REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

FREDERICK H. GAIGE

REGIONALISM AND

NATIONAL UNITY

IN NEPAL

\ IK/\S PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

DELHI nOMBAV HANGALORE KANPUR

VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

5 Dar^’aganj^ Ansari Road, Delhi- 110006

Savoy Chambers, 5 Wallace Street, Bombay-400001

10 First Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore-560009

80 Canning Road, Kanpur-2080001

Copyright © 1975

by The Regents of the University of California

First published by

The University of California Press

Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, U.S,A.

Printed in the United Stales of America

Austra and I dedicate this book to

the memory of a beloved friend,

Gordon G. Roadarmel

Willi appreciation to Davidson College

for subsidizing the publication of this book.

CONTENTS

Preface

I. Geopolitics of the Tarai 1

The Physical Setting 2

Reli^ous Characteristics of the

Population 12

Linguistic Characteristics of ilic

Population 1 5

Caste Characteristics of the Population 17

Marriage Ties Between the People of

the T arai and N orthern India 22

The Process of “Nepalization” 22

II. Economy of the Tarai 24

Notes on the Economic History

of the Tarai 24

The Economic Importance of the Tarai 26

The Tarai, Nepal, and the Rice Trade 29

Trade Ties Between the Tarai and India 29

Communal Characteristics of Village

Shopkeepers and Itinerant Village

Traders

The Relationship ofTarai Industry to

the Indian Economy 2 ^

Communal Characteristics of Owners of

Small-Scale Industry

Nepalese Attitudes Toward Indian

Economic Domination

Extension of the Nepalese Currency

System into the Tarai

Vll

43

CONTENTS

viii

III. Nepal-India Border Problems

Border-Demarcation Disputes

Control of Crime Along the Border 48

Smuggling 49

Illegal Economic Activity and Cultural

Stereotypes

The Blurred Border 56

1\’. Migration into the Tarai 58

Migration from Northern India into the

Tarai 58

Migration from the Hills into the Tarai 62

The Tarai as a Population Vacuum 66

The Scale of Migration 70

Caste and Communal Characteristics

of Migrants 73

Previous Residence of Migrants 76

Economic Status of Migrants 78

Government-Sponsored Resettlement

Projects 82

V. The Politics of Citizenship 87

Status of Tarai Subjects before 1951 87

Citizenship Laws in the 1950s 89

Citizenship Laws in the 1960s 91

Citizenship Requirements for Various

Ts-pes of Economic Activity 94-

Citizenship-Application Procedures 99

Controversy over Citizenship 100

Dual Citizenship 104

The Specter of Migration 105

Anti-Indian Sentiment and

Citizenship Restrictions 106

^1. 1 ite Politics of Language 108

Gewernment Language Policy and the

Language Controversy, 1956-58 109

L Hindi the Predominant Language of

CONTENTS

the Tarai?

To What Extent is Nepali Spoken in

the Tarai?

The Language Issue During the Period of

the National Election Campaign and

the Nepali Congress Government,

1958-60

The Government’s Language Policy

since 1960

VII. Language, Communication, and

National Integration

The Press and the Radio

Government Officials’ Contact with

Villagers

The Integrative Function of the

Educational System

VIII. Politics in the Nepalese Tradition

Origin and Structure of the Panchayat

System

Politics at the Village Level

Politics at the District Level

Politics at the Zonal Level

Politics at the National Level

IX. Oppositional Politics in the Tarai

The Land-Reform Program and

Discontent in the Rural Areas

Opposition Parties

Support in India for Opposition Parties

X. The Problem of National Integration

Appendix. Methodology of the Field Sut^.^y

Conducted in the Tarai, November

1967-March 1968

Glossar)^

Selected Bibliography

Index

ix

115

119

121

124

126

126

130

132

136

136

141

144

156

158

171

171

181

191

194

207

215

21 ^

23 -

MAPS, TABLES, DIAGRAMS

MAPS

1 . Census regions and census districts of Nepal

2. Development zones and development

districts of Nepal

3. Speakers of hill languages, plains languages

and plains tribal languages as percentages

of tarai district populations

4. Commercial centers of the tarai at Indian

railheads

5. Population density in districts of Nepal and

India’s border districts

6. Forested and cultivated areas of the tarai

7. Linguistic subregions of the tarai

8. Subregions of the tarai having similar religi-

ous characteristics

9. Subregions of the tarai having similar

population density characteristics

TABLES

1. Religious Composition of the Population of

Nepal

2. Religious Composition of the Tarai Popula-

tion

3. Major Languages Spoken in the Tarai, 1961

4. Population by Regional and Communal

Grouping in Five Tarai Districts

xii MAPS, TABLES, DIAGRAMS

5. Regional and Communal Affiliation of

Shopkeepers in Sample Villages

6. Itinerant Traders in Sample Villages of Five

Tarai Districts, by Regional and Com-

munal Groupings

7. Small-Scale Industry in the Tarai, by

District and Type of Industry'

8. Owners of Small-Scale Industry in Five

Tarai Districts, by Regional and Com-

munal Groupings

9 . Migrant F amilies as a Percentage of All Fami -

lies in Sample and Nonsample Villages,

by District and Subregion of District

10. Percentage of Migrant Families Settling

Permanently in Sample Districts, by

Region in Which Migrant Families

Resided Previously

11. Migrant Families Settling Permanently,

1959-67, as a Percentage of Total Popula-

tion in 1967, by District and Economic

Status

12. National Panchayat Electorate

13. Jhapa District ; Participadon in Village- and

District-Level PanchayatBodics, by Caste,

Tribal, and Regional Affiliation

14. Mahottari-Dhanusha ; Participation in Vil-

lage- and District-Level Panchayat Bodies,

by Caste, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation

15. Bara District; Participation in Village- and

District-Level Panchayat Bodies, by

Caste, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation

16. KapUabastu District; Participation in

Village- and District-Level Panchayat

Bodies, by Caste, Tribal, and Regional

Affiliation

32

34

39

40

71

77

79

140

148

149

150

151

MAPS, TABLES, DIAGRAMS xiii

17. Kailali District: Participation in Village-

and District-Level Panchayat Bodies, by

Caste, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation 152

18. Regional and Communal Groups within the

1959 Parliament and the 1967 National

Panchayat 164

19. Regional and Communal Distribution of

National-Level Administrators 166

20. Caste Breakdown of Senior Army Officers,

1967 167

DIAGRAM

1. Nepal’s Panchayat System 138

XVI

PREFACF.

docs consideration of international relations take precedence over

developments within Nepal.

The tarai is the one important repion of Nepal that i.s geographically

and culturally distinct from the hills and, for this rca.son, problems

of national integration focus primarily on the relationship betsveen the

two regions. The economic importance of the tarai, the political restivc-

ncss of its population, and the growing sense of national purpose among

members of the governing elite in Kathmandu have prompted the

Nepalese government to seek ways to link the tarai ntnrc cficctivcly

to the hill region and at the same time to loosen the economic and

cultural ties which the tarai population hassliarcd with the population

living across the border in northern India. Chapters through X

focus upon the process of national integration, that is, upon the various

government policies designed to link the tarai with ilie hills and upon

the reaction of the tarai population to these policies.

What is meant by the term “integration”? Mvron Weiner’s

definition provides us with a useful touchstone :

The term “integration" tlius covers a va.st range oriiuman rcl:itionship.s

and attitudes- ilic integration of diverse ami discrete cultural lovaltics

and the development ofa sense of nationality: the integration of political

units into a common territorial framework with a government which

can exercise authonty; ihc inicgmiion of llic rulers ami llie ruled; the

micgralion of the citizens into a common political proce.ss; and, finally,

ic integration of individuals into organizations for purposive activities.'

™ I» litt Ncp.ilcsc situ-itira,

Ld Sr I'' “ "» or dive™

nor ,« l„r ” ’ -T"\*"" "" « 'I'P Ml r SiP"

To™ n,rr r™’'

ZZZ°l nu is ,I,C critical probicn.

This volume was written fnr

comprise all f Tl,c (i»(

»ko.„Ti„.T J a \*'”"P Kientisri

lopini naliom and wouldTndThb i"" '’r““ in deve-

useful for their rnm • °f'ntcrdisciplinary ease study

’“Political Integration a d P V • theoretical analyses. In tlic third

ofPoblml and Social Science, vol.°358 tf^”chT965)'\*’54^™“^'’ Academy

PREFACE

XVll

group are Nepalese policy makers, the members of Kathmandu’s

governing elite who face the problems related to national integration.

It is my hope that these individuals, some of whom are friends and

acquaintances, rvill find the new data presented here helpful as they

proceed \sdth their difficult task.

This work grew out of my doctoral dissertation, and I would like

to acknowledge the support I received for the doctoral research, an

N.D.E.A. -related Fulbright-Hays Fellowship from the U.S. Office of

Education and a Fulbright Fellowship from the Institute of Inter-

national Education for eighteen months of data collecting in Nepal.

While in Nepal, I was awarded a grant from Tribhuvan University

which enabled me to hire a research assistant for the period of the

field survey. A one-year appointment at the Institute of Internadonal

Studies, University of California, Berkeley, allowed me to write a

major part of the dissertation. Two summer grants from Davidson

College made it possible for me to complete the dissertation and then

to revise it for publication.

There are many individuals to whom I owe a great deal of gratitude

for assistance wth %'arious aspects of this research. Many are Nepalis

who, by their friendship and their interest in my work, made my stay

in Nepal an unforgettable experience. They have added important

dimensions to this work. I would like to acknowledge them by name,

but refrain from doing so in the event that any of my conclusions may

be objectionable to their government.

I have received generous support from members of the Department

of South Asia Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania;

Dr. Holden Furber, Dr. Alan Heston, Dr. Richard Lambert, Dr. Joseph

Schwartzberg, and especially Dr. Norman Palmer and Dr. Dorothy

Thomas. Since 1964, 1 have been in constant touch with Dr. Leo Rose

and have spent three periods of study at the University of California

to use materials he has collected and to obtain his advice with regard

to my research. The time he has devoted to discussing my research

with me and to reading and suggesting revisions of my work runs into

countless days. It is difficult to imagine how this study could have

been completed without his counsel and his concern.

Finally, I owe my wife, .Ausira, far more than gratitude for her

involvement in all aspects of my work. Her incisive observations about

Nepal and about my research, her companionship even in the most

tn-ing field conditions, her patient editing, and constant encourage-

ment over the years since I began the research make this book not

mine, but ours.

Chapter I

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

Nepal’s importance, seen from the international perspective, lies

not in its size or its natural resources, but in its strategic location

between two Asian powers, China and India. In size, Nepal compares

with Illinois, and its population is little more than eleven million. Its

natural resources, aside from the potendal to generate large amounts of

hydroelectric power, seem to be minimal. But Nepal, a strip of mostly

mountainous territory approximately 100 miles wide, forms a buffer

state between the Tibetan region of China and the economic and

demographic heartland of India, the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar,

and West Bengal. Thirty-five percent of India’s population, much of

India’s industry, and some of its richest agricultural land is situated

in these three states, and through them run the transportation and

communication arteries that are vital to northern India.

China and India have been competing for leadership in Asia since

the mid-1950s. Particularly during the late 1950s and early 1960s,

their armies clashed sporadically along the border and, during one

brief period, October-November 1962, hostilities flared into a border

war. India perceives China as a threat to its security and regards

Nepal as a keystone in its northern defense system. To the extent that

India’s vulnerability in the Himalayas is China’s strength, the United

States and Russia also ^vant to guarantee that India’s northern defense

system is adequate. Cognizant of Nepal’s geopolitical importance

they, like India, have used diplomacy and various forms of aid to'

ensure that Nepal does not become dominated by Chinese interests.

