

Caste/Ethnic Dimensions of Change and Inequality: Implications for Inclusive and Affirmative Agendas in Nepal

❖ Madhusudan Subedi

Introduction

Since the promulgation of the Muluki Ain (Legal Code) in 1854, the caste categorization in Nepal is taken as the primary organizing principle and the major determinant of social identity. Caste has been the central feature in Nepal to describe level of poverty, education and health status and host of other development issues, among researchers (Dahal et al., 2002; DFID and World Bank, 2006; Bennett et al., 2008). Caste/ethnic inequalities have now become important agendas of the multilateral funding agencies. However, the inequality is further complicated by interaction with class, gender and region within each group. This adds complexity to the phenomenon of intergroup disparity, which makes straight forward generalization confounding (Dashpande 2011). In this paper, I focus on caste/ethnicity because of the much discussed social categories in general public and the presence of caste-based affirmative action policies in Nepal. My main research question is - Do caste/ethnic categories in Nepal reflect poverty, education and health inequalities? Debates surrounding caste hierarchy and nature, and control over ideological and material resources by Brahman, Chhetri and Newar (BCN) clearly suggests a need for empirical research (Das and Hatlebakk, 2010). I argue, and the empirical evidences suggest, that intragroup inequality and socio-economic marginality should be the major variable to formulate social inclusion policy in Nepal.

Methods and Materials

Only from the census of 1991, information based on caste/ ethnicity was analyzed in Nepal, after Panchayat regime and restoration of multi-party democracy. The 1991 Census listed 60 caste/ethnic groups. The 2001 and 2011 Census listed 103 and 125 social groups respectively. None of the censuses, however, categorized or labeled these as the caste or ethnic groups. Government of Nepal has recognized 59 ethnic groups and the Gurung Commissionⁱ has suggested that there are 75

ethnic groups. These categories show that caste/ethnic identities are not fixed. In this paper, however, I use term caste/ethnic groups to cover all but grouped into major categories (DFID and World Bank 2006; Bennett et al. 2008). I have used national level survey data and village level information. The Nepal Living Standard Surveys (NLSSs), the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHSs) and the data of various censuses of Nepal are used for exploring national trends on poverty, education and health. I have also used village level qualitative information from Udipur, Pyuthan where I conducted fieldwork in October 2012 and January-February 2013. A total of 43 households comprising of poor and rich, diversified and less diversified, nuclear and joint, non-Dalits and Dalits, female headed and male headed were selected using theoretical sampling. A series of interview and informal discussions were conducted from the household heads of different categories including school teachers and political leaders. In 1984-85, I had taught in a high school, Udipur for about one and half years. Udipur was revisited, observed and explored in poverty, education and health care utilization to explain changes in these sectors.

Findings and Discussion

Poverty Status and Inequality

Figures show that poverty has dramatically declined in Nepal between 1995 and 2010. A total 25 percent of population was poor in 2010, compared to 42 percent in 1995. Thus, incidence of poverty in Nepal declined about 17 percent points over the course of 15 years. While the poverty in both rural and urban areas declined appreciably, the incidence of poverty remained higher in rural areas (27% in 2010) and lower in Kathmandu Valley (12%).

The migration (both internal and international) helped to improve the economic conditions of the households in terms of standard of living, asset position, awareness of livelihood opportunities, education of their children, and ability to buy food and clothing. In addition, decrease in number of household size, and the decrease in number of children below 7 years, increase in level of education further helped to decrease poverty in Nepal. Similarly, access to basic services is important correlate of poverty (CBS 2011). Access to higher secondary schools, public hospitals, paved roads, market centers, agricultural centers, and

cooperative and bank facilities have contributed to increase the living standards of people.

Poverty status by ethnic group indicates that poverty among Tarai Janjati decreased by the highest percentage point (27%) from 53% to 26%, and in case of Hill/Mountain Janajati has decreased by 20 point percentage from 49% in 1995 to 29% in 2010. Whereas the poverty among Brahman and Tarai high/middle caste people has slightly increased from 10% and 26% in 2003 to 11% and 28% in 2010 respectively. The Chhetris are often clustered together with Brahmans as members of the “high caste (BC)” or grouped with the Brahmans and Newars as the “Brahman/Chhetri/Newar (BCN) group” of “dominant” Hill communities. However, NLSS data suggest that there is a marked difference in the poverty status between Brahmin and Chhetri. Thus, it seemed that often used 'BC' or 'BNC' category shows considerable internal variation. Another significant pattern emerges between Dalits and Non-Dalits. The Dalits appear to have much greater proportion of poor households compared with Non-Dalits.

Though poverty among Hill Dalits and Tarai Dalits has decreased substantially, their poverty level is more than national average in all surveys. The village level information clearly shows that low social status is an important determinant of poverty in Nepal. Dalits have remained poor for generations because of socio-cultural norms which restricted or denied them access to resources and better livelihood opportunities. Many Dalits, in the past, had lived in the land of either big landholders or in a less productive public land. They were used as client to provide caste-based service to other caste groups, and to provide farm labor to the landholders. Due to such situation, many Dalits, could not save earning to buy land. The income from the traditional caste-based occupation was relatively low and was paid mostly in kind and sometime cash as well, depending upon the amount of land cultivated by the household (for blacksmith group) and number of members in the patron's household (for tailors). A decline in patron-client relationship, low remuneration for caste-based occupation of Dalits, lack of employment opportunities in the villages, a surplus of household labor compared to land holdings and the desire to lead an enjoyable life in the urban areas have been pushing poor households out of village (Subedi, 2015). The decreasing involvement in caste-based occupation and availability of new means of livelihood like agriculture and farm wage earning, non-farm wage earning, and foreign

migration have been creating opportunities to Dalits to improve their economic conditions. Even then, the inequalities between Dalits and Non-Dalits are still very high.

Examination of regional pattern is useful because it cautions us against any assumption that caste/ethnic identity automatically determines economic status. For example, the Brahmins and Chhetris in the Far Western Region have an average per capita income that is only slightly lower than that of Dalits in the Central Region. It is also important to note that the Newars in the Central Region (where most dwell in the Kathmandu Valley), have, on average, about twice the per capita income of Newars in the Eastern Region – who tend to be petty traders, village shop keepers and farmers in rural areas. Both the national level data and field information from the village caution the researchers that while Brahmin and Chhetri are, on average, relatively privileged, this cannot be generalized.

The poverty indices varied remarkably across development regions. The Eastern, Central and Western regions continued to have poverty indices below the national average in all three surveys, while the Mid and Far-Western regions continued above the national average. All three surveys show that there is a relationship between household size and poverty. Poverty has increased with increase in household size irrespective of caste/ethnic group. Thus, households with large families are particularly prone to poverty. Poverty rates are positively correlated with the number of children (0-6 years) present in the household. Poverty rate is lowest for household with no child, but increases to 47 percent (CBS, 2011) for households with 3 or more children (0-6 years). Thus, households with small children are particularly prone to poverty.

The village level information show that the income in terms of cash has increased because of decreased trend of payment in kind. The change in traditional farm-labor arrangement resulted in a change in relationship between employers and laborers (Mishra, 2007). The new system of cash payment provides more freedom to laborers than the traditional farm servant arrangement. This relationship has helped in the bargaining power of the employees, and the agricultural wages increased in the villages. The credit markets have been more efficient than they were in the past. The timing of these improvements corresponded with an

increased government intervention and the formalization of credit market. A broader range of loans are available from the wider range of institutions than previously and the importance of village moneylenders have been decreasing. One of the crucial causes of declining poverty and improved economic conditions of the households is that the number of people involved in non-agricultural wage labor has increased. Increasing level of education has played a positive role for entering the non-farm economy and increase in income of households.

The village level data clearly shows that poverty varies within the caste/ethnic groups, between those with regular cash income and without regular income, and with land and without land. Overall, the Brahmins were economically better than other groups. However, the Brahmins households self-employed in agriculture were poor than the Dalit households engaged in business (Subedi, 2015). Many Magar households were economically better than the Brahmins. Those who lack skills and contacts to find jobs elsewhere have remained locked in the agriculture in the village. Reliance on traditional agriculture dependent on rain water is an indicator of poverty. Thus, caste/ethnicity is not the only variable to describe poverty status but other variables are even more pertinent to discuss the poverty status of people in Nepal.

Education

It is widely accepted that education helps to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to address the problems that a person confronts with, in a confident and self-reliant manner, which is the essence of human development. Education is critical since the better-paid jobs require formal schooling, usually completion of secondary school or beyond. Education also makes migration more likely to be successful. Formal education makes it easier to learn new skills that are highly relevant to one or other activities. Education opens access to printed world and to the preservation, systematization, manipulation and transmission of symbols in a way, which would not be possible within the oral tradition. Literacy opens communication beyond the primary groups. Education and awareness building have been the popular solution to overcome poverty.

Prior to 1951, in Nepal education was treated as an active threat to the rulers rather than a potential asset. During more than a century of authoritarian Rana rule, education was restricted as part of the general policy of isolation. A vast

majority of Nepalese had no access to any kind of formal education. In 1951, there were only 300 college graduates in whole Nepal, most of whom graduated from Indian schools. Only 2% of the population was literate, and less than 1% of school-age children were enrolled in school; there were less than twenty trained teachers in the whole country. Among many constraints to development at the time, the most serious was the shortages of educated men and women, and lack of indigenous educational institutions (Isaacson et al, 2001:51).

Nepal has made excellent progress in literacy. Overall literacy rate (for population aged 5 years and above) has increased from 14 % in 1971 to 66% percent in 2011 (CBS, 2003; 2012). According to the latest census (2011) the male literacy rate is 75% compared to 57% of the females. The highest literacy rate is reported in Kathmandu district (86 %) and lowest in Rautahat (42%). The literacy rate is higher among the Jain, Marwadi, Bangali, Thakali, Hill Brahmin and Newars. Similarly, Tarai groups such as Maithili Brahman, Kayastha, Rajput, have higher literacy rate than national average. Various censuses clearly show that the literacy rate of Janjatis and Dalits have increased substantially. The literacy rates among the Hill Dalits are better than those of the Tarai Dalits, who are the most deprived in terms of education. Of them, the lowest literacy rate is that of Musahar, followed by Dom, Chamar, Paswan, Tatma (Dahal 2003, Sharma 2014).

The overall literacy rate among 15-24 year olds (formal and non-formal) has increased from 79% in 2005 to 87% in 2010. These improvements, however, are not uniform across the region, caste, ethnicity and gender (UNDP-Nepal, 2009). For example, the net enrollment rate (NER) of the richest quintile was 87 percent while that of the poorest group was 51 percent in primary school; the enrollment of girls (including Dalits, other excluded caste and ethnic groups) at all levels has improved, but the rates are significantly higher for males than females in all age groups. The Tarai /'Middle and lower caste group' have much lower levels of education, compared to Madhesi Brahmin. The largest gender gaps in literacy exist in the Tarai/Madhesh region.

According to Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2013, from just 64 % in 1990, the NER at the primary level reached 95% in 2013. The progress in NER has been supported by the increased enrolment of children in the bottom consumption quintile, from 51 percent in 2003/04 to 76.2 percent in 2010/11, an

increase of almost 50 percent in just seven years (CBS, 2004; CBS, 2011). In comparison to their share in the total population, the representation of the girls (51%), Janjati (35%) and Dalits (20%) children at the primary school is encouraging.

While the NER of the girls was lower than that of boys for the last decade, the gap has narrowed over the years. In 2012, it was just slightly below that of boys. Notably, the rate of increase was greater among girls than boys. The increase in both the overall NER and that of girls suggests the success of policy intervention like Welcome-to-School campaign and scholarship for girls (MDG Report 2013:20). However, two key concerns remain. First, 5% percent of all school-age children are still out of the school. According to NLSS 2010, almost one-fourth (24%) of children from the bottom consumption quintile (23% girls and 25% boys) do not go to school (CBS, 2011). Second, NER varies by development region, and within development regions, and by gender. The total share of Dalit students in total enrolment was 11% percent in 2011 and that of Janjatis in the same period reached to 40%. It indicates that the share of Dalit and Janjati students is quite closer to the share of total population of these groups (MoE, 2011).

Educational facilities existed within the village to study up to School Leaving Certificate (SLC) level. Private schools are established in villages and nearby villages which provide additional opportunities to study. The provision of free-education in public schools and provision of free textbooks and scholarships to all Dalit students and a midday meal program in many schools encouraged low-income households to send their children to schools. As a result, number of school going children especially from poor households increased.

In Udipur, there has been a significant increase in school attendance among Dalits (both boys and girls). Moreover, Dalit, Janjati and 'upper caste' children are treated equally in the school. In school, they eat and play together. The teachers, in general, do not discriminate their students based on caste/ethnic background.

The children of poor households, and mostly of the Dalits, do not get chance to study in private (English medium) schools and have been facing challenges to get jobs in private sector. Owing to the existence of two types of education system and the demand of competent human resources by the private sector, socially and

economically deprived youths have not been able to engage in economically better private sector.

People of different castes also have different probabilities of getting into new occupations which demand for various levels of education. Formal education has enabled the Dalits to diversify their livelihoods. With education above SLC, their first preference is for non-farm regular income; government or non-government job. The entry of Dalits into such field has been possible because of their education and inclusive social policy of the state.

Affirmative action is being implemented in Nepal for the transformation of caste-based exploitative social structure. The affirmative action policy, opened the jobs to specific social groups of Nepal like - Dalits and other groups in government jobs. However, the socially and economically advantaged Dalits and Janjatis, capture such jobs.

Overall, Nepal has made significant improvements in education through progressive policies and programs. For example, policies such as free primary education, strengthening decentralized management, building data collection systems – a user friendly system for collecting disaggregated data on gender, Dalits, and other groups, scholarships (financial and in kind-uniforms, textbooks, meals and oil) have been implemented. Support for girls and students from poor and marginalized groups, social mobilization and advocacy campaigns, social audits, including social mapping – to increase opportunities for Dalits, Janjatis have brought significant improvement in education of various castes and ethnic groups.

Health

Good health is essentially important to living a worthwhile human life. The factors which influence health are multiple and interactive (NESAC 1998). Social status affects health by determining the degree of control people have over life circumstances and their capacity to take action. Support from families, friends, community and state are important in helping people to deal with difficult situation and maintaining life circumstances. Employment and working condition, physical environment, personal health practices, availability and affordability of health services are other determinants of health.

Since 1950s, various plans, programs and strategies have been implemented to improve the health status of Nepali people through increased utilization of essential health services, increase the coverage and raise the quality of health services, with an emphasis on improved access for poor and vulnerable groups. The three-year interim development drafted (2007-2010) after historic people's movement in 2006, accepted the global principle of health as a fundamental right. The government of Nepal, together with international donors has implemented a broad range of programs to address health problems over the past decades. Despite the political unrest and armed conflict of about a decade between 1996-2006, most of the health indicators of the country showed improvements.

Mortality is widely and legitimately regarded as a key indicator of the level of public health achievement as well as general socio-economic development (NESAC 1998). The infant mortality rate was 255 per 1,000 in 1951; one-third to one-half of children died before reaching adulthood, and this high figure contributed to Nepal's exceptionally low life expectancy rate - 28 years (Isaacson et al., 2001: 43). The most recent estimates for neonatal, infant and under-five mortality in Nepal are 33, 46 and 54 per 1,000 live births respectively, for the period of 2006-2011. The overall reduction in childhood mortality in Nepal is impressive but there are variations by geographical locations, development regions, wealth status and caste/ethnicity. Mortality is high in mountain areas, Far-Western Region, born to uneducated mothers and into families belonging to the lower wealth quintile and Dalits. Further analysis indicated that poverty is the main contributing factor for mortality irrespective of their place of living and caste/ethnicity.

Mortality declines with a certain level of socio-economic development like nutrition of mothers and children, birth intervals, age of mother at pregnancy and childbirth and basic health services including immunization and safe motherhood program. Various NDHS data indicate that while infant mortality has been declining compared to the past, the pace has slowed in the most recent years. Infant mortality declined from 79 per 1,000 live births during the period 1991-1995 to 64 per 1,000 live births during the period 1996-2000, and to 48 per 1,000 live births during the period 2001-2005, but only to 46 per 1,000 live births in 2006-2010. Similarly, neonatal mortality decreased by 34 percent in this period, from 50 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1991-1995 to 33 per 1,000 in 2006-2010. Over the last

15 years in Nepal, under-five mortality fell by 54 percent, from 118 deaths per 1,000 live births to 54 per 1,000 live births. NDHS reports found that health outcomes had improved and also that the unequal access to and utilization of some services has decreased significantly.

2006 NDHS from the perspectives of caste, ethnicity and regional identity found that Dalits, Muslims and Tarai Other Groupsⁱⁱ had consistently low level of most indicators covered by the study (Bennett et al., 2008). The continued inequalities in access to and use of maternal health services were reflected in differences in maternal mortality ratio (MMR) for different groups. The study found a much higher MMR ratio among Muslim (318 maternal death per 100,000 live births), Tarai/Madhesi Other (307), and Dalits (273) compared with the Brahman /Chhetri (182) and Newar (108) at the other end of the spectrum.

Antenatal care (ANC) is considered one of the most important components of maternal health care; the aim of this care is to detect, manage, and refer potential complications during pregnancy. The use of ANC services has been increasing over the years, social inequities in access to these services are high. Compared to other groups, Tarai Dalit women have lesser number of ANC visits. Further analysis of NDHS 2011 in 2013 clearly showed that caste, ethnicity and economic statuses have statistically significant association with levels of ANC service utilization even after controlling for confounding factors (Pandey et al., 2013). The Hill Brahman and Newar women have the highest levels of use of all essential antenatal services. In contrast, Dalit and Janajati women have relatively low levels of utilization of all services. Dalits in general and Tarai Dalits in particular have lower rate of service utilization compared to other groups.

Inequalities among the different social groups reflect not only historical socio-cultural hierarchies but also the different reasons. For example, the difference in levels of ANC visits between Brahman and Chhetri women is quite large (81% versus 55%). Although the differences between the Hill and Tarai Janajatis are not large, the Tarai/Madhesi Dalit are far behind the Hill Dalits in ANC care and receipt of iron tablets, revealing high intra-group inequalities that need to be seriously considered (Pandey et al., 2013). There is a need for researchers to explore the causes of health service utilization differentials that requires a systematic

qualitative data collection and analysis to guide specific policy directives and in formulating and adapting programs to address poor indicators.

Although, there has been an increase in the number of women who are delivering in health facilities, a majority of them deliver babies at home. The Aama Program, as it is known, comprises free delivery services and cash incentives to cover travel costs for all women who deliver at designated health institutions. This includes normal delivery, management of complications, and cesarean section. Newar (68.1%) and Hill Brahman women (62.2%) have the highest percentages of delivery in health facilities, while Tarai/Madhesi Dalits have the lowest proportion (21.8%). Delivery by cesarean section, an indicator of access to safe delivery techniques if complications arise during delivery, also is highest for Newar (7.8%) and Hill Brahman women (12.2%) compared to Tarai Dalit (2.2%) and Hill Dalit (2.1%) (Pandey et al., 2013). Overall, Nepal has numerous improvements in health services over the years. Still, persistent gender, caste/ethnic, regional and wealth inequities are making it harder to close many of the remaining gaps, of which causes are rooted in historical, social and cultural discriminations against certain groups of people. It is crucial to target population groups who have less access to health services across the country by strengthening economic statuses and health system.

Conclusion

There have been significant changes in various socioeconomic indicators -sources of income, education, health status, transportation and communication, and right based activities in Nepal. In 1963, the National Civil Code abolished caste-based discrimination. Since then, there have been numerous political decisions and policy measures to attempt to remove discriminatory practices. Nepal has implemented social inclusion and affirmative action policies to address gender, caste, and ethnic-based disparities by bringing poor and marginalized groups into the mainstream of development and launching the programs that target the most deprived and vulnerable groups. The inclusion of Dalits, Janjatis and other disadvantaged groups in the 1990 constitution of Nepal, the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy, formation of autonomous organizations like National Dalit Commission and Adibasi Janajati Utthan Rastriya Pratisthan, and the proactive provisions of reservation and positive discrimination are some significant steps forward in bringing the Dalit and Janjati agendas into the mainstream of development through empowerment and inclusion (Subedi, 2016). In the

education sector, through Nepal Education for All (NEFA) program, government has expressed commitment to provide equal access in educational services to girls, linguistic minorities, Dalits and Janjatis. NEFA also provides scholarships for all Dalit Children. In health sector also, policies are formulated for the betterment of Dalits and janjatis but without proper assessment of affordability and economic status of the households.

Madhesi is a broader Tarai/Madhesh ethnicity that includes all castes of that region. Tarai Brahmins/Chhetris have the better economic conditions, higher level of education and health. The Tarai Dalits, on the other hand, are economically poor and have lower level of education and poor health statuses. Among many caste/ethnic groups which add to Nepal's diversity, some are clearly less well-off than others. Consistently, Dalits have poor economic and social indicators. Differences in poverty do not necessarily reflect current situation of discrimination against Dalits but a product of historical relationship between Dalits and Non-Dalits, a contribution of discrimination in the past. Remoteness has been preventing people from actively participating in various sectors, ranging from access to education and health, non-farm economic activities and right-based movements. Mid and far-west mountainous areas are remote and their terrains are difficult. The region has relatively little cultivable land, low population density and few market centers. However, inequality and the debates on social exclusion in Nepal have been concerned with characteristics of excluded groups – ethnic, religious or caste groups but intragroup inequality has been of lesser concern. The caste/ethnic based reservation quotas benefits mostly the 'creamy layer'. The advantages of reservation are mostly accrued by the Dalits and Janjatis from urban background, whose parents have already been the beneficiaries of the quotas in education and employment. Their parents are either civil servants or are working in the economically better private organizations in a more cosmopolitan setting than their rural counterparts (Deshpande, 2011). Thus opportunities created by inclusive policies are captured by the elites within the Dalits and Janjatis. There have been less emphasis and policy debates on single parent households, disabled, unemployed and children. Haug and Aasland (2009:13) say:

"In Nepal, the debate on social exclusion has been concerned with characteristics of excluded groups-ethnic, religious or caste groups-intragroup exclusion has been a lesser concern. The danger in a singular

focus on groups per se is that it risks blurring crucial intragroup dynamics and exclusion mechanisms.... Hence, as a concept informing social policy measures social exclusion may benefit from a more nuanced analysis of intra-group dynamics."

Hence, the reservation policy should be aimed at the really marginalized and poor people and a caste/ethnic marker is not sufficient to ensure their inclusion in real sense. Affirmative actions should be class-based rather than caste/ethnicity based (Subedi, 2016). Irrespective of the caste/ethnicity, the state policy has to focus on poor households which do not have access to economic opportunities, education and health services to implement the policies of equity and social justice in new Nepal.

Acknowledgements:

This paper emerged from the research project 'Households, Livelihoods and Social and Political Transformation in Nepal (2012-2014)' funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. I am thankful to Professor Chaitanya Mishra, Dr Astri Suhrke and Dr Magnus Hatlebakk for their constructive feedback and suggestion.

References

- Bennett, Lynn, Dilli Ram Dahal and Pav Govindasamy, 2008. *Caste, Ethnic and Regional Identity in Nepal: Further Analysis of the 2006 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey*. Calverton, Maryland, USA: Macro International Inc.
- CBS 1996. *Nepal Living Standards Survey Report 1996: Main Findings*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- CBS 2004. *Nepal Living Standards Survey, 2003/04: Statistical Report*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- CBS 2011. *Poverty in Nepal (2010/11)*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- CBS 2012. *Nepal Population and Housing Census 2011*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- CBS and UNICEF 2012. *Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010: Mid and Far Western Regions*. Kathmandu, Nepal: CBS and UNICEF.
- Dahal, Dilli Ram, Yogendra Bahadur Gurung, Bidhan Acharya, Kamala Hemchuri and Dharma Swarnakar 2002. *National Dalit Strategy*. Kathmandu: ActionAid Nepal, CARE Nepal and Save the Children.
- Dahal, Dilli Ram 2003. Social Composition of the Population: Caste, Ethnicity and Religion in Nepal. In *Population Monograph of Nepal*, Vol. 1. Kathmandu: CBS. Pp 87-135.
- Das, Arun K.L. and Magnus Hatlebakk 2010. *Statistical Evidence on Social and Economic Exclusion in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Himal Books.
- Deshpande, Ashwini 2011. *The Grammar of Caste: Economic Discrimination in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- DFID and WB 2006. *Unequal Citizens: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal*. Kathmandu: DFID and World Bank.
- GoN/NPC/UN Country Team of Nepal 2013. *Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2013*. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, Nepal.

- Haug, Marit and Aadne Aasland 2009. A Review of the Academic and Policy Debates on “Social Exclusion” in Europe and its Relevance in Nepal. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 36 (Special issue), 1-22.
- Isaacson, Joel M., Christa A. Skerry, Kerry Morah and Kay M. Kalavan 2001. *Half-a-Century of Development: The History of U.S. Assistance to Nepal (1951-2001)*. Kathmandu, Nepal: USAID.
- Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), New ERA, and Macro International Inc., 2007. *Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2006*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, and Macro International Inc.
- Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), New ERA, and Macro International Inc., 2012. *Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2011*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, and Macro International Inc.
- Mishra, Chaitanya 2007. *Essays on the Sociology of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Fine Print.
- NESAC 1998. *Nepal Human Development Report 1998*. Kathmandu: Nepal South Asia Centre.
- Ministry of Education 2011. *School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Ministry of Education, Department of Education.
- Pandey, J. P., M.R. Dhakal, S. Karki, P. Poudel, and M.S. Pradhan. 2013. *Maternal and Child Health in Nepal: The Effects of Caste, Ethnicity, and Regional Identity: Further analysis of the 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey*. Calverton, Maryland, USA: Nepal Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, and ICF International.
- Prennushi, Giovanna 1999. *Nepal: Poverty at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*. Kathmandu: The World Bank
- Sharma, Pitamber. 2014. *Some Aspects of Nepal's Social Demography*. Kathmandu: Social Science Baha and Himal Books.
- Subedi, Madhusudan. 2015. *Identity Debate and Ethnic Federalization in Rural Areas of Nepal*. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 42(1):107-143.

Subedi, Madhusudan. 2016. Caste in South Asia: From Ritual Hierarchy to Politics of Difference. *POLITEJA*, 40(1):319-339.

United Nations Development Program. 2008. *A Resource on the Situation of Dalits in Nepal, their Demands and Implications for a new Constitution*. Kathmandu: United Nation Development Program.

United Nations Development Program. 2009. *Nepal Human Development Report 2009*. Kathmandu: United Nation Development Program.

Endnotes:

ⁱ The government of Nepal had formed a commission in 2010 to revise the ethnic groups list coordinated by anthropologist and ethnic activist Dr Om Gurung, the then Head and Professor of Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University. This commission report claimed that members of the commission had carried out intensive consultation in the various parts of Nepal when they prepared the list.

ⁱⁱ The caste/ethnic groups mentioned in this analysis were categorized according to their original caste/ethnic background, rather than according to the place where they currently live. The major caste/ethnic groups categorized were: Hill Brahmin/Chhetri, Tarai (Madhesi) Brahmin/Chhetri, Tarai (Madhesi) Other Caste, Newar, Hill Dalit, Tarai Dalit, Hill Janjati, Tarai Janjati and Mulsim.