.64

The literacy level peaked at 11 to 15 years age group, indicating the contribution of school level education to the literacy situation in the country. The literacy level declined gradually from 74 percent in 16-19 years age group to a very low literacy percentage of about 16 percent in 65+ years group. This declining literacy percentage indicates that the inefficient education system could not sustain the high literacy level achieved by increased enrolment in primary schools.

Fig 4.8 Literacy status by age groups (2001)

4.7 Observation on Literacy Status of Different Age Group

- Despite a steady increment in primary school enrolment, the lower literacy rate (59%) of 6-10 years population group as compared with the literacy level of 11-15 years age group (80%) may be attributed to a large proportion of under and over-age children (about 40% of the total) in primary schools.
- The average literacy level peaked at 80 percent, which is the average literacy level of 11 to 15 years age group.
- The significant contribution of primary education to the literacy level of the country is reflected in the high literacy percentages of 11-15 years group.
- The next highest level of literacy of 16-19 years age group (74.06%) reflects contribution of non-formal education and literacy programs.
- The average literacy level dropped sharply at 20-24 years and thereafter to a low level of about 26 percent for 44⁺ years age group.
- It is obvious that the potential contribution of primary education to improved literacy situation has been constrained by inefficiencies of the primary education system.
- Sharp decline in average literacy levels indicate that the high literacy level of post primary school years has not been sustained.

5. GENDERS AND LITERACY

5.1 Gender Gap in Literacy

The gender gap in literacy ranges from about 20 percent in Dhading and Kathmandu to 42 percent in Bajhang (See Table 5.1) in 6+ years age group.

In terms of gender gap in literacy, districts are classified into 4 categories, namely,

- Green** - High literacy gap with less than 20 percent difference between male and female literacy level;
- Light Green** - Below average gender gap with 20 percent to 23 percent difference;
- Yellow** - Above average gender gap with 23 percent to 30 percent difference; and
- Red** - Wide gender gap with more than 30 percent difference in male and female enrolment.

The classification of districts in terms of gender gap in literacy is presented in Fig 5.1.

Table 5.1 Classification of district by gender gap in literacy (2001)

Low Gender Gap ($< 20\%$)		Below Average Gender Gap (20% to 23%)			Above Average Gender Gap (23% to 30%)		Wide Gender Gap ($> 30\%$)		
Manang	14.8	Dhankuta	20.1	Gulmi	22.0	Terhathum	23.2	Jumla*	30.2
Ilam	15.9	Panchthar	20.1	Myagdi	22.2	Dhanusa	23.5	Dilekh	32.2
Chitawan	16	Rupandehi	20.1	Sindhupalchok*	22.2	Kapilbastu	23.6	Bajura	33.6
Banke	16.4	Taplejung	20.2	Surkhet*	22.3	Khotang	23.7	Doti	34.9
Jhapa*	16.7	Mustang	20.2	Dang	22.3	Salyan*	23.8	Darchaula	35.0
Rasuwa	18.0	Morang	20.2	Udayapur	22.4	Sindhuli*	24.2	Mugu*	35.9
Palpa	18.4	Jajarkot	20.3	Kailali	22.5	Nawalparasi	25.1	Kalikot*	36.8
Sankhuwasabha	18.7	Arghakhanchi	20.3	Lamjung	22.8	Kanchanpur	25.2	Baitadi	37.8
Makwanpur	18.7	Syangja	20.3			Dolakha*	25.2	Achham	37.8
Gorkha	18.8	Parbat	20.5	(29 districts)		Bara	25.7	Dadeldhura	38.9
Bardiya	19.4	Lalitpur	20.6			Siraha*	26.2	Bajhang	42.3
Tanahu	19.6	Sunsari	20.6			Ramechhap	27	(11 districts)	
Dhading	19.9	Baglung	20.8			Parsa	27.2		
Kathmandu	19.9	Rautahat	21.0			Okhaldhunga	27.3		
(14 districts)		Solukhumbu	21.2			Saptari	27.6		
		Sarlahi	21.3			Pyuthan	28.4		
		Bhaktapur	21.5			Humla	29.1		
		Kaski	21.5			Dolpa*	29.6		
		Bhojpur	21.7			Rolpa	30		
		Nuwakot	21.7			Kavre	23		
		Rukum	21.8			Mahottari	23		
						(21 districts)			

Gender gap in literacy is very considerable in Nepal. Wide gender gap in literacy prevails at Far-western and Mid-western mountain and hill districts. Considerable gender gap exists in selected Terai and hill districts adjoining the Eastern and Central regions. Western and Central districts, in general, are characterized by a low gender gap in literacy status.