Nepal is far removed from the heartland of China. In the past

China has conceded that territory- on the southern side of the Himalayas'

comes under the hegemony of the dominant power in the subcontinent

and, therefore, has made no claims of sovereignty or suzerainty over

Nepal. On the other hand, during the 1950s and 1960s, China was

willing to use its influence to provide some leverage for Nepal in its

relations with India because China viewed a Nepal ’ndepemfem of

Indian control as a serious defense problem for India.

i REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

Nepal is renowned for its magnificent mountains, which include

four of the five highest peaks in the world. These Himalayas, as the

mythical home of the Aryan gods, draw to them contemplative Hindus

from all over the subcontinent. As rugged, snow-swept pyramids of

rock soaring into the sky, they draw adventurous mountain chmbers.

As sheer spectacles of wonder, they attract tourists from around the

wor , t would undoubtedly astonish many of Nepal’s casual visitors

to now that 15 percent of the land area in this “mountain kingdom”

IS at p ains territory, home to 31 percent of the nation’s inhabitants.

This important but little-studied plains region of Nepal is called the

tarai. ^

e tarai is important to Nepal, because it generates more than half

e nation s gross national product, and the government obtains

p cent 0 Its revenue from agricultural and industrial productivity

well t its own geopolitical significance as

India strip of territory lying along Nepal’s border with

econnmir! predominantly of Indian origin, its

times durin^thr primarily with India and, at various

ment nolitical f it has been the stage for antigovern-

oper tin om T "'u Nepalis

E Tat T ^''vays regarded

Netl’rnrETv \*"'l^Pendence than China, because of

many LET upon India. For

malarious tarai foreTbeLuEeET'^^

thepenetrationof'Enlenc^^^^^^^^^

ted, much of the forest has viMH n \* . "ow largely eradica-

and the tarai is viewed by many'^Nen of land-hungry settlers,

Indian influence can increase ^hiT \*\*

uponNepalas“adavD-pra- ^ ®ome anxious Indians look

-ome Lied

lani .\* Ihei, vulnerabk undiS™”'

- OC.1 \*1NG

at thTfom TTounLj SeTTef E'"'

geographical definitions ' one m land. There are two

the other specifically limited to^NepaTxr

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI 3

definition includes the long and narrow strip of plains abutting the

Himalayan foothills all the way from Uttar Pradesh through Nepal,

West Bengal, and Bhutan and into India’s North East Frontier Agency,

now called Arunachal Pradesh. The second definition, the one that

will be used throughout this study, includes only the plains region

adjacent to the foothills within Nepal’s national boundaries. This

foothill range is called the Siwaliks or sometimes the Churia range.

As the crow flies, the Nepal tarai is approximately 500 miles

long, from its western boundary, the Mahakali River, to its

eastern boundary, the Mechi River. Of course, the actual boundary

line between the Nepal tarai and the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh,

Bihar, and West Bengal follows a circuitous route of considerably

more than 500 miles. It wandere across the countryside, sometimes

following a winding river bed and sometimes the seemingly arbitrary

surveyor’s line from one stone boundary pillar to the next. At its widest

point, the tarai has a span of 33 miles and, at its narrowest,\_ 2 or 3 miles.

The estimated average width of the tarai along its entire east-west

axis is 20 miles. Nepal does not control an uninterrupted strip of plains

along the entire length of its southern border. For reasons not yet

clear to historians, India controls sections of the tarai south of Dang-

Deukhuri and Chitwan districts.\*

The Siwaliks range was the last created by the niighty geological

forces that produced the Himalayas. The youti o J 's

borne out by the frequent earthquakes in t e region an y t e geo-

logical action that continues to push up the level of the tarai closest

to the Siwaliks, producing a gradual slope ^ The

tarai has been crLted not only by this ‘‘orogen c ac^uv y, but also

by alluvial action in the Siwaliks and the ranges.

Dozens of snow-fed rivers drain the

of smaller rivers and streams which flow only du g e rainy season

originate in the Siwaliks range itself, nver -d str^

rocks, gravel, sand, and fertile ^ ^^id September to

slone Diirinff the dry months, trom r "T'a-June,

moM of riwr bi no mot. ton broad eap,„» otg,,,

Z -l.,e and gravel, with an orc^on.l

Zldt uZyamidriallnvio'^j"^^^

these rivers and streams become raging torrents, emptying out of the

=See map 2 for of the tarai distncK- , ^

“O. H. K. Spate and A. T. A- nea>

Geography, 3d ed. (London, 1967), PP- ’

'^d Rigion^

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

5

t^’pe of vegetation predominates — savannah grass and bamboo. In

eastern Nepal, where the rainfall averages more than 100 inches a

year, the vegetation is of the moist tropical type, mostly tall deciduous

hardwoods. Sal, commercially the most valuable of the hardwoods,

grows throughout most of the tarai.

Two geographical terms frequently used in Nepal, “inner tarai”

and “outer tarai,” must be introduced here. The three broad, low-

l^dng river valleys north of the Siwaliks are referred to in Nepalese

government publications as vitri madhesh or inner tarai. The outer

tarai is the plains region within Nepal’s border south of the Siwaliks.

The term tarai as used in this study refers only to the outer tarai.

The term “hills” is used throughout this study to include all of

Nepal from the Siwaliks foothill range north to the Tibetan border.

This is a broader definition of the term than the Nepalese use. A fuller

definition of this and other important terms such as “hill languages,”

“hill people,” “plains,” and “plains people” is given in the glossary.

To determine the square-mile area of the tarai, its territory can be

defined in several ways; one, as the area of Nepal south of the Siwaliks

or, two, as the area of the tarai districts established by the government

as administrative units. Using the first of these definitions, the tarai

has an area of 8,282 square miles or 15.2 percent of Nepal’s total

54,363-square-mile area. If the tarai area is calculated on the basis

of administrative districts, there will be two slightly different results,

because there arc two sets of districts, census and development districts.

The area of the census districts is 8,92 1 square miles and the area of the

development districts is 9,437 square miles, or 16.4 percent and 17.4

percent, respectively, of Nepal’s total area. Both sets of administrative

districts include some territory' in the Siwaliks, particularly in Sunsari

and Morang districts, hence the 8,282-square-mile calculation is

the more accurate. The fact that Nepal now has two sets of district

organizations, one for the census and the other for development and

general administrative purposes, is likely to cause some confusion

Because it is necessary' to refer to both sets of districts throughout

this study, a map for each is included.

The ecology of the tarai has changed greatly during the past seven

hundred years, indeed, during the past several decades, and the trer

of change follows closely that which has taken place in other n

the Gangctrc plain. In the 16th and 17th centuries the

pcro„ ™ld clcplunu, buflaloB, bison.

m ,l,c „g,o„ be.s,cc„ ,l,c and J„„„,

MAHAKALI

GEOPOLITICS OF THE

TARAI 9

List of Development ^ones and Districts for Map 2°

I. Mahakali zone

VII. Lumbini zone

1. Darchula

1. Gulmi

2. Baitadi

2. Argha

3. Dandcldhura

3. Palpa

4. Kanchanpur

4. Kapilabastu

5. Rupandehi

II. Seti zone

6. Pfawal Parasi

1 . Bajhang

2. Bajura

VIII. Gandaki zone

3. Doti

1 . Manang

4. Achham

2. Parbat

5. Kailali

3. Kaski

4. Lamjung

III. Karnali zone

5. Gorkha

1 . Humla

6. Syangja

2. Mugu

3. Jumla

7. Tanahu

4. Tibrikot

IX. Narayani zone

I. Chitwan

IV. Bheri zone

2. Makwanpur

1. Dailekh

3. Parsa

2. Jajarkol

4. Bara

3. Surkhet

4. Bardic

5. Rautahat

5. Banke

X. Bagmati zone

I . Rasuwa

V. Rapti zone

2. Nuwakot

1. Rukum

3. Sindhu Palchok

2. Rolpa

4. Dhading

3. Sallyan

5. Kabhre Palchok

4. Piuthan

6. Kathmandu

5. Dang Dcukhuri

VI. Dhaulagiri zone

7. Bhaktapur

8. Lalitpur

1. Dolpa

XI. Janakpur zone

2. Mustang

1 . Dolakha

3. Mygadi

2. Ramcchhap

4. Baglung

3. Sindhuli

'Tarai development districts .arc imlicized.

The three districts of Kath-

mandti V.alley arc districts 6, 7, and 8 of B.agmati zone.

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

II

on the Gangetic plain are so numerous that it is more informative to

point out a few significant dissimilarities. From almost any tarai

village one can look north on a clear day to see the forest fringe, often

quite near at hand and, beyond, the Siwaliks. For several months

after the monsoon rains of June, July, and August have washed the

dust out of the air, it is often possible to see the majestic snow-capped

peaks of the Himalayas reaching up behind the Siwaliks.

Modernization has only begun to have its effects upon the villages

and bazaar towns of the tarai. The nearly ubiquitous macadam roads

buses and electric-power lines of rural areas across the Indian border

in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have not yet reached tarai villages. These

are just now being introduced to the few commercial towns of the

tarai. Without bridges or hard-surface roads, life comes almost com-

pletely to a standstill during the rainy season. The hundreds of tame

streams and rivers that can be forded by foot during the dry season

swell dangerously, often flooding cultivated areas along their banks

and cutting off one village from the next.

Aside from the lack of modernization, the most obvious difference

between the tarai and the rest of the Gangetic plain is the presence

still in relatively small numbers, of hill people. Particularly evident

in the commercial centers, mingling with the dhoti-clad and sari-clad

plains people, are hill men dressed in pants which are tight below the

knee and bagg^^ around the middle, vest-like jackets and distinctive

peaked caps. The hill women wear long skirts with layered cloth belts

and long-sleeved blouses. Unlike the plains people who carry their

goods on their heads or in bullock carts, the hill people, adjusting to

the demands of their mountain terrain, carry goods in conc-sha I

wicker backpacks. Settlers from the hills often construct their houses

in the distinctive architectural style of the hill region. The houses have

two floors, the ground floor generally designed as shelter for animals

and storage of tools and supplies, the upper storey as living quart ■

for the family. As one travels through the villages of the tarai ^

easily distinguish these houses by their overhanging upper store”

construction. ^

Thus, the tarai is geographically and culturally a transitional

between the hills and the plains. The plains features preejo

but the hill features make their impact. The transitional natur”''Th ’

tarai creates for Nepal problems associated with integratio^of the

region into a national economic and political framework Thi dv

is an analysis of these problems. But the tarai also provides^Nepal

12 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

with promise in the form of abundant resources that can be tapped

for development of the whole nation. This aspect should be kept in

mind as the problems are analyzed.

Familiarity with some of the most important cultural characteristics

of the tarai population, of both its plains and hill components, is

essential if the problem and promise of national integration are to be

properly understood. Most tarai inhabitants are plains people. Their

religious traditions, languages and the caste system, their food, style

of clothes, forms of entertainment and even personal mannerisms

are cultural characteristics they share with people who live across

the Indian border in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. During the past decade,

hill people have begun to settle in the tarai in significant numbers,

carrying their own traditions with them and bringing about a per-

ceptible change in the cultural equation of the region. Let us consider

three important cultural characteristics, religion, language, and social

structure, m order to measure the extent to which the north Indian

plains culture predominates in the tarai and the extent to tvliich the

Nepalese hill culture is penetrating the region.

RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

According to the 1961 census of Nepal, 88 percent of Nepal’s total

population IS Hindu. This percentage is about the same for both the

arai an i regions. The percentage is actually somewhat lower in

, ecause Nepal’s census enumerators categorized the

fart ^ ° plains and the hills as Hindus despite the

hill t ° nominally Hinduized. Many of the

nractirpH primarily influenced by religions they

tribals’ r advance of Hinduism into the region. The hill

Bon ni l Buddhism, a Tibetan religion called

to practiciith of animism. Many of the plains tribals continue

eEs coL ''r Table 1 gives statistics on the

regions composition of Nepal’s population.

