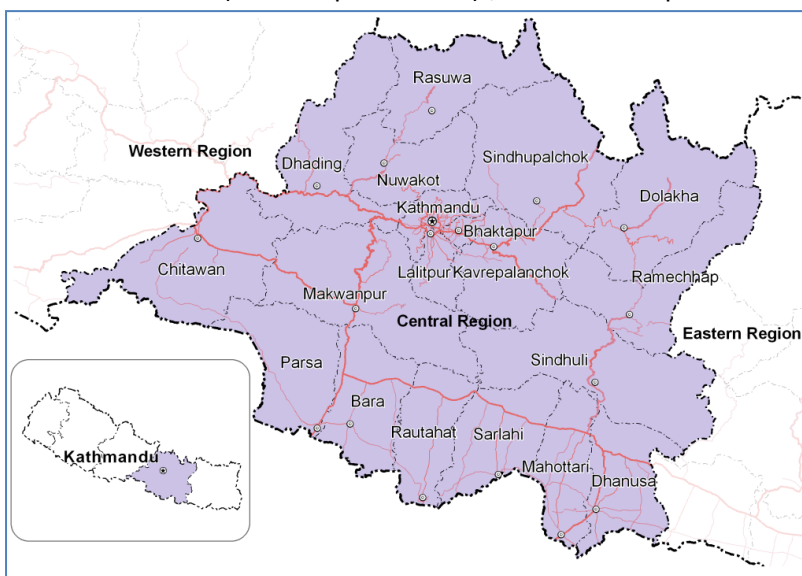


An Overview of the Central Development Region (CR)

The Central Region (CR), one of the five development regions of Nepal, spans all three eco zones – mountain, hill and plains. Headquartered in Hetauda (Makwanpur district)¹, the CR comprises three administrative zones (Bagmati, Narayani and Janakpur), 19 districts, 1,199 Village Development Committees (VDCs), one metropolitan (Kathmandu), two sub-metropolitans (Lalitpur, Birgunj) and 17 municipalities.

The population density in the CR is 293 inhabitants per square kilometer, which is the highest among all five development regions and significantly above the national average of 157 inhabitants per square kilometer². The CR is home of



various ethnic communities for example Newar, Tamang and Thami and its inhabitants represent different religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

The Human Development Index (HDI) of the CR (0.531) is higher than the national average of 0.509. However, the CR HDI excluding Kathmandu is 0.489, only slightly above the Mid- and Far-Western Development Regions.

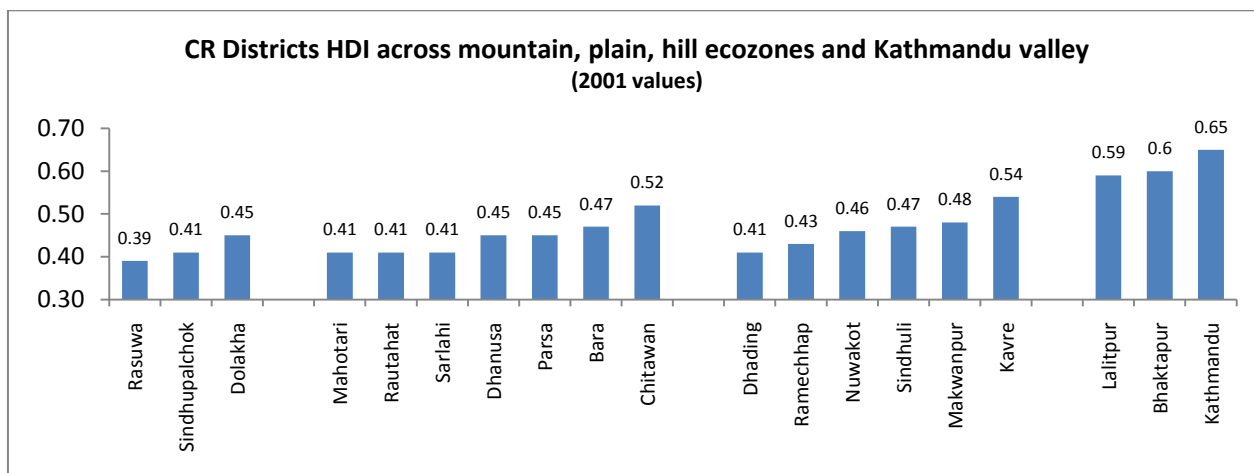
Indicator	CR	Compared to all Nepal
Population	8,031,629	34.7%
Total Area (Sq Km)	27,410	18.6%
Population growth	2.61%	2.25%
GDP /Capita (PPP US\$)	1,989	1,597
Development (HDI)	0.531	0.509
Human Poverty Index	35.3%	35.4%
Infant Mortality Rate	52/1,000	48/1,000
Life Expectancy	65.7	63.7
Adult Literacy	51.5%	52.4%

Sources: CBS 2001; NHDR 2009; Demographic Health Survey 2006

¹ Local Administration Act, 2028 (1971) and its Fourth Amendment, 2058 (2001). www.lawcommission.gov.np

² Agriculture Census Nepal, 2001/2002

The HDI also varies greatly across the CR eco-zones (mountain: 0.454, plain: 0.478, hill: 0.602³ (see also the graph below), as well as across urban and rural areas and social groups (see section on Gender and Social Inclusion below).



Geography and Natural Disasters

All district headquarters in the CR have road connectivity. Nonetheless, geographical isolation, vulnerable roads and lack of bridges across most of the rivers are major challenges in terms of accessibility. The climate in the region varies from temperate in the hills and valleys to tropical in the plains. The region has a diverse landscape, ecology and biodiversity.

The CR is regularly affected by natural disasters such as floods and landslides. Other hazards affecting the region are evere thunderstorms, cold waves, drought, food insecurity (mostly in the hills), epidemics, accidental fires and earthquakes. Human and economic costs of man-made and natural disasters in the CR are high. For the period 1971-2009, the CR saw 8,104 disaster-related deaths (30% of all disaster related deaths in Nepal) with 19,406 injured; 665 missing; 2,953,822 affected; 22,495 relocated and 6,060 evacuated, 66,041 houses destroyed and 62,187 houses damaged. The economic losses have been estimated at NRs. 5,603,143,323⁴.

Conflict Dynamics

The decade-long armed conflict in Nepal saw widespread violence, torture, disappearances, displacements and a general anticipation of terror. The CR has been comparatively highly exposed to the conflict with 2,998 deaths (23% of all Nepal conflict-related deaths) and 210 missing persons (21%) between 1995 and 2006⁵.

The decade of 1996 – 2006 also saw a large number of people disappearing both at the hands of the state and the Maoists. According to INSEC, nationwide the state was responsible for the disappearance of 828 people and the Maoist for 105 between 13 February 1996 and 21 November 2006. In the CR, 183 persons disappeared at he hand of the state and 24 by the Maoist during the same period⁶. Despite the signing of

³ Nepal Human Development Report (NHDR), 2009.

⁴ Source: Nepal DesInventar Database, NSET 2010

⁵ Source: Conflict Victims' Profile, INSEC 2010, www.insec.org.np/victim

⁶ Source: Impaired Accountability: State of Disappearance in Nepal, Published by:INSEC www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/INSEC_Nepal_Disappearances.pdf

the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006, civil unrest attached to political instability continues in the CR. The situation in the Tarai districts remains volatile with a relatively high presence of identity-based movements and occurrence of strikes, blockades, crime, clashes, use of improvised explosive devices and unlawful killings. For example, between 2008 and 2010 killings in the CR accounted for almost half (49%) of all the killings in Nepal with 128 people reportedly being killed by armed groups or security forces⁷.

Health and Sanitation

24 district hospitals, 67 primary health centers, 173 health posts and 999 sub-health posts provide health services to a total population of 8,031,629 in the CR. In addition, international and national non-governmental organizations and private clinics provide health care services in the region.

Despite some vacant posts and absenteeism, staff of health posts and sub health posts in the VDCs provide basic health services and regular vaccination programmes.

However, the quality of service delivery is observed to be low in the rural areas. Although centrally supplied medicines and essential drugs are normally available in most of the health facilities, there is often a lack of trained health personnel in remote district headquarters and villages.

Although access to safe water and sanitation is comparatively high in the CR it is limited in absolute terms, further affecting public health (see chart below).

Health Infrastructure in CR

Health post:	173
Hospital:	24
PSC:	67
SHP:	999
Total:	1,263

Source: MoH_Annual Report 2007/2008

Reproductive Health Indicators	CR	National
Neo-natal mortality rate	35/1,000	33/1,000
Child mortality rate	17/1000	14/1,000
Infant mortality rate:	52/1,000	48/1,000

Source: Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2006

Indicator	CR	Nepal
Percentage of households with access to improved sanitation	39.5%	38.5%
Percentage of households served with managed water source	83.6%	82.2%
Percentage of households served with treated water	25.2%	11.6%
Households that utilize traditional water source	132,738	448,287
Number of months per year water access from piped schemes	6.3	7.4

Sources: Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003-2004, www.rwash.gov.np

Education

9,538 public schools in the CR provide education services up to higher secondary level to 2,421,286 students. The student-teacher ratio is 32.7 in primary, 32.6 in lower secondary, and 20.9 in secondary levels. Literacy rate (15 years and above) in the CR is 47.7% which is below the national literacy rate of 48.6%. The literacy rate of the population of 6 years and above is 52.6% which is also below the national average of 54.1%. There are further disparities and a gap of 20% can be observed between male and female literacy rates (15 – 24 years). Across the three eco-zones of the CR, the literacy rate of 15 years and above also vary with mountain 34%, hills 50% and Tarai 39%⁸.

⁷ Source: Democratic Freedom and Human Rights Institute (DFHRI), 2011

⁸ Sources: MoE_Education Statistics of Nepal 2009, Flash Report 1, Census 2001



Above, in the mountains of Central Development Region: Child porter in the slate trade - A public school. Photo credit: UN RCHCO

Targeted scholarships for girls, children from Dalit and Janajati communities as well as children with disabilities have been administered by the Government of Nepal (GoN) to increase the particularly low enrolment rate of these groups. As a result, Nepal has managed to achieve overall enrolment increases, accompanied by a reduction of gender and caste/ethnic disparity. Primary school enrolment of Dalits has increased substantially from 605,830 in 2003 to 966,146 in 2008. Enrolment of Janajatis has, likewise, increased substantially from less than 1 million to almost 2 million in the period of 2003 - 2008, with near gender parity⁹.

Educational Demography and Infrastructure in CR

Total Students:	2,421,286
Higher Secondary:	916
Secondary:	2,546
Lower Secondary:	3,802
Primary:	9,333
Total:	9,538

Source: Flash Report 1, MoES, GoN, 2009/2010

Agriculture and Food Security



Above: Plowing in rocky terrain in a mountain district the central region. Photo credit: UN RCHCO

Nepal is predominantly an agricultural country with agriculture contributing 33% of Nepal's GDP and 51.4% of the economically active population is employed in the sector. Overall, the CR fits this picture with 42% of the population employed in agriculture¹⁰. There are however large variations across the eco-zones: mountain 68%, hill 43%, and Tarai 37%.

Like in the rest of Nepal, major food crops include rice, maize, wheat, potato, pulses, oilseed, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, jute, tea, cardamom, ginger and various fruits and vegetables. Of these, mustard linseeds, herbs, ginger and cardamom are the major

agricultural exports for Nepal contributing 21% of the national export earnings¹¹.

⁹ Norad, 2009. Joint Evaluation of Nepal's Education for All 2004 – 2009 Sector Programme. www.norad.no/en/attachment/125145/binary/42349?download=true

¹⁰ Source: Census 2001

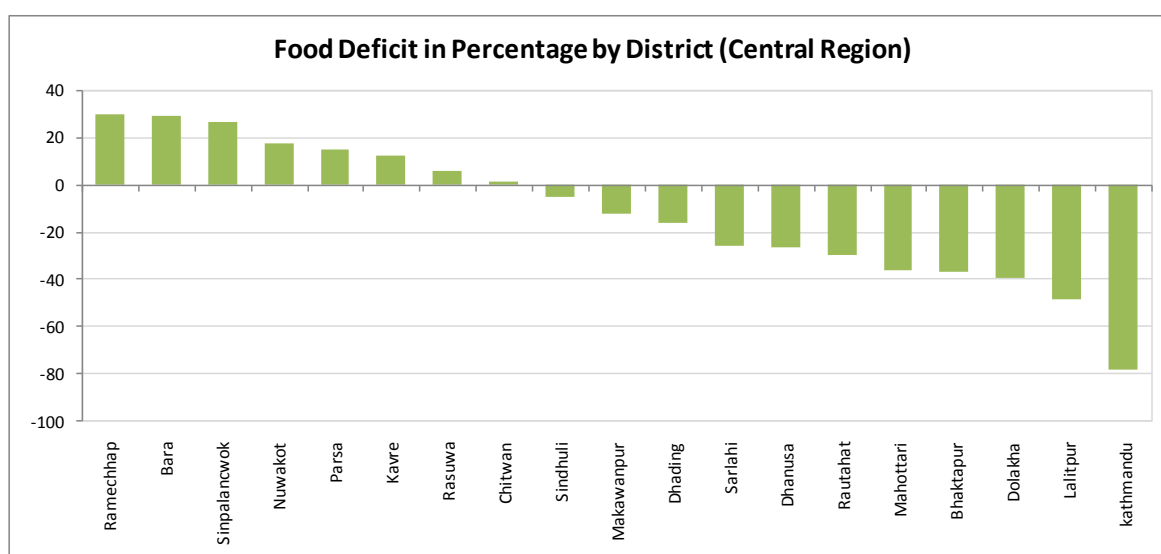
¹¹ www.apo-tokyo.org/gp/e_publi/penang_symp/Penang_Symp_P149-158.pdf

The table shown below suggests the characteristics of the agricultural sector in the CR: landlessness, small size of plots, heavy use of pesticides and scarce use of improved seeds or mechanization. As in the rest of Nepal, irrigation is not universally used.

Indicator		Nepal	CR
Area of Agricultural Land (%)		29.4	26.2
Agricultural Households (HHs) (%)		79.9	71.3
Women headed Agricultural HHs (%)		18.7	13.4
Agricultural HHs with land (%)		77.5	68.9
HHs with owned Agricultural land (%)		92.7	90.4
HHs with renting-in Land (%)		31.4	34.7
Average size of Agricultural land (hectares)		0.8	0.7
Area irrigated (%)		54.3	55
HHs using fertilizers (%)	Paddy	66.4	90.4
	Wheat	56	74.6
	Maize	34	66
HHs using improved seeds (%)	Paddy	5.4	5.6
	Wheat	5.6	7.9
	Maize	4.3	8.6
Agricultural equipment ownership (%)	Plough	56.8	39.3
	Tractor	0.6	0.5
	Thresher	0.9	0.5
	Water pump	2.7	1.8
Agricultural HHs having cattle		66.6	57.4

Food Security

The CR suffers from an overall food production deficit with the Kathmandu valley and flood affected districts being severely food-deficient¹² (see graph below). Rapid urbanization in the Kathmandu valley fragmented agricultural land and shifted it to residential and commercial use, decreasing local food production. Meanwhile, rural migration has increased the population of the valley, resulting in an overall



¹² Source : FAO/WFP Food Security Assessment Report, July 2007

food supply deficit. While the Kathmandu valley is easily supplied from neighboring districts, other food-deficient districts are cash-strapped, remote and the external food supply they rely on is vulnerable to floods, landslides or poor roads. Recent years have also exposed the vulnerability of food production to natural events such as floods and droughts.

Industries, Trade, and Employment

In addition to being the home of the capital Kathmandu as well as the country's busiest border crossings, Birgunj (61% of international trade flow) and Tatopani (the only border crossing into China), a good share of Nepal's industries (agro-products, cement, steel) along the Birgunj-Hetauda corridor, are located in the CR¹³: Overall, the CR employs most of the industrial workers in Nepal (288,428 workers out of a national total of 99,086) in 3,272 registered industrial companies (4,310 nationwide)¹⁴.

Products manufactured include garments, carpets, pashminas, handicrafts, herbal medicines, ornaments from precious and semiprecious stones, leather goods, hand-made paper and processing of agro products for export to India and onwards. In order to encourage investments, the Government of Nepal (GoN) as declared the periphery of Birgunj, the Hetauda Industrial District as well as Panchkhal (Kavre district) and Ratmate–Jiling-Devighat (Nuwakot district) as special economic zones (SEZ) where industries and trading houses are exempt from taxes. The GoN has also granted 555 hectares of land in Simara and Dummarbana VDCs of Parsa district for the construction of a SEZ.

Unemployment rates for 15 – 24 year olds

Overall for CR:	14.9% (12.3% Nationwide)
Male:	14.1%
Female:	16.1%
Mountain:	10.0%
Hill:	11.5%
Tarai:	19.9%

Source: CBS_Census 2001

Despite these measures unemployment in the CR still stands at 15%, which is higher than the national average of 12%. Intra-regional variation in unemployment in the CR is noticeable with the unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds being 10% in the mountains and double that with 20% in the Tarai.

Gender Inequality

Child and early marriages (mostly in the Tarai and in rural areas), domestic violence against women, and dowry related incidents (physical and mental torture, beatings, killings) are major challenges to gender equality in the CR. The Gender Related Development Index (GDI) in the CR is 0.517 and the Gender Equality Measure (GEM) 0.511. Although these are both above the national average, the indicators vary greatly across eco-zones with GDI 0.441, 0.589 and 0.463 and GEM: 0.489, 0.534 and 0.467 in the mountains, hills and

CR Gender-related development index: 0.517 (0.499 Nationwide)

CR Gender Empowerment Measure: 0.511 (0.496 Nationwide)

Source: UNDP HDI Report 2009

Female ownership of land and house: 4.56% (4.6% Nationwide)

Female ownership of house: 5.76% (5.5% Nationwide)

Female ownership of land: 10.68% (10.8% Nationwide)

Source: CBS – Census 2001

¹³ Source: Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade Working Paper Series, No. 79, April 2010

¹⁴ Industrial Statistics (2009/10) Government of Nepal, doind.gov.np/uploads/pdf/industrial_statistics_2066-67.pdf

Tarai respectively.

Other gender inequality indicators in the CR are: female ownership of land and house (4.6%; 4.6% nationally); ownership of house (5.8%; 5.5% nationally); ownership of land (10.7%; 10.8% nationally) and the share of female employees in non-agriculture sectors (17.5%, 17.4% nationally) which are all very low¹⁵ but close to national averages.

Highlight: Sano bambai, Thulo Sahar, HIV and Mumbai disease

“Sindhupalchowk district, barely 20 km northeast of Kathmandu Valley as the crow flies, shares with Rasuwa District, to its west, the notoriety of being the pre-eminent exporter of girls to the brothels of India. [...] Some of the Sindhupalchowk locals say that the sex trade originated in the supply of Tamang and Sherpa girls of this region to the feudal Rana court of Kathmandu. Apparently, it was just a step away from serving as bhitrini (concubines) and susaaray (maid servants) to the "cages" of the Kamathipura red light district of Bombay.

The antiquity of trafficking may be murky, but there is no doubt that there is profit in selling sex. That much is obvious. Ichowk's tin-roofs reflect a prosperity that is said to come from earnings of its women in Bombay. Until recently, when they became more common in the hills of Nepal, these tin roofs were proof of cash income and an indication of Ichowk's source of wealth, compared to poorer villages which had to make do with thatch. Unlike other equally poor hill districts of Nepal, Sindhupalchowk has concentrated on this particular export trade. It has helped that powerful gharwalis (Madames) from this region rule the roost at the Bombay end.

The family members of the victims equally share in the crime. Prostitutes who return home after several years in the trade encourage their neighbours to send their daughters to Bombay. With their ostentatious display of wealth, it is easy to convince the parents. There is, apparently, a direct link between a daughter in Bombay and a tin roof above one's head in Sindhupalchowk.” (Source: Naresh Newar, 1998. My sister Next?, Himal South Asian, Volume 11, No 10, October 1998)

Reliable data is scarce but it has been estimated that as many as 200,000 girls and women are trafficked to India to work in the sex industry (National Human Rights Commission, 2010. Trafficking in persons (especially women and children) in Nepal.

Source: [www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Countries/Nepal/NHRC - Trafficking-NationalReport_2008-09_100801.pdf](http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Countries/Nepal/NHRC_-_Trafficking-NationalReport_2008-09_100801.pdf) Around 70% of the commercial sex workers (CSWs) returning to Nepal are HIV positive. Meanwhile another 60,000 CSWs are employed in the local sex industry in Nepal. (IRIN, 2006. Nepal: The growing threat of HIV/AIDS. www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=33612).

“The proportionate distribution of population groups amongst total 59,984 estimated HIV infections of age 15 years and above was as follows: migrants (29.4%); Men who have Sex with Men (6.2%); clients of Female Sex Workers (5.0%); Injecting Drug Users (4.2%); and FSWs (1.0%). Remaining male and female populations, who were classified as low-risk populations, accounted for 26.2% and 28.0%, respectively. Female partners and spouses of Most-At-Risk Populations (MARPs) were included in the remaining female and male population [...]”. (Source: Nepal Center (NCASC), 2010. ncasc.gov.np/ncasc/Reports/HIV_Estimation_17_Dec_2010.pdf)

¹⁵ Source: CBS 2001

Social Exclusion

As in the rest of Nepal, some social groups in the CR are excluded from formal and informal structures in the society based on caste, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, geography and other conditions. Despite the abolition of caste-based discrimination in 1963, the social hierarchies and divisions remain and are reinforced by persisting inequalities in land ownership, education, health and economic status. Different social groups, therefore, enjoy very different levels of human development. The table below shows HDI values for some social groups in Nepal and how they compare to HDI values of other countries. In education, a major component of human development, there are also large differences between social groups. Nationwide adult literacy rate of Brahmin/Chhetri is 64%, for Newar 68%, all Janajati

Human Development Index across social groups (National averages)

Hill Brahman	All Brahman/Chhetri	Hill Dalits	All Dalits	Madhesi Dalits
0.612	0.552	0.449	0.424	0.383
Countries with similar values of Human Development Index				
Bhutan	India	Myanmar	Nigeria	Rwanda

Source: NHDR 2009, HDR 2010

The Chepang Community

Chepangs are a minority indigenous ethnic group, categorized by NEFIN as a ‘most marginalized indigenous nationality’². Habitat, language, culture, religion (Shamanism) and diet all contribute to set this recently sedentarized ethnic group apart. The Chepangs, numbering 52,237 (45% of whom are below age 15 according to the 2001 census) now occupy remote forest settlements and cultivate land on steep slopes where they are vulnerable to forest fires, wildlife, and landslides. Almost 90% live below the absolute poverty line² or suffer chronic food insecurity (59% of Chepangs are food sufficiency for less than six months of the year²). Literacy rate is estimated to be less than 15% due to low school enrolment rates combined with high dropout rates². (Sources:¹ National Census (Ethnicity/Caste), CBS 2001;² NEFIN, www.nefin.org.np/indigenous-nationalities/hill-in/34.html, accessed April 2011)

“The main source of the livelihood of the Chepangs is the forest and its produces. Many of them are landless. Most of them are very small land-holders. For various types of crops, the environment and climatic conditions of the forest are not conducive. Those who have land have it on the slopes of steep ranges and hence the yields are only minimal and are sufficient only for six to seven months. The rest of the months they rely on hunting, animal husbandry and forest –produces like roots, fruits, honey etc.” (Source: CCS Nepal, ccsnepal.wordpress.com/2008/09/27/with-chebang, accessed April 2011)



Chepang (meaning dog and arrow in Chepang language) worship the bow and arrows they use for hunting.

Photo credit: National Chepang Association, www.ncachepang.org.np

excluding Newar: 52%, Tarai/Madhese/other castes: 42%, Dalits: 38% and Muslim: 30%¹⁶.

Several ethnic minority groups of the CR suffer from almost complete marginalization, among them, the Chepang community (see box above).

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¹⁶ Nepal Human Development Report 2009, UNDP Nepal