5.2 Gender Gap in Different Eco Zones

The extent of gender gap in literacy in different eco zones is presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 District level gender gap in literacy by eco zones

Eco Zone	Gender Gap		
	Low (< 20%)	Middle (21-30%)	Wide (> 30)
Mountain	2	11	3
Kathmandu Valley	2	1	-
Hill	6	25	5
Terai	4	12	4

It appears that gender gap in literacy is evenly distributed across the country.

5.3 Literacy Level and Gender Gap

The extent of gender gap in districts with different literacy levels is indicated in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Gender gap in literacy by different literacy levels

Literacy Level	Gender Gap		
	Wide	Middle	Low
High	-	10	7
Middle	4	26	5
Low	7	14	2

It is obvious from Table 5.3 that a higher proportion of low literacy level districts have a wider gender gap than those districts with a higher literacy level.

5.4 Observations on Gender Gap in Literacy

- The gender gap in literacy in 2001 is 22.6 percent, which is quite high.
- Wide gender gap in literacy prevails at Far-western and Mid-western hill districts.
- Western and Central region districts are characterized by a low gender gap in literacy status.
- Gender gap in literacy is evenly distributed across different eco zones.
- The extent of gender gap in literacy appears to be inversely related with the level of literacy, that is the higher the literacy level, the lower is the gender gap.

6. LITERACY STATUS OF MAJOR POPULATION GROUPS

6.1 Estimated Literacy Status of Major Population Groups

The estimated literacy status of major population groups, which accounts for about 70 percent of the total population in Nepal, is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Estimated literacy status of major population groups (2001)

Population Group	Literacy Percentage
Brahman-hill	74.90
Chhetri	60.11
Gurung	59.79
Limbu	58.12
Magar	55.90
Muslim	34.72
Newar	71.22
Rai	58.19
Tamang	45.04
Thakuri	63.39
Tharu	47.12
Yadav	40.83

Obviously, 4 out of 12 major population groups have a literacy status lower than the national average. There are many other ethnic groups at the lower end of the literacy status spectrum.

7. EDUCATIONAL CORRELATES OF LITERACY

7.1 Contribution of Formal and non-formal Education

The source of literacy, that is, whether a person became literate through formal and non-formal education, is not discernible in the census data. However, in a survey conducted in 2000, the relative contribution of formal education was found to be as indicated in Table 7.1

Table 7.1 Literacy rate by source of literacy

Age group	Formal	Non-formal	Total
6+	51.3 (89.1)	6.3 (10.9)	57.6 (100.0)
10+	49.0 (89.1)	7.0 (10.9)	56.1 (100.0)
15+	42.2 (83.8)	8.3 (16.2)	50.5 (100.0)

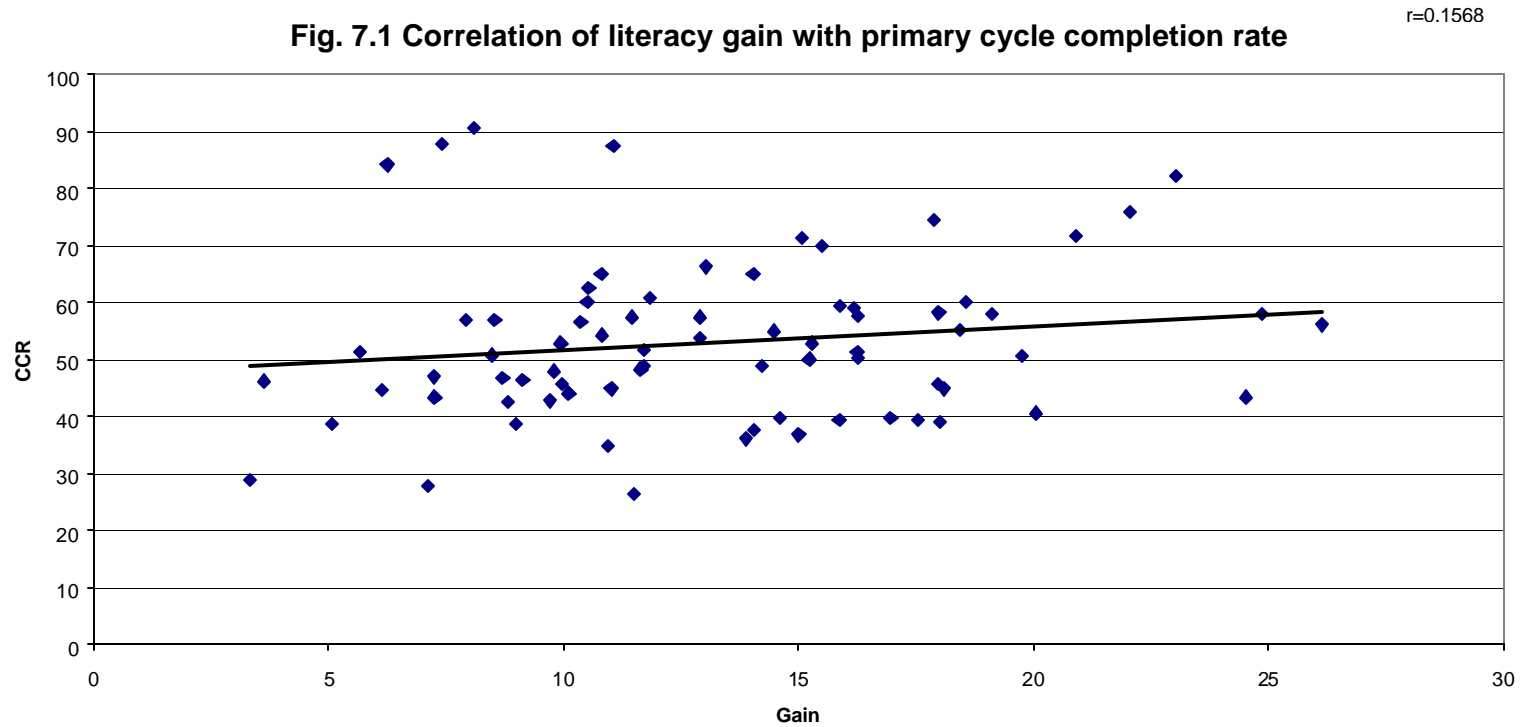
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Source: BECHIMS, 2000, CBS

It is distinctly clear that formal education is the main contributor to national literacy level. The contribution of non-formal education is about 11 to 16 percent.

7.2 Primary Cycle Completion Rate and Literacy

The correlation of primary cycle completion rate (CCR) with the literacy level is indicated in Fig. 7.1.

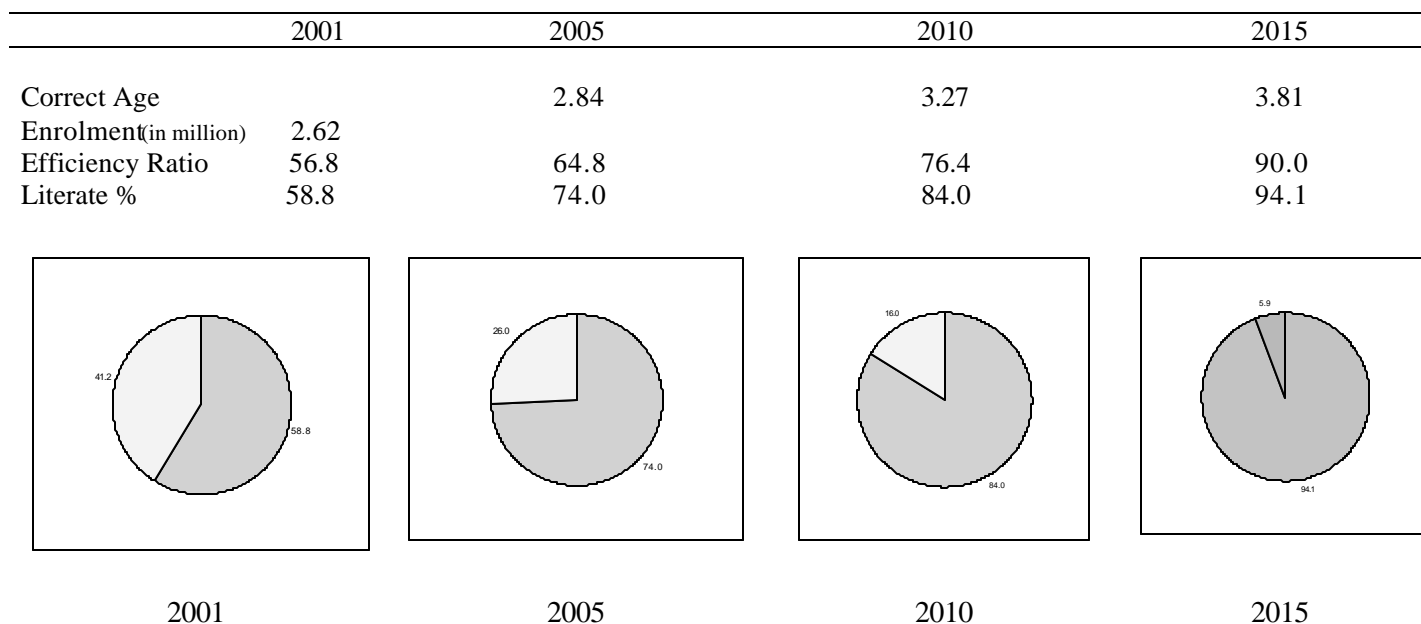


A positive correlation between CCR and literacy level indicates that primary education completion is an influencing factor in enhancing literacy status.

7.3 Efficiency Rates and Literacy Level

The corresponding literacy level of 6-10 years group in different efficiency scenario is indicated in Fig. 7.2.

Fig. 7.2 Efficiency rates and literacy rate (6-10) for selected ye ars



For every 1-percentage point increase in efficiency ratio, there is a corresponding increase of 1.07 percent in literacy level. This is the compelling reason for improving the efficiency of primary education. With an increase in efficiency ratio to 90 percent in 2015, the literate percent of 6-10 population reaches to 94 percent.

8. SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Synthesis

A synthesis of major findings is presented below.

- **Illiteracy has remained a continuing challenge in Nepal**

In general, the average literacy level (6+ years) of Nepal is low, only about 54 percent. The average literacy level of 15+ years is still lower, only 44 percent. Hence, the challenge of illiteracy is an unresolved issue in Nepal.

- **Several pockets of illiteracy in rural and remote areas present a formidable challenge in raising the national literacy level.**

Far-western and Mid-western region and Terai belt have several pockets of illiteracy. The average rural literacy level (6+ years) is more than 20 percentage points lower than that of urban average literacy level (50.7 percent rural as against 71.6 percent urban).

- **Women and several population groups that have suffered perpetual disadvantaged ness have a low average literacy level.**

The difference between male and female literacy level (6+ years) is more than 20 percentage points (65.1 male literacy as against 42.5 female literacy rate). Similarly, several population groups such as Tharu and several ethnic minorities have very low literacy levels.

- **Inter-Census literacy growth reveals a slow, snail's speed progress in literacy improvement.**

Fourteen percent growth in literacy level during ten years, from 1991 to 2001, is not an impressive gain. With this rate of progress, it will take several decades to attain universal literacy.

- **Primary education is the main contributor to improved literacy situation**

Literacy level peaks at 80 percent for 11-14 years age group, clearly indicating the contribution of primary education to the national literacy situation. The relative contribution of formal and non-formal education to literacy (6+ years) was found to be 89 percent and 11 percent respectively.

- **Sharp decline in literacy level after 11-14 years in general, and after 16-19 years in particular, reveals the ineffectiveness of the system to sustain and supplement the literacy gain from formal education .**

The average literacy level declined sharply from 74 percent for 16-19 years to 65 percent for 20 to 24 and to 26 percent for 45+ years population groups.

- **Raising efficiency of primary education appears to be the best strategy for enhancing national literacy status.**

The impact of increase in efficiency of primary education on the literacy percentage appears to be positive and significant. It is more pragmatic to strive for increased efficiency of the primary education system than to provide literacy education to a more dispersed and diversified adult population.

- **Literacy upliftment in rural and remote areas, and among disadvantaged groups require a concerted policy and action focus that addresses urgent needs and produces concrete results.**

8.2 Implications

The implications of the analyses of literacy situation and of the synthesis of major findings are outlined below.

- *Literacy promotion policy should focus on adopting preferential and positive discrimination treatment of disadvantaged groups in rural and remote areas.*
- *In order to ameliorate psycho-social barriers and link literacy to real life situation and opportunities, the planning and implementation of literacy programs should be decentralized to local communities at sub-district or lower level.*

- *The substantive content and modality of literacy programs should be relevant to the needs of adult participants in rural and remote area contexts and should be instrumental in fulfilling their aspirations.*
- *Extensive social mobilization campaign should be launched in order to enhance parental and community awareness and support to ensure correct age enrolment and timely completion of primary education by their children along with effective implementation of quality improvement measures at the school level.*
- *A balanced and integrated program of formal schooling and non-formal education programs including functional literacy is imperative for enhanced and sustained literacy improvement in Nepal.*