Aa plains and hill people as

regions has many i

of the same gods^celebratin ? example, worship of many

of religious storips i i • " common festivals, and recitation

Brahmin priests of legends. The

literature and ritual Th common body of Sanskrit

ntual. The orthodox Hindus in both Nepal and India

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

TABLE 1

Religious Composition of the Population of Nepal

All Nepal

Eastern Hills

Kathmandu Valley

Western Hills

Far-western Hills

Eastern Tarai

Mid-western Tarai

Far-western Tarai

Hinduism

Buddhism

Source: Census of Kepal, 1961, vol. II, pp. 16-17.

take satisfaction from the fact that the King of Nepal is a fr

stands at the head of the only government in the world ' " ”

Hinduism enjoys special status. ’''•'I'lidr

On the other hand, Hindu practices in the hills differ frr

in tlie plains in a number of respects. Hinduism in ii.s orthodr^!

has never been accepted by many hill people. Strict ^'1"^

is practiced by few of those people; some hill Brahmins

such as chicken and goat. Upper-caste plains pcopp.

dieiaiA' restrictions of Hinduism much more carefully. Aid

no means common, intcrcaste marriages sometimes take

hill people; such marriages are considered taboo amouj/',?,

people. The more fie.xiblc social traditions of Hinduism

in the hills result largely from the interaction between

the less rigid social traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. [„ f,'”’"'

Hinduism has been affected by interaction with Islam, f,/

it has adopted practices such asi /ntrdha, the keepinj/

state of seclusion. This is a widespread practice amone t,, '

upper-caste plains Hindus. ”J»mzed

Table 2 provides more detailed information nboui tf-

composition of the tartii population. T he conceniratj,,^, j f

in some tarai districts and their almost total ab^'m,-

districts provide.s the major religious variation in tkf other

the tarai. '.ions of

Almost no .Muslim.s live in Bardia. Kailali. and Krinr|,..

districts of the far-western t.arai. Large tracts ofdeme p,. <hr^

■ -t JDM sou-

14

,Ea.O»LIS>. \*»D KAT.OML WrrV IN- NEMT.

TABLE 2

Religious Composition of the Tarai Population

Regions anil districU of

the tarai

Hinduism

Eastern tarai :

jhapa

Biratnagar

Hanuman Nagar

Siraha

Mahottari

Sarlahi

Rautahat

Bara

Parsa

Mid-western tarai:

Palhi

Majkhanda

Khajahani

Shivaraj

Far-western tarai:

Banke

Bardla

Kailali

Kanchanpur

89.8

95.6

91.0

93.0

93.1

89.2

87.8

83.4

88.2

87.3

87.1

91.7

88.9

83.1

82.3

91.5

78.0

97.0

99.8

99.9

Islam

8.9

3.4

7.0

6.8

5.6

9.0

7.8’

16.9

11.4

12.6

12.7

8.3

10.7

16.9

17.7

8.5

21.9

3.0

.2

.1

Buddhism

1.1

.9

1.1

.0

.8

1.8

4.4

.0

.2

.0

,1

.0

.3

.0

.0

.0

.0

.0

,0

.0

Source; Census of Nepal, 1961, vol. 11, pp. 16-17.

of these districts have discouraged migration into them

heavily populated areas of northern Uttar Pradesh to the sout •

inhabitants of these three sparsely populated districts arc ®

exclusively Tharus, plains tribals who have lived isolated in the ore^^

for countless generations. They are only now beginning to expen

the process of Hinduization.

The next district to the east, Banke, has the largest Muslim concen

tration of any tarai district. This seemingly contradictory situation

results from the fact that there is no forest south of Banke to discourage

migration from the areas of Muslim concentration in northern U

Pradesh. Although there is some fluctuation, a general decline in i

percentage of Muslims is evident as one moves through tarai districts

east of Banke, the lowest percentage (with the exception of those

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

15

districts mentioned above) being in Jhapa, the most easterly tarai

district. This follows the same pattern of decline in the percentage of

the Muslim population that one finds while moving from west to

east across northern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This correspondence

in the Hindu-Muslim ratio on both sides of the border is one measure

of the cultural affinity between the tarai and northern India.

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

In this discussion, the languages of Nepal are categorized as “hill

languages” and “plains languages.” The hill-language category

includes all the languages spoken as “mother tongues” or “first langu-

ages” by the hill people of Nepal. They include Nepali, Newari,

Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Sunwar, and several Tibetan

dialects spoken chiefly in Nepal, e.g., Thakali and Sherpa. The plains-

language category includes languages spoken as mother tongues by

plains people living in the tarai. These include Hindi, Urdu, Maithili,

Bhojpuri, Bengali, dialects of these such as Awadhi and the Morang

Pradesh dialects, and some languages spoken by relatively few people —

languages such as Jhangar, Manvari, and Raji.

The most important language of the hill region is Nepali. According

to the 1961 census of Nepal, this language is the mother tongue of 51

percent of Nepal’s total population. In the western and far-western

subregions of the hills, the census reports that 76 and 96 percent of

the population speaks Nepali as a first language. Perhaps even more

important, Nepali is spoken as a second language by a great many

other hill people, making it the lingua franca of the hill region. In

Kathmandu Valley, the language of the majority is Newari and in

the eastern subregion of the hills a large minority, 43 percent of the

population, speaks Tibetan-related tribal languages, Tamang, Raj^

Kirati, Limbu, and Sherpa.

A great majority of tarai inhabitants speak languages .spoken else-

where on the Gangetic plain. As documented in table 3, Maitfli); is

spoken by more than 85 percent of the population in four eastern tarai

districts and Bhojpuri by more than 92 percent of the population in

three other eastern tarai districts. Awadhi is the first language of 87

percent or more in four mid-westem tarai districts and Tharu dialects

of plains languages predominate in three districts of the far-we-uern

tarai.

Maithili and Bhojpuri arc the predominant languages of the nor-

Major Languages Spoken in the Tarai, 1961

E

§5

•S

■s-

c:

^ .'S

.1 5

O c<5 r^. r>»

(N ci ■

•J\* c<i —

CO ‘ cs

cc

•o

; C) CO O f>- CO "t\*

CO<NtDCOfO-\*\*

o — Ci o

CO CO o

o CO J:;

§ g .t <- -cn'cL .o- D ^i- =?- \*n. <^in 't “

O CO

•J\*

§ ° £ '^

O CO CO

' ^'co of «o'

CO CO ^ O trT co" -f K

— m cc

o ~ oj »n oi CO CO CO Cl oi

O ^ r^T CO rs‘ f>^

cicicDcocieor^ —

^ ^ Cl in r>\* r^ CO

S c2 cT CO —

JOCl^OCOCOt^ —

CO to

to CO

CM

to CO r»«

^ Ol Cl

fv iS —

!>.

»0 lO

— to Cl

CM CO\*

^ Cl o

»0 -f t£f

O CO CO

CM CM ^

SSS 2 SS~--‘^--

~ '^ '^c'SgS'^’'

5 S' ^ § s s i «

2£

CO —

CO to

»o

m m to

CO CM

||i||SI|||Sp.§§lsSgsg

a

o.

I

'5'

5

o

3

, O

■ C/5

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

17

them Bihar districts contiguous to the tarai districts where these

languages are spoken. Hindi is the predominant language spoken in the

northern Uttar Pradesh districts contiguous to the mid-westem tarai

districts where Hindi is the major language, but for political reasons dis-

cussed in the section on Hindi in chapter VI, Nepalese census enumera-

tors have preferred to call the Hindi speakers of the mid-western tarai

Awadhi speakers. Tharu, although categorized by the census as a

separate language for simplicity’s sake, is not a single language. Tharus

appear to speak dialects of the languages spoken around them. Many

Tharus who live in the inner tarai valleys north of the Siwaliks have

developed dialects of Nepali and those south of the Siwaliks speak

dialects of Hindi, Maithili, and Bhojpuri. The correspondence between

the predominance of various plains languages spoken in the tarai

and in northern India is another measure of the cultural affinity

between the people on both sides of the Nepal-India border. The

predominance of speakers of plains languages in the tarai is presented

graphically in map 3.

CASTE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

Caste as a system of social organization is peculiar to Hindu societies.

Since the hill culture of Nepal as well as the plains culture of northern

India are included under this broader cultural umbrella of Hinduism,

the social structure of both regional cultures is organized along hier-

archical caste lines. The two cultures share interlinking but signi-

ficantly different caste systems.

To anyone familiar with the caste system as it exists in most of

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the caste system of the tarai plains people

will be familiar. There are a great many castes arranged hierachically

according to the extent of their purity, and purity is expressed

ritualistically in terms of pollution, interdining and intermarriage.

Although the occupational dimension of the caste system is slowly

breaking dowm under the impact of modernization, at least theoreti-

cally, most castes have traditional occupations which caste members

practice. Because the caste system of the Nepali hill culture is signi-

ficantly different in a number of ways, caste, like religion and language,

is an important yardstick with which to measure the degree to which

the plains culture dominates the tarai and the extent to which the

hill culture is beginning to create a new cultural configuration in

the region.

GEOPOLITICS OF THE TARAI

19

There are some obvious similarities in the two caste systems. The

traditional priest caste of Brahmins remains fixed at the apex of both

systems, and both have a number of the same occupationally defined

castes which differ only in name. For example, both caste systems

have a traditional warrior caste often called the Rajput or Thakur

caste in the plains and the Chctri® caste in the hills of Nepal. The

Kumhales of the hills and the Kumhars or Kohars of the plains are

traditionally makers of clay pots. The Kamis of the hills and the Lohars

of the plains are blacksmiths. The Sarkis of the hills and the Chamars

of the plains are leather workers.

However, there are more significant differences. Similar occupation-

al castes have different ranking within their respective systems. For

example, the Sunars of the hills and the Sonars of the plains are makers

of gold and silver ornaments. In the plains, as might be expected, the

Sonars have the highest status among the various craft castes. However,

the Sunars of the hills are untouchables, ranked even below the

blacksmiths.

An even more striking difference is the number of castes in each of

the systems. During a 1967-68 survey of tarai villages, fifty-nine Hindu

castes were encountered. There appear to be no more than a dozen

castes among the Hindus in the hills.® The considerably greater

number of plains castes, resulting in a more complex social system, is

at least partly the result of the more complex economic order that has

developed on the plains over the past millennium, continually splitting

occupational castes into more specialized categories.

There is one interesting caste in the hills which has no counterpart

in the plains — the Gharri caste, whose members are descendants of

ex-slaves. Slavery, an institution that never developed widely in

India, was not abolished in Nepal until the 1920s. Members of all

castes, except presumably Brahmins, could be bound over to slavery

for various crimes, and since slaveiy became fairly common in the

hills, members of the Gharri caste arc often encountered in the hills

today.

The tribal groups of the hills and the tarai were not included among

the large number of plains castes and the smaller number of hill castes

referred to above, despite the fact that they are really tribal castc,s or

castes in the making. The absorption of tribal groups into the caste

system has been proceeding for thousands of years in northern India

‘Chciri U a corruption of the word Kshatriy.a.

'See, for c.xampic, Dor Bahadur Bista, Th PfopU of Xrpat (Kathmandu, 1907,.

p. 1. Sec the appendix for die methodology- med in the 1967-68 field surr ey.

20 Rl-.OIOSM.ISM AM) NATIOSAI. I'NITY IN' NRI’AI.

aiul for a cdnsidcralily slxtrlrr lime in tlif liill'- <'! Xrpai. I Iif

in whicti tribal t'rnnp'. arr briiit; ab-.mlircl ini" tin'

is aiiollicr factor that (lifrcrrntiali-s the two. In the hill', the . .',,.11-.

Gunmi;s, Rais, I.inihns, and nthrrs arr Mill iindrryoiiitl ihc ? o"

prorc.ss of ahsorption, but already tlirrc is a di'u rnibh hn tare 1,

amont' them. Those which have bi'ciinir ilir must llindtii/cd, t tat iN

those has'int; the Impest and nmsi intrinr interaction with tin ca tc

Hindus, tend to he ranked by caste Hindus abocc those ssin\* arc e\

Hinduized. Soinenfiliese tribal primps arr ranked considrrabK . those

the losveal nntoiicliable easies.

'IVihal [groups in the larai the 'Ihavns, Rajhanshis, lajpuria,

Gnni'ai.s, Mcchis, tind other smaller tiihe' are al'o iifitdtitill; I’'\*’”’'

ab.snrbctl into the raste system of their rrttion. l.'nlikr the hill triha N

hosveser, the trihals of the tarai tire rcletttited to the s'cry hotioin 0

the liierarchy, even helosv tnany of the niitonrhtthle ctisies. Lntt

recently, the tribal people have hern tdile to find isolation froni die

subcontinent's more advanced economie soeiciy in the forests of tin-

larai and other I'coi'raphically peripheral recioits. The surt’crifpopida"

lion into the peripheral rci'ions ami the eleariin; of forests to [irovide

additional farm land have confronted titr tribal people svith the need

to adjust to a new and essentially hostile soriety. ReleK.iled as the)

arc to the lowest runt's of the caste ladder, svithotii the e-spericiicc

needed to compete for scarre economie resources-, they bas e i'cneraliy

found the adjustment process confusini' ami ]>ainful. Indeed, in nnn'^

cases, it lias been a struggle for survival.

Table 4 has been compiled to gis-c a more complete picture of the

distribution of caste and tribal charartcrisiirs in the tarai popttladn''-

The data indicate that the c,iste Himius of plains origin prctlominate

in Mahotiari-Dliamislia, Bara, Kapilahastii, and neigitboring districts

of the eastern and mid-svcsicrn tarai. They also represent a sizable

minority in Jhapa disirici. In Kailali and ncighitoring fnr-svesteni

larai districts, the plains tribal people predominate, and they also

constitute a large minority ofjliapa’s population. Although not in

large numbers, llic Muslims have significant representation in Bara

and Kapilabastu districts. Only in Jhapa di.sirict are the bill people

represented in significant numbers, and most of them arc caste Hindus

rather than trihals. In the other four districts and the tarai subregions

they represent, hill people arc present in considerably smaller numbers.

The caste data therefore support the religion and language data

presented earlier in the chapter. Until recently, the tarai was totally

Population by Regional and Communal Groupings in Five Tarai Districts

• 51 , ^

s £

53 a >s

Co '•=

H! S -S

"S ^ 53

^ § I

53 S5 ^

Co -5

50 a «

2 ^ -fi

<> O Q

S' g 5

Co ^

50 g S

2 a -S

— ( JU

^ -

^ S' -S

I § ^

c? ^ ^

o 5 «

— I ^5

f II

•— «-l

^ £ -2

C 5 s: ^

UD q

ID

q <N q

q

oi

ci

^ cd

0

0

00

0 ^

0

^ q

q q CO

q

0

‘ cd

ud

d

QJ

C)

0

in in

0

q

<D

0

q

cd

d

d

cd

d

d

;d

Oi

0

^ (N q CO

cyj

CO

0

-.■ ‘ d

d

cd

d

r^

— • .— .

o>

0

cy q

r«.

m

0

— ; ‘ rJ d

cd

d

cd

d

r-a

cn

0

q q q

q

0

<N q

d

c 4

id

d

CO

0^

0

q

q

q q

q

0

d

r^\*

cd

r>\*

d

d

r^.

CO

0

cn

0

q

q

0 CO

q

0

d

(N

cd

CO

d

5

d

0

—

q

—

—

CO

q

q

q

CJ

d

cd

d

cd

id

d

""

m

r>.

0

q

'^a

q

CO

q

0

d

id

lad

cd

cd

.. 4 a

d

cs

CM

CO

CO

0

3 So.

S as-g § 5 g £

I— \_cTJ\*^ \*'ij ^ oS

j: a V \_ Bu

u. 2 cct:g ^ uS

ttHli I 1°

rt ••- Ci»"\* rt w

- u t; tt « S u

•Sgeu^S ^ oe

3xi='-Scg' 2 SK

cnO-^oS^ s 3 ;“

■'uS’^S— •— 2 >

“EoSo«SS g’a

^<£ 2 ^ 2 . s; “2

2£“'5iJ®'S

MfjWgcjiJii VC

•< 3 rt\_Qw "■w.e u\*^

.W»v

\*-'bo£:j<5v-‘^ »'av|-

v-C^^t^0wXV-T3'«

tS.S-'SvSiw.E^rtVo

„XbODhrtC^Cu

5 rt t> E bD,5 'q. ^ n C

iii<ss E o l'?-^

ot— ® '"’5 C'\*^' 5 js

V o h, ^ v.s.S m, ti ^

V ^ CSa JS rt aW ®

V 5^j2 uxSs

£i 2 3 vtJ-tE ^

bort u ^ .2 c 2 S s ts E

E23«i:ub;5c,3o

.== S’ " .2 ^ -o c :E ce “

0.0 5 E’'®H S‘“ « r^-:

CtfluOSS

i“t:ox»c< 2 o 2

c^^2^®cWo^r3'«:£y

Js-a-2 ^ 3.S ^ ”f= ® Jrt ^

CO ^ 73 3 ‘g\* r» r\* r OT

— v«r3c.2;w-5>cSr

«|:5o|'p-E"|

1^33^ - n’oHSj^yo

rA ^ a.. W 3 Cm O a^

E S ^ £2.5 “js So-n 53

• ‘iu4i.i!“’9r:>-SE>.

C-E.C^ZE i«ve w

a,, ..EcS>>rtj:

'£-ORb.;3°S=“=S“

S-ESicC-to^ Eoo: 3

” S’a'7:-E5^^co'S5«j3

P-rrOci-^^V 1

^ C y 5 j a>^ Y\ W

\_r.2 ir be ». X j: g-5D ii 5 n

S E.K -E ■£ £ : 8 o 2 - 2

-’boccc'ES'oggci

-•■ s c’&r 2 S .£•£ Si - 2

"o O E

n VO «- u

g 05 g t; -O

^— \* -3 1 -

. f 2 a 7 C 0

V c i; °

g e -sf V S I •£ Si g g

■Ci.^ S n t»""-'r‘— >^0 '

'^I- WiCU#;\*r73 c

<, o2=^o"''s8-o£:-:

^•- £•'=2.5. .Su=i:Q.o

5 ^-52.2 g5i;.c

S'i“l5‘“5 £■££•£ =

0.22i:'£2j£Oj;o.,

-rv\_j,ux 3 uv-,,ij

".Sj:=ti’C.£^gE.2u

Vo r“ VVv O

2c1.e &•£ 2 sp

I liJl5f£ I' I.

22 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

a part of what may be called the northern Indian

sphere, but settlers from north of the Siwahks arc no v

the Nepalese hill culture into the region.

marriage ties between the people of the tarai and

NORTHERN INDIA

Brief mention of marriage patterns needs to be made here

they are indicators of broader cultural tics between t « tarai an

hills on the one hand and the tarai and northern India on i

Marriage patterns arc also significant because they are gen

associated with patterns of business and political activity.

In the tarai, and presumably in other regions of tlic subcon i >

low caste and tribal people tend to marry their children to o

living in neighboring villages. Marriages rarely take place et

families living more than a few miles apart. However, among ^

upper- and business-caste people, marriages arc not

arranged between families living many hundreds of miles from ca ^

other. This pattern results at least partly from the fact that there ar

generally fewer families of these castes living in nearby villages.

There is another factor. All the caste Hindus and Muslims are

migrants into the tarai or descendants of migrants. The upper- an

business-caste people tend to maintain closer ties to their ancestra

villages than do the low-caste migrants. Marriage arrangernents

continue to be made in the region of the ancestral village, even i i

ancestral village is a long journey from the tarai. In addition, ^

higher-caste marriage pattern is also a function of relatively higher

levels of education, greater mobility, and more extended communi

cations systems.

Many of the hill Brahmin, Ghetri, and Newar settlers in the tarai

arrange marriages for their children in Kathmandu Valley and other

parts of the hill region. The plains Brahmins, Rajputs, and members

of the various business castes often arrange marriages all over northern

India, These marriage patterns represent a continual and active

reinforcement of the cultural ties that are shared by the tarai population

with the hills of Nepal and the plains region of northern India.

THE PROCESS OF'“nEPALIZATIOn”

Over the past several hundred years, the hill tribal people have been

undergoing cultural change. This includes the introduction of Nepali,

GEOPOLITICS OF THE XA.RAI

23

a Sanskrit-based language, as well as of Hindu practices. Scholars

have called the process one of Sanskritization or Hinduization, but

it actually extends beyond linguistic and religious changes to include

a whole complex of interrelated cultural changes, ranging from the

adoption of different values to that of different clothing styles and

food preferences, Nepalization is therefore a broader and more appro-

priate term for the process by which hill tribal people absorb the

values and customs of the hill Brahmins and Chetris.

In fact, the Chetris more than the Brahmins have been the sturdy

and flexible people responsible for Nepalization. Overwhelmed by

the Muslim invasions of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, these

Kshatriya warriors fled to the mountains with their Brahmin advisors

and established principalities throughout the hill region. At that time,

they accommodated aspects of the various hill tribal cultures to their

own. Thus, the Nepal hill culture of today, in contrast to the Hindu

culture of the plains or the Buddhist culture of Tibet, has evolved

fairly recently. Nevertheless, it is a vital and expansive culture.

The process of Nepalization is beginning in the tarai, now that hill

people are settling in the region. Some of the plains tribal people will

undoubtedly respond readily to Nepalization as their own tribal

cultures prove unable to withstand the disintegrative pressures of

the more complex and aggressive hill culture. However, it must be

remembered that the tarai culture is simultaneously being merged

into that of the north Indian plains as a result of migration from Uttar

Pradesh and Bihar. The plains tribals living closest to settlements of

caste Hindus of plains origin have been undergoing assimilation into

the north Indian plains culture for many centuries.

The caste Hindus of plains origin are not as susceptible to cultural

assimilation as the tribals of either the hills or plains because the Hindu

culture of the plains is an ancient and rich one, as vital and expansive

as the Nepalese hill culture. As later chapters will document, the

Nepalese government has taken various steps to encourage the Nepaliz-

ation process in the tarai, but it is clear that the plains people will

resist the government’s more obvious efforts to transform their cultural

patterns.

Some assimilation will take place slowly and naturally as hill

interact with plains people in the tarai. However, cidtura! homogeneity

is not a necessary precondidon for national unity. Certainly the plains

people of the tarai could be brought into a Pf‘'c>Pating relationship

svith the hill people wthout adopting the hill culture.

Chapter II

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI

Nepal’s location on the southern side of the Himalayas places it on

the periphery of the greater Indian economic sphere. More than

90 percent of Nepal’s trade is with India. The country’s major lines

of transportation and communication are with India, and it is

dependent upon India for the supply of many essential commodities

such as cloth, sugar, kerosene, and most metallic articles. Because

it borders directly on India, the tarai is even more closely linked with

the greater Indian economic sphere than is the hill region. Blessed

with rich agricultural resources and stimulated by the economic

activity of northern India, the tarai has become the most productive

agricultural and industrial region of Nepal. For this reason, it generates

much of Nepal’s national wealth and most of the government’s revenue.

This chapter will survey the historicd and contemporary reasons for

the hill region’s economic dependency upon the tarai and the various

economic links that have been established between the tarai and

northern India.

NOTES ON THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE TARAI

The hill kings of Nepal have cast covetous eyes on the tarai for centuries.

In the 16th century, the Sen kings of Makwanpur in the central hill

region of Nepal conquered the eastern tarai from kings of plains origin

whose locus of power was in what is now Bihar. When hill kings were

not strong enough to wrest parts of the tarai away from kings living

in the plains, they sought the tarai as zamindaris.\* In the 18th century,

the kings of Palpa in the western hills received the districts of Kapila-

bastu, Rupandehi and part of Nawal Parasi as a zamindari from the

Nawab Wazir of Oudh, at that time one of northern India’s most

povverful rulers. In the early 1770s, after the conquest of Kathmandu

a ey, Prithvi Narayan Shah, founder of the present ruling dynasty

JA zammdar is a nonotfidal fax^eollecting functionary, and a zamindari is the land

holding of such a functionary.

24

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI 25

and unifier of modern Nepal, turned his attention to the conquest of

eastern Nepal. His aim was to control the eastern tarai. In a letter

to his generals in the field he commented that little was to be gained

from control of the low-revcnuc-yielding hill region without also

appropriating the high-revenue-yielding tarai region.^ Subsequently,

revenue derived from the eastern tarai became a major source of

income for the government of the Shah kings.

The Nepalese expansion along the Himalayas in the late 18th and

early 19th centuries paralleled the expansion of British power on the

Gangetic plain. Inevitably there was conflict between the two powers

in the region where their administrators and soldiers came face to face.

This region was the tarai, and the struggle for control of Butwal and

Shivaraj (modern Kapilabastu and Rupandehi districts) in the mid-

western tarai ultimately led to the An'glo-Nepali War of 1814-16.

When, after valiant resistance by the Nepalese, the British finally

demonstrated the superiority of their military technology, the British

considered annexing the Nepal tarai as a means of cutting off this

valuable source of revenue and thereby financially crippling the

government in Kathmandu. By the terms of the treaty of Sugauli,

December 1816, the British took over the entire tarai. A year later,

the eastern and central tarai from the Mechi River to the western

Rapti River was returned to Nepal and in 1858, after the Nepalese

aided the British during the Indian Mutiny, the western tarai was

returned.

During the period when the Rana prime ministers held sway in

Kathmandu, tarai lands were liberally distributed to family members

and loyal retainers. The income from these lands accumulated into

fortunes for these land-grant holders. Particularly after the beginning

of World War I, when India’s industrial economy was expanding

rapidly, it was possible for these people to exploit their forest reserves

with great profit. Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher in Morang and

Bara during the 1920s, and Prime Minister Juddha Shamsher in

Mahottari in the 1930s, had their forests logged by Indian timber

contractors and hill-tribal laborers in order to supply the demand of

die Indian railroads for ties (sleepers) and that of Indian industry

for construction materials. To increase land revenue, the Rana

government also encouraged the settling of tarai lands. Because the

'Yogi Narahari Nath, cd., A CelUction of Tuatits in Ih Illumination on Hislo^,vo\. 11

(published on the occasion of the Spiritual Conrcrcncc convened at Dang on ti. b.

1 1966]), p. 42. (Trans, by Rcgmi Research Project, 1967.)

40 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

land shortage was more acute in northern India than in the hills

during the late 19th century and the early 20th, and because the

hill people found the tarai climate hot and living conditions strange,

the Ranas could not persuade hill people to settle in the tarai. Indian

zammdars were encouraged to lake tarai land and induce tenant

cultivators of plains origin to settle it. The mid -western tarai was

settled largely in this manner between the 1890s and the 1930s.

THE ECONOMIC I.MPORTANCE OF THE TARAI

By the 1960s the tarai had become the economic backbone of the

n. n order to put this economic importance into quantitative

nr a' ^ contribution to NepaFs gross domestic

product and to the government’s revenue.

accumulates primarily

active non ofNepal’s economically

percenfofdirrnp agriculture for a living, and 65

Nepal Rastra m f ° 1964-65 was estimated by the

On the basis of^ anh to come from the agricultural sector.^

A,ri uLt '"P-P-duct/on Minis.ry rf

''.“‘“T

ances have to he m a r agricultural product. Allow-

ntSrJicu ,r? 'r ‘^e Ras^a Bank’s figure for

copr,hl t c„„,rib„,i„„ b/yed the l” major

and forestry 1’ j}," "a”'’”" T, husbandry,

product is app,,r.t"l,Tp,',™':'

or the' "'“li" ISSMS, 11 pereent

Of Nepal’s l,686^Drivpmi '"^""'acturing.’ In 1962, 72 percent

’ThcNcpaiisu 1 ^ °"’ned smaller industries were situated

in order to indicate that forcien-aid rn'T'k rather than gross national product

‘Nepal Rastra Bank,

ftr«n«r 1961/62. 1962/6^3, 1963/64

"•U Council. ’ P- 5. The Bank quotes as its source

prllducTr ^“'f”"r'lr)', or^foreiA-Yn “f Prodnei from

:v ,"2"' 'T'mor crops and forcstrs- ’ "'''\*''1 the tarai generates most of the

Arpal Rastra B.inl

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI 27

in the tarai, which probably accounted for more than 72 percent of

industrial production because the largest industries, some of which are

publicly owned, are also located in the tarai.® The Rastra Bank has

also estimated that commerce, transport, communications, construc-

tion activity, financial institutions, private housing, public administra-

tion, and utilities make up the remaining 24 percent of the GDP. It

should be assumed that the tarai’s share of the GDP generated from

these sources is slightly less than its share of manufacturing, because

most of the public administration and utilities are centered in Kath-

mandu Valley. Sixty-five percent as the tarai’s share should be a

reasonably accurate estimate.

55% of Rs. 3,959,000,000 GDP

for agriculture® =Rs. 2,177,450,000

72% of Rs. 594,000,000 GDP for

manufacturing =Rs. 427,680,000

65% of Rs. 1,248,000,000 GDP for

commerce and services =Rs. 811,200,000

Total GDP from the tarai in 1964-65 = Rs. 3,416,330,000

This is 59 percent of Nepal’s total GDP of Rs. 5,801,000,000 in

1964-65.

Let us now estimate the contributions the tarai makes to government

revenue. The government’s total revenue for the fiscal year 1965-66

was Rs. 391,798,000. Of this, 55 percent was derived from domestic

sources; the rest was received as foreign aid. Rs. 176,124,000 or 81

percent of the domestically generated revenue for that year came from

four major sources; 1) taxes on timber operation, 2) excise or industrial

taxes, 3) land taxes, and 4) customs dunes.\*®

Because Nepal’s most valuable stands of timber arc located in tarai

districts and because roads are available to transport the timber to

Indian markets, 87 percent of timber revenue comes from this region.

Of the remaining timber revenue, the inner tarai valleys produce

'Badri Prasad Slircshtha, Tht Economy of j\tpal (Bomba)-, 1 96/) p.

•Fificen percent has been added to the Rastra Banks cst.ma e of Nepal s total

agricultural product in order to bring it into hne vstth M.n.s.r)- of AgncuUure data.

The manufaLring, commerce, and scrs-icc cst.mates arc those by 'he Bank.

It is assumed that the percentage of industo- .n the tara. ts the .same .n 1964/65 .as .. u-.as

'-Nepal, Ministry of Finance, liodgct Spe^kofthe Wr«/ JVar 1967-68 (Deliver,^ by

the Honourable Finance Minister, Surra Bahadur Tl.apa.Juh 9, 190/), nppend.ws

A and D.

28 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

9 percent and the western hills 4 percent.\*^ Ninety-three percent of

the government s excise revenue flows from sugar and jute processing,

and from cigarette and match manufacturing in tarai towns. Most of

the remaining excise revenue is contributed by Kathmandu Valley.

Revenue from land tax is the second largest source of domestic revenue;

percent comes from tarai districts, 3 percent from Kathmandu

remaining 22 percent from the inner tarai valleys

an t e hills. The government’s largest source of revenue is the

u evie On imported and exported goods. Almost all of this revenue

s CO ecte at 1 18 customs posts along the tarai border with India, for

more t 90 percent of Nepal’s trade is carried on with India. It

very i cu t to make a regional breakdown of customs revenues

goods that pass through tarai customs posts have

tn north of the Siwaliks. Itis therefore necessary

hv pr ^ ^ sbout 70 percent of customs revenues are generated

hans ™ \*he tarai. This is a reasonable estimate, per-

nation’s iTri considers the high percentage of the

of rice and in the tarai and the large exportable surplus

Rs.

Rs.

Rs.

Rs.

15,685,230

18,657,660

33,388,500

65,460,000

of Ip" revenue

iJ/ ®^cise revenue

^^>518,000 land revenue

/o of Rs. 93,515,000 customs revenue

Total revenue generated by the tarai,

This = Rs- 133,191,890

Rs- 176,124000from'the/ ^'^mestically generated revenue of

that the tami rnn! m ^ ^ven above. t\* It can be assumed

other Rs 40 372 000 approximately the same percentage of the

Nepal's lan/’area\*"and'’ 3 ?'’ accounts for only 17 percent'^ of

approximately 59 Dfrrp„f population, it contributes

rcvcnuc.is ^ ‘ ^ Nepal’s GDP and 76 percent of the

of Forests. obtained from HMG/NepaI,\_ Office of the Chief Conservator

bsotehfor '96trGDA'’r«fo,''ig^^^^ these hgures. The population

PcrccntaEesarri;i-«i.,. .. . the revenue figures for 1965 - 66 .

■J-J^^percentage.;;! kdv t

arc likely lo vary slightly each

year.

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI

29

THE TARAI, NEPAL, AND THE RICE TRADE

The economic importance of the tarai is further underscored by the

volume of the agricultural surplus it produces. Statistical documenta-

tion of these surpluses is published elsewhere, Most important is the

tarai’s surplus rice production. Not only does the food-deficit hill

region of Nepal depend upon substantial yearly imports of rice from

the tarai, but the tarai also sends large amounts of rice to India. In

1965 an estimated 348,000 metric tons of rice were exported from

the tarai to India, making Nepal the fifth largest rice exporter in the

world that year. The importance of this large-scale rice export to

Nepal’s economic development can not be overstated. It is estimated

that Nepal earned 237,772,685 Indian rupees from its rice exports

in 1965. Other agricultural surpluses exported from the tarai, parti-

cularly raw jute and oil seeds, have added lesser but still substantial

Indian-currency earnings to the nation’s financial ledger.

The Nepalese government levies duties on these exports, and revenue

raised by this means contributes to government income from the

tarai. In the private sector, the major beneficiaries of the export

business are the large-scale farmers, rice-mill owners and various

middlemen. Some of the Indian-currency earnings are invested in

India, because many of those who profit from the trade have family

and business connections in India. Some of the earnings are plowed

back into the land in the form of seeds, fertilizer, repair or improvement

of farm tools, irrigation facilities, etc. or for rice-mill maintenance

However, a large share of the profits accumulates as capital for con

sumer or development purposes; for example, the construction of

new house in Kathmandu or another rice mill in the tarai. Inasmuch as

most of the manufactured items needed in such construction must

be imported from India, and can not be purchased with Nepales

currency, the Indian-rupee balances earned from the export of tl ^

tarai’s agricultural surpluses become the key to much of the private

sector’s economic vitality.

trade TIES between THE TARAI AND INDI4

Aside from rice, the tarai produces surpluses of jute, tobacco nil ^

sugar cane, herbs, spices, timber, hides, and many o.hec a^clhural’

\_\_ rtfiKr- Tnrai in

Agricultural

■'Sec Frederick H. Gaigc, “The 'he Tara, m Nepap, ^

Vasudha (Kathmandu). H U-ne 19681, 53-61, 71. nom.c Develop-

mcnl

30 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

items in smaller quantities. Trading networks have developed for

each of these items, flowing from the villages to the tarai towns and

from there to the major cities of India. Some of these networks are

same businessmen buying and selling several

1 erent items. In order to present a more graphic description of how

one of these trading networks operates, let us follow one, the rice

network, since it is the most important, from the village southward

across the border into India.

Despite the fact that the tarai is a food-surplus region, many of its

armere ve at a subsistence level. They have no surplus food or money

0 f^n a into debt before the end of the economic year, u’hich

nV ' ^ just before the hart'est of their main crop, generally

thetr find themselves in this situation are forced to sell

Inwf^t 'p ^ ^ harvested, when the rice prices arc at their

to nrnm’^^'^k ^ harvest season, they are occasionally forced

nricc lever ^ ® at prices below the harvest-season

The none harvest season,

often on a hart'\* l ”ue to village shopkeepen,

to commission T ^ matches, or

The few more 'fiHages periodically as rice buyers.

tS eS o^h ‘I’-' rice until after

cl and can m They also owm bullock

thus bypassing the seTof mid

and commission agents. represented by the shopkeepers

until pridsraTd th to tie up capital, hold rice

Sion agents have little canirnl r ^ shopkeepers and commis-

thc siockisG \vith which^to h ” borrow money from

small, the difference between Th

villagers and sell to the storl-i

have taken, ^ ' truous interest on loans they may

u dozen trading ccntlT"^h-'k field surs-cy had half

houses, Tlicsc centers rano a •' stockists maintained their store-

Tlie stockists sometimes stewp 'h rillagcs.

season is wdl over and riro of tons of rice until the harvest

sell to rice-mill owners in ^ mounted in India. Then they

'vholcsalcrs, who distribute ricTmm^"'\*'r

major Indian cities. The price of

ECONOMY OF THE TARA! 33

general population, verifying the high degree to u'hich they have

become commercialized. This fact is underscored in Jhapa, where

only 18 percent of the population is plains Hindu but 71 percent of

the shopkeepers are individuals whose castes are included in this

communal category. Generally, Muslims throughout northern India

have developed a fairly high degree of commercialization, particularly

at the level of the small-scale trader and shopkeeper. This seems to be

less the case in the tarai, except in the far-western tarai district, Kailali,

where practically all the Muslims are businessmen. From the survey

data gathered, it appears that the percentage of hill people

teho are shopkeepers corresponds fairly closely to the percentage of

hill people in the total tarai population. With the exception of the

Sherpas and Thakalis, hill tribals appear to have relatively little

interest in business. Almost all hill people pursuing business in the

tarai, whether shopkeeping, itinerant trade, or small-scale industry,

'\ere Brahmins, Chetris, or Newars. As one would anticipate, the

plains tribals are the least commercialized. This fact is underscored

by the data collected in Jhapa and Kailali districts.

The upper-caste plains people do not seem reluctant to enter

business, even though business is traditionally a middle-caste occupa-

don. Among the hill people there are no traditional business castes,

^•'teept among the Newars and, therefore, no preconceived attitudes

about the rank of businessmen in the caste system. In any case, the

caste system has not been able to force its regime of occupational

rigidity upon the hill people to the extent that it has until recently

\*^Pon the plains people. Also, economic resources hatdng always been

’^ore limited in the hills than in the plains, hill people have been

C'tccd to retain a flexibility that permits them to take advantage o

"hatever economic opportunities present themselves.

. Tike shopkeepers, itinerant traders play important economic rolK

■n tarai villages. They often act as comn^ission agents, butmg agn-

^^llural surpIuseSj and occasionallv sell Hghl provisions and knic

^■ttacks. In 48 of 81 villages surveyed, the headmen responded ihai

^ust of the villagers sold their surplus crops to traders ulto came to

"'c tillage. In another 18 Ullages, a significant number, if not the

^‘•>jorily, of s-illagcnt sold to these traders. There arc several reasons

''f the importance of this tape of businessman, Fint, in man} o ' “

^nialler villages, there arc no shopfcccpcre to fill the traders function .

■ '^™nd, traders, like the shopkeepers, sometimes runclion as money-

ers. \\hen villagers borrow from these individuals, tiie} o J if-

34 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

themselves to pay very high interest rates, and thus form dependency

relationships with these businessmen.

TABLE 6

Itinerant Traders in Sample Villages of Five Tarai Districts,

by Regional and Communal Groupings

Regional and

communal

groupings

Jhapa

Mabottari

Dhanusha

Bata

Kapila-

bash!

Kailali

Hill people

36.8

1.7

HA

Plains Hindus

36.8

89.1

90.0

70.7

11.1

Muslims

7.3

10.0

27.6

22.2

Plains tribals

21.1

3,6

22.2

Unknown

5.3

Total

100.0

100.0

100.0

100.0

100.0

Source; Data collected in field survey ofBI villages, 1967-68.

amonl^^hl^ rta!) ® the hill people are well represented

significant Kailali districts, where there arc

sigmncant numbers of hil settler? Ti,„ ■ •! ,

seated among the trader than

districts In Mah ■ m the shopkeepers of these two

tXs Hil Kaphabastu districts,

shopkeeper class

competiLn. their own in the

indicates that the T^2 the tarai, the evidence

a dominant commercial niv the plains Hindus, hold

. were businessmen when thc‘ ‘ ’''““Shout the region. Most of them

for new business oppoir'? ^hey were looking

maintain marriage and K ■ ’ • ^PP®ars that many of them

members in the Indian nf extended-family and caste

families migrated snm<.r' ^ ^Ses and towns from which they or their

Probably nothing perm^r generations ago.

lines faster than the prosn ^ ®"tl communal

unwise to weigh too heav'l'^ ° economic gain. For this reason, it is

between family caste nil about the relationships

’ activity. Nevertheless, th4

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI 35

informal and often invisible ties do exist and tend to reinforce the

network of buying and selling that links the tarai and northern India.

the relationship of tarai industry to the INDIAN ECONOMY

The development of industry in the tarai is a response to the expansion

of Indian economic activity. The construction of the Indian railroad

system to the Nepal-India border in the late 19th century and the

establishment of railheads along the border is a graphic example of

the no rthward expansion of the Indian economy. Around the railheads

sprang up typical northern Indian towns: a few unplanned, sun-baked

mud streets lined with dark and cluttered one-room shops crowded m

upon each other, streets bustling with heavily loaded porters, squeaking

bullock carts, animated buyers and sellers, cows, dogs.

In the days before such towns were established on the Nepal side of

the border, the tarai’s agricultural surpluses flowed direct y to these

railhead settlements for shipment to Indian cities. ap indicates

the points of termination for the railroads along t e t e

close proximity of major tarai towns just north of the railheads.

According to B. P Shreshtha, one of Nepal’s leading economists,

88 percent of Nepal’s industrial investment is ’ " nearly

'lOOpercentofthenation’sindustriallaborforce.-Unpubh^^^^^^

of the government’s Industry Department list 28 Imited com-

panies operating in 1967-seventeen com^^'^^"''"

Valley, Ld two in the western hills. Pubhe limited companies are

among the largest industries in Nepal. As already mentioned, an

J 72 pLnt of Nep.r 3 smaller indus.nes are alro loca.ed i„

the t3.r3.i

TKe avallaHlIry orihe

roads as well as the railroads, X r cif

. . . j \_ reason lor the lacK 01 such dr-vr.L

roads as well as the railroaas, i:. - e -<..,1

• 1 . , • el a nrimarv reason lor the lacK 01 such devel,

mdust^ m the tara. and a pnmjy el

ment m the hill region.^ completed In the t,

!0p-

ment in the hill region. ^ ,,,pleted in the b;;

region, one from Birganj to completed in I972. Tf, ^

and one from Bhairawa to -rmpfan border at Kodp ■

also a hard-surface road ’ ^t what they need bi"h'° f

mandu. Most hill people mu P They cai

ovpr Dhnt from tarai markets to > can not carrv-

...e...uu. \* , tf) thClr llOmCS. TfleV Car,

over foot trails from ^ afford to buy much

much and, many case industrialists are dependent

tarai farmers and small s « upon the

Indian market to absorb their goods.

. vln /nlrcMim !o Economy, p. ■

CHINA

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI 37

Indian capital is also instrumental in the development of tarai

nstry. Xhc Indians who invest in the tarai arc often inr olved in

® similar business across the border. For c.Karnple, Radha Kissen

^i^aria, a Marwari important in Calcutta’s jute processing and

Sporting business, was chiefiy responsible for the establishment of

^Ns largest Jute mill in 1936. Chamaria had already built a jute

® ‘ at Katihar, a town in Bihar about 75 miles south of Biratnagar.

® larai area around Biratnagar had become a major jute-growng

y the 1930s, and the price ofjutc was high. Chamaria pei'suadtd

^ Juddha Shamshcr, Rana Prime Minister of Nepal at the

^ holding company financed jointly by the two of them.

Jp Singhania, Chamaria’s brother-in-law and manager

J-hamaria’s mil) at Katihar, moved to Biratnagar to manage the

‘here and rvas instrumental in establishing Biratnagar's In^t

|e nee mil] in 1937, a cotton mill in 1942 , and a sugar mill m 191R '

‘"O'ne tarai industry has been established by hill people mth their

"’" capital. For example, Nepal’s largest rice mill "’"S hudt m

by the father of Gauri Narayan Giri. Gin s atlu

^ born in the eastern hills, and while a goi-crnmeni oniei.d in <

^■powmg foothills district, he began c.xporting tea >« flalenth ,

h the capital he acquired, he bought land in the tarai and- m - -

‘"'"h a rice mill in the Indian border town of Jnvnagar. Aher JudcUu

Shamsher

T - constructed a narrow-gauge • „ ,

f"akpur to facilitate the logging operations on ins cxteiisivt fouA

railroad from jiiynagm' to

hold;

tngs north ofjanakpur, the Giris moved - \_ - ,

« G.„ri bLma iB

anted to move their industries from India into I u

First, the railroads provided cheap and rcliabR t. i^p ' tatlO •

they wanted to Ld the payment >«than ex

, /"ri, they wanted to locate closer to the source 0 punn ' , ‘ '

■> jute and rice, in order to obviate dependence ,11

membcni of the King s extended

their mill toJanakpin\

i.e.

ough some Ranas and Shahs

and other hill people like tlic

Girls hn\'e im-esied rapitid in

much of the capital for the larai's

Alth.

family^

be development of tarai industry, . r i r

i^^g^-and medium-scale industry appeal to hiwe come from Imhan

businessmen or from plains people who are settled in the lain, an.,

with Shyam Narayan Singlmnin. yomiKor liroilirv nl .-Vxh \b ■

Im® Sr in Biratnagar on Jan. 1 , 1967. Aisl. Nnntyan was niannsrr nl litr It

Mills at the time of the interview. ^

interviews with Gauri Narayan Giri in Jannkpur, Dec, >> and Aw

38 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

have access to capital through marriage or business associations in

India. This cannot be documented by reference to Industry Depart-

ment records because Indian investors have found it advantageous

to associate tliemselvcs with hill people, particularly those who have

government connections, in order to obtain government licenses for

their industries. Therefore, Industry Department records often list

hill people as owners and managers of industries in which they have

little or no capital investment. Government officials tend to distrust

businessmen of plains origin, even those who have lived in the tarai

for many years or even generations. This distrust arises from the com-

plex and, from the officials’ point of view, often confusing relationships

between businessmen liring in the tarai and in India. Some officials

tend to suspect that Indian economic interests may threaten Nepal’s

political integrity.

Except for several stainless-steel and synthetic-fabrics factories,^®

one cotton mill (not operating at present) and one steel-rolling mill,

nearly all of Nepal s industry', whether large- or small-scale, processes

urnber and agricultural produce grown in the tarai. Table 7 organizes

information about small-scale industry in the five districts of the

-68 field survey. The great majority of these enterprises are rice

mi s, most of them small diesel-driven mills which husk rice and press

oil seeds only for ffie population in surrounding villages. However,

a cw 0 the mills in each district are large and process thousands of

ons 0 nee or export to India. Along the Indian border there are

• "It !■\* operate in Nepalese territory, again to

tn "t r" Until recently, timber was generally exported

milled there, but now the milling

soan inti\* '^Stoning to take place in the tarai. The sugar, brick, and

soap mdusines have been established mainly for local consumption.

CO.MMUNAL characteristics OF OWT^'ERS OF SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRY

and manIgLem in which part-ownership

little or no nninl ■ ^ individuals who have made

='Th«c wc ^ \* ’"'’“‘"lent, small-scale industry is generally owned

•TVDid Indian ‘‘PParemly by Indian businessmen to

"a in India

‘ u a handmade cipamir\* r \*

lire under \shich village women and rhiW \* \* ^

'^^ucturc nrarby vshert rhr f^c^n 1 T a one- or ovo-room brie);

D anager keeps his records and stores the bidis.

39

ECONOMY OF THE TARAl

TABLE 7

Small-Scale Industry' in the Tarai,

by District and Type of Industry °

Oistrict

Jhapa

M allot tar i

DItantisha

Bara

Kapila-

bastu

Kailali

Rice mill

85

155

102

87

55

®idi factory

2

46

20

9

2

Brick factory

7

20

Saw mill

5

]

I

2

Soap factory

1

3

1

Sugar mill

4

1

Miscellaneous

!

4

2

Total

93

209

134

121

59

The data for this table were collected from the unpublished records of the revenue

office in each ofthe districts. The revenue office is under the supervision of the Anchala-

'sti (zonal commissioner) or Assistant Anchaladish. Small-scale industry means

single-owner industries. All public limited and private limited industries, i.e., those

"’ith more than one owner, have been excluded from the data in this table.

and managed by the same individual or family. The caste of the owners

is therefore easily identified in the district revenue-office records.

Table 8 indicates that hill people are better represented atnong the

owners of small-scale industry than among shopkeepers or itinerant

traders. In Jhapa district, where the hill people constitute 16 percent

of the population, they account for 58 percent of small-scale industria-

lists. In Kailali, only 10 percent of the population arc hill people,

yet they represent 73 percent of the small-scale industrialists. A few

of the small rice mills in these two districts are owned by plains tribals,

indicating the possibility that these people are beginning to adapt

to the complex world beyond the fringe of their isolated forest habitat.

Even in the most populous subregions of the tarai, represented by

Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara, and Kapilabastu distncts, the percentage

of hill people among oivners of small-scale industry is higher than

the percentage of the hill people in the popu ation of those districts

The best example of this is in Bara, where they own nearly 13 .

of small-scale industry despite the fact that they represent only about

2 percent ofthe district population.

It is difficult to know why the hill people appear to be more highly

40

REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

TABLE 8

Owners of Small-Scale Industry in Five Tarai Districts,

by Regional and Communal Groupings'’

Regional and

communal

groupings

Jhapa

Makottari-

Dhanusha

Bara

Kapila-

basltt

Kailali

Hill people

58.1

15.3

12.8

13.2 •

72.9

Plains Hindus

25.8

76.1

75.2

61.2

3.4

Muslims

6.2

9.0

25.6

Plains tribals

16.1

2.4

3.0

23.7

Total

100.0

100.0

100.0

100.0

100.0

These data were collected for each district as a whole, not simply for the villages

in the field survey. The data were obtained from unpublished records of the revenue

office in each district. Generally, the owner’s caste could be identified by his name,

but in cases where this was difficult, the revenue officer was consulted.

commercialized with regard to light industry than shopkeeping or

itmerant-ty^e trade. Although hill people represent a small percentage

of the tarai population, a relatively large number of tliem, because

t eir contacts with the various Kathmandu governments over the

past several generations, have sizable holdings of rice-producing land in

c tarai. or an enterprising producer of large rice surpluses, it is a

rather natural step to establish a small rice mill, husking the rice in

er to en ance its value before it is sold to Indian wholesalers. Also,

« afready mentioned, it tends to be easier for hill people than plains

p c to o tain the necessary government licenses for such an

enterpnse.

r., ^ concentration of small-scale industry in the subregions

of he tarai represented by Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara, and Kapila-

of the hill people, the Hindus and

these ZtS ' small-scale industry in

ESE ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIAN ECONOMIC DOMINATION

airLdv dependency on India involves, along with others

labor for n” on India for the supply of skilled

epa s several large-scale industries and of essential goods

41

economy of Nepal is susceptible

I e.itrar MoceoveP Discussion

such as cloth, salt, kerosene, and sug \_ „ the

to the inflationaiT trends that gnP^th^. ,^,ir attention upo

of these must be left to scholars people

economic relations between Nepa ^ construction of

1. b here to -n-n .he ^ eoo

to lessen their economic dep together v therefore,

a transportation system whi depen toward

».»h,. h one wa, they “Si'\*''! „ „„k fte

the, hail the construction o j east w

greater self-sufficiency. Sore "“Sng Mahendra only in

isolated subregions of tb\_ roposed by through the hil!

IKOs, h„. it was firs. pjned to

1961. Because the cost ° River in the west

region would have been prohr the Mahaka^^^

through the tarai, all t rp^e Am

to the Mechi River m the . ^ ^

have c«mp>e.rfj\*^„e<l » “f, L.,970s.

Indian „ wifi becoinP . yf^ trade routes belam

that the enfire '>■8''”” e..a<Ii<l'>"\* rtaoe to. it will fadB,.,, the

ThcroadcutsactM h ,jypi,s h P

India and UeP»'' I\* ,don.

r\* ":,'r«t to «“"•'? u«.crasi.s. «a, f,r th J „ J,

lZ°ZnvI recently, another was .0 waik „4,. 4,

r wwptnon of tne , tram to the station sod of

from one subregioih , take uw imo.iM ,

nearest Indian railhead^ the hills^ In 1972 tklVepdso

their destination, then surveys for

government contracted east-west highway andiw^pom

wends to CO . .r, til these feeder roads are Mi-.iii/f

government cono— j the easi-v..oe

north-south until these feeder roads arekVarf

of the hill region.^ » still be a long way off-feE-iioi

the actual construct the tarai f

• 11 U#» eilC^'' .1 nr>#] 1

ofthehillregio- ^ay stiu uo . rw,.«

the actual construct the tarai safe

highway will be K-atbmandu and Pokliara VslKhivt

42 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

operates on a subsistence or ncnr-subsislcncc level. Indeed, Nepal is

probably less a part of the larger Indian economic sphere than it

would be as an industrialized nation. Industrial nations that border

each other tend to develop much greater economic interdependence

than do neighboring agricultural nations, because of the greater

flow across national boundaries of capita), labor, and goods that is

stimulated by industrialization.

India s economic domination of the tarai and of Nepal as a whole

is inevitable, given the close proximity of the two countries and their

disproportionate sizes. Yet, this is a dependency relationship that

is resented by the Nepalis. As one cmpatlietic Indian journalist has

put it, A country of 10 million people, lied by geography and much

e sc to the Indian colossus, is apt at limes to feel like someone having

to s arc a bed with an elephant.”’^ One Nepalese newspaper editor

M warned. If the Government of India wants to see Indians in

Af ^ Indians in Ceylon, Burma, and

nca It as only to continue its present policy of attempting to

r?-! . ? monopoly of Nepal.:' The government daily,

ahl, f A ^ reminiscent of Indian journalistic comment

economic domination, complained: “India expects

and ind follow a policy which will encourage its trade

industrial Nepal, which is lagging far behind India in

ILct oTlf '’^''elopmcnt, undergo such adverse and

It is no7n Of its intimate friend, India?”"-’

men .s the Indian govern-

at empL; to ? economic dependency or

t at N palU HowU the fact

“.icoSiXiZS !' '"f ” ’

tion. These effects will be d’ T of national integra-

it suffice to say here that I'’'' “"‘"’“ding chapter. Let

to that of northern a- of tlie tarai is so closely linked

members of the^Kathm‘^'V^“i- government officials and other

difficulty thinkine of thTt ” of them hill people, have

but otherwise alien region^'^^' ^ Nepalese-administered

(Calcutta)' June T 2 ’ I97o’,'n Delhi’s Diplomacy on Trial," Slaksmm

•samq;, June 19 , 1959

^’Gorkhapatra, Aug. 14, iggg.

economy of the tarai 43

ENSION of the NEPALESE CURRENCY SYSTEM INTO THE TARAI

Kathmandu Valley has been monetized for many

of th century B.C., wlien the influence

over ^^uryan Emperor, Ashoka, M'as felt there. Gradually,

eco ^ several centuries, monetization has occurred in the

^ccaur^ region outside Kathmandu Valley,

cause Nepal is a part of the larger Indian economic sphere, Indian

cncy has been until recently the major circulating currency

Rtuch of the country, almost to die total exclusion of Nepalese

ency in the tarai. This situation is responsible for one of the inier-

r problems of national integradon. The unrestricted entry of

lan currency into Nepal and its use, particularly in the tarai, as

currency of daily commercial transactions, have prevented the

palese government from exercising monetary control over much

of^the national economy.

The demand for Indian currency began growing rapidly during

\* c 18th century. During the latter half of that century', the Nepalis

used Indian currency to buy more sophisticated arms than they could

produce themselves in order to defend their territory against threaten-

’ug Indian and British armies. In the second half of the 19th century

K^epaiese nobility, particularly the Rana family, developed contact

'vuh European culture and acquired a taste for the trappings of upper-

class Western living, baroque-style palaces with cut-gla.ss chandeliers

motor cars, watches, and so forth. Altiiough some of these goods were

44 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

for goods and services that could be met only by the Indian

Now that nationalism has taken hold, at least among e uc

Nepalis, the Indian businessman in Nepal and the Indian rupe

often viewed as symbols of Nepal’s economic dependence on n i<

addition, there are more practical economic reasons for

termination of the dual-currency system. Since the late 194 s, i

lias been a general deterioration in the value of the Nepa ese rup ^

in relation to the Indian rupee. The fluctuation in value has crea

many problems for those who must deal with the two different curr ^

cics, not only the large-scale businessman and the Nepalese govemmen^

itself, but also the villagers. Fluctuating currency rates harass ot

buyers and sellers and discourage creditors and borrowers alike rom

becoming involved in long-term loans at fixed interest rates. In otie

words, the fluctuating values of the two currencies inhibited the process

of economic growth. The problem existed not only in trade between

Nepa! and India, but also between the two currency areas of Nepa ,

that is, between the hill.s, particularly Kathmandu Valley, and t e

larai. The dual-currency system encouraged economic interaction

between the tarai and India. It created a barrier to economic inter-

action between the two regions of Nepal and, tlicrcforc, a formidable

barrier to national integration.

The government took its first step to abolish the system in 1957,

when it passed the Nepalese Currency Circulation Expansion Act."

T here have been many subsequent cflbrts to make the Nepalese

currency area coincide with the nation’s borders, but it has been a

tlifficult task. For example, becau.se customs and currency-exchange

facilities along the border arc inadequate, the government has no

records from wliich to estimate how much Indian curenej’ is circulating

in Nepal. Indian currency continues to be used for major transactions,

but the government's efibn to discourage its use as the everyday

currency for minor transactions has been making considerable head-

n;iy. F.ven in the tarai, one seldom secs Indian currency being u.sed

in the open market.

It is not the government’s intent literally to push Indian rupees

out of .Nepal, but rather to h.ave them converted into Nepalese currency

in .Nepalese banks so that they will be available to llic gos'crnmcnt

for uv in (mtihasing from India various development goods needed

to it'.'^islcriuj’.e tlie economy. Despite the fact that Nepalese currency

is O'lv. uo-d for daily transactions througlumt Nepal, the government

vn. N'> iSJuNgo, IW.

ECONOMY OF THE TARAI 45

has difficulty obtaining the Indian rupees it needs from the private

sector. A major reason for this is the variety of means by which Indian

currency is brought into the country. It can be mailed in, as a Nepalese

soldier serving in the Indian Army might do when he wishes to send

part of his pay to his family. It can be transferred in through the

banking system, as the Indian and American governments do with

their economic-aid funds. However, most Indian currency finds its

way into Nepal in a less organized fashion. More than 95 pereent of

Nepal’s trade is with India and most of the Indian-currency-earning

exports are produced in the tarai. The Nepalese businessman may

go to a nearby Indian market to sell his goods and bring Indian

currency back into the tarai, or the Indian businessman may bring

Indian currency into the tarai and buy goods with it there. The

Nepalis may hold their Indian currency to reinvest in their trade,

they may invest it in other sectors of the tarai economy or in India, or

they may spend it on consumer or development goods in India. In

any case, except for the Indian currency they convert into Nepalese

currency for living expenses or taxes, the government obtains little

of it.

Besides gaining access to the use of Indian-currency surpluses in

Nepal, the government wants to prevent the outflow of these surpluses

for investment in India. During the Rana period, the Rana prime

ministers and family members invested large amounts of capital in

India, primarily in urban real estate and industry. Since then, big

landowners, businessmen and some government officials have done

the same. In the early 1960s, the government enacted laws to prevent

this, but there is no government apparatus to enforce them. How can

the outflow be stemmed? Because adequate control of the border

appears too difficult from the administrative point of view, the govern-

ment can only hope to create investment opportunities in Nepal as

well as an atmosphere of confidence in the Nepalese economy, so

that Nepalis who would otherwise invest their money in India will

invest it at home instead. In order to persuade the plains people to

invest their money in the tarai or in other parts of Nepal, the govern-

ment will have to draw these people more fully into national politics

and policy making, to assure them that they have a stake in national

development.

Chapter III

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS

Throughout this study, Ncpal-India relations constitute a secondary

theme, interwoven with the primary national-integration theme, u

in this chapter, international relations come to the fore, because

problems that develop along the border generally affect both nations

and often require joint action. The border problems also relate direct )

to the question of national integration. Until the Nepalese government

is able to control the movement of people and goods across its border

with India, it can not csiablLsh full control over the tarai. The govern-

ment's success with administration of activities along its border is a

measure of its capacity to administer more complex, nontraditional

economic- and political-development programs in the tarai, indeed,

to ensure progress toward more complete unification of the tarai with

the hill region.

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS 49

the Nepalis objected to this disregard for their jurisdiction and lodged

an official protest.

As a rule, Nepalese and Indian officials cooperate in an effort to

maintain law and order along the border, and this cooperation has

been facilitated by a series of extradition agreements between the

two countries, the first signed in 1834® and the latest in 1963.® From

time to time, law-enforcement offieials meet in Indian or Nepalese

border towns to discuss their problems. As a result of such meetings

inBhairawaandJanakpur in 1972, a set of simplified border-patrolling

and extradition procedures were worked out. Indian police officials

agreed to allow Nepalese police to carry arms while traveling through

Indian territory and to prevent administrative harassment of these

police, and the Nepalis agreed to extend the same privileges to Indian

police.

It is not always easy to distinguish between groups that are organized

for purely criminal purposes and those that are organized for political

purposes, because politically motivated groups occasionally raid and

plunder in order to finance organizations with political goals. This

was apparently the case with K. I. Singh’s “army” in 1951 and with the

confrontation between the Communist Party and local-government

officials in Rautahat district in 1957. It is possible that some violence

labeled purely “criminal” by the government since the royal coup of

1960 has been, in fact, the result of activity organized by the banned

political parties. Politically motivated violence naturally adds a

complicating dimension to the government’s law-and-order problems.

SMUGGLING

Relations between Nepal and India are very close, highly complex,

and delicate, given the somewhat different objectives of the two

countries. India’s major aim in the Himalayas is reinforcement of

its defenses against China. Nepal’s principal concern is its own national

integrity. There have been periods of diplomatic stress when the

Indians and Nepalis have felt that their national objectives were

particularly at odds. During these periods it has been more difficult

for the two governments to resolve problems involving the border,

®‘'A Notice in Connection wth the Agreement to Hand Over Criminals, Mutually,

on the Southern Borders (1834),” in Nath, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 1.

” Nepal Gazelle, vol. XIII, Extraordinary' Issue No. 10, Aug. 16, 1963.

"‘Gorkhapatra, ]an. 18 and Apr. 12, 1972.

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS 51

have been particularly popular among urbanized Indians. Chinese-

made fountain pens can be purchased throughout India.\*®

The most complex smuggling pattern developed in the late 1960s.

In an effort to shore up its faltering economy after implementation

of its poorly conceived revaluation policy in lOSG,\*\* the Nepalese

government encouraged the export of raw jute and burlap to overseas

countries by guaranteeing the exporters the right to keep 60 percent

of the hard currency derived therefrom.\*® At the same time, the Indian

government raised export duties on Indian-grown raw jute to a level

which made its export prohibitive. This was done to insure that enough

raw jute would be available to supply India’s own jute industry.

Shortly thereafter, Indian jute began to find its way to overseas coun-

tries through Nepal. Indian jute from Bihar and ^Vest Bengal was

smuggledinto the major tarai jute centers of Biratnagar and Bhadrapur,

and then shipped as Nepalese-grown jute to overseas countries through

Calcutta, Nepal’s window on the world.

The 60 percent hard-currency allowance by the Nepalese govern-

ment was made in late 1966. The following year the government

instituted a gift-parcel scheme, under which any Nepali could receive

from abroad a gift parcel, no more than one per day, so long as the

value of the goods in the parcel did not exceed 1,000 Indian rupees.

Until it was terminated in 1971, the gift-parcel scheme was used by

Nepalese jute exporters and their Indian business associates to send

into Nepal from Hong Kong, Singapore, and other ports such consumer

goods as transistor radios, watches, flashlights, cameras, and cigarette

lighters. Thus the government received not only 40 percent of the

exporters’ hard-currency earnings, but also substantial customs

revenues. It was estimated that at one point the government was

receiving customs revenue from gift parcels at a rate of 200,000 Nepalese

rupees a day.\*®

The population of Nepal could absorb only a small percentage of

i^The reverse of this pattern has occurred since the completion of the all-weather

road from Kathmandu to Lhasa in 1966. Among the most important quota goods

exported by India to Nepal are gasoline and kerosene. Some of these have reportedly

reached Tibet. Statesman IVeeily, Sept. 28, 1968, p. 15.

JtGoods such as jute burlap that were manufactured in the tarai could no longer

compete on the Indian market, because they were priced too high.

tANepal and other developing nations generally require their exporters to convert all

or much of their hard-currency earnings into local currency in order to consen-e the

hard currency for national development needs.

Times, July 30, 1963.

52 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

these imported goods, and most of them turned up on the Indian

market. Because Nepalese import duties on such goods were consi-

derably lower than Indian ones, these goods, when smuggled into

India, were less expensive than those imported through legitimate

Indian import channels.

Such consumer goods are smuggled into India in various ways.

They are sold in Kathmandu shops to Indian tourists and pilgrims.

During important Hindu festival periods such as Shiva Ratri and

Dasain, thousands of Indians flock to Kathmandu. It was estimated

that Indian visitors bought 10 million Nepalese rupees’ worth of

imported goods during the 1968 Dasain festival. Most goods apparently

cross the border by bullock cart or truck, using well-established routes

into India. Small quantities undoubtedly cross in backpacks, over

oQtpaths through the fields. An occasional smuggler is even reported

to have floated his goods down the Gandak River!”

he Indian government has created a fairly effective antismuggling

s^^tem m its major ports and along its coast, but Indian government

0 cias ave viewed the Nepal border as a sieve through which has

rainc ar currency needed for development purposes. This was

devaluation and Nepalese revalua-

ororrH iorq special antismuggling

hence r ' were crossing into Bihar State,

uniis a) U created seventeen special mobile-police

Bihar V Incidents involving Nepalese traders and

inside the arrest of a trader allegedly

under hea tactics of the Indian border police came

und r heavy criticism m the Kathmandu press.-

State cauffal of ^ Customs Office in the Bihar

of smuSne and 1"'-' ‘he rising rate

dunneme in Rih prevent it. It reported that

rupees’ worth of bordering Nepal, 100,000 Indian

rupees’ worth had ^00,000

1,736,000 rupees’ wonh hlf of 1968,

arrests for cLom= ^ ^ confiscated during 2,133 separate

synthetic yarn valued''a?5rOOo'^n'

at 225,000 rupees and lar.r ’ ^ European sugar valued

pees, and large quantities of watches, fountain pens, and

‘■//iWmfan Dec 30 lOfifl r, ti.n ll j ,

May 27, 1969. ' 1969;.IW^^

July ij^ 1963; GorUafialra^ Aug. 14, 19GB.

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS 53

cigarette lighters. The seizures also included 62,000 rupees’ worth

of Indian jute bound for Nepal.\*®

The establishment of stainless-steel and synthetic-textile factories

in the tarai has resulted in additional problems of illegal trade. In

1966, only one stainless-steel factory and one synthetic-textile factory

were in operation. By mid-1969, there were seven stainless-steel facto-

ries.^® Both industries mushroomed as a result of Nepalese-government

industrial-licensing policies, excise-tax benefits, and the opportunity

to purchase raw material from overseas countries with hard currency

earned from the export of jute or tea or black-market hard currency

smuggled in from India. By 1968, these factories were exporting

products in large quantities to India, and despite Indian import

duties, selling these goods at prices below those of similar Indian-made

products. As a result, Indian industrialists, particularly members of

the Indian Silk and Art Silk Mills Association, began to protest to

the Indian government.

During the last several months of 1968, the questions of smuggling

and the import of inexpensive goods were raised in the Indian Parlia-

ment. In the lower house, in answer to charges that the Indian govern-

ment was doing too little to prevent the illegal movement of goods

across the Nepal-India border. Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai

spoke of India’s need to strike a balance between its concern about

these problems and its concern for its friendship with Nepal. Never-

theless, because of this criticism, the Indian government initiated

talks with the Nepalese government in late 1 968 and obtained a promise

from the Nepalis to restrict the production of goods manufactured

with raw materials imported from overseas.®®

Despite Nepalese moves to restrict the export of such goods, by

May 1969, Indian customs officials began holding up shipments on

the grounds that they exceeded the quotas agreed upon by the two

governments in late 1968. These goods then began to 6nd their way

into India in large quantities through unauthorized channels and, by

mid-July, the Indian government announced that it had conhscated

stainless steel and synthetic textiles worth 6,000,000 Nepalese rupees.®®

Illegal trade and Indian efforts to prevent it were among the major

^^Hinduslan Times, Dec. 30, 1968, p. 5; Staiesman Weekly, 4, 1969, p. 8.

Xepal, Mar. 4. 1969; Jmava,la, Au%. 26, 1969.

^mnduslan Times, Nov. 15, 1968, p. 13. See also Dec. 10, 1968, p. 7.

^^Ibid., Nov. 20, 1968, p. 16.

^^Malribhumi Weekly, ]xi\y 15, 1969.

REGIONAI.ISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

54

Stumbling blocks to renegotiation of the 1960 Inclo-Nepal Trade

and Transit Treaty, which expired in 1970. The negotiations, accom-

panied by considerable rancor, spun out through 1970 and most of

1971, as the Indian government sought to ivin Nepalese commitments

to trade policies that would discourage smuggling, policies which the

Ncpalis resisted on the grounds that they would be detrimental to

the Nepalese economy, India finally gained some concessions and, in

1972, the Nepalese government began gradually to diseourage the

import of luxury goods from overseas.-\* The government also decided

to coiivcrt all but two of the 17 stainless-steel and synthetic-textile

lactoiics in the tarai into plants that would manufacture goods made

from domestically produced materials.”®

Foi scvcini decades, perhaps longer, smuggling on the largest

scale has involved agricultural produce, particularly rice. The tarai

has been a ncc-surplus region and, until recently, the states ofnortliern

India have almost always had food-grain deficits. Although the tn-o

go\ ei nments lave sought to control the rice trade across tlie border

m order to gam customs revenue from it, large quantities of tarai rice

!■ M "'‘fl'out passing through the customs posts on

ahn , ?! ^ ^ SO'-ernnient has complained unduly

tlip s'ttuggmg because India has needed the surplus and

needed f '! large quantities of Indian rupees, much

2n ? ! f-"’ l"dia H;wever,

In? ! ? ;’r TV ^ ^’'■•-^nically deficit area,

cek tl c 2, a, r T’ f government nail

lull region-® ' ' ' ®^\*\*P^\*\*® be diverted instead to the

it V thc'Nl.Tll'?‘' P'ttiern is detiimentaJ to Nepal,

acdon. In Sate

of the bm-dei- siSddenl'v beanie

i«to Nepal on a lanw scai'e. and inVhr’'\*'’

ludian-ciirrencv j process Nepal's important

Prime Minister Surea rTI ™ed. By the end of the year, Nepal’s

boirier to prevent furtl'^ Tliapa. tlireatened to seal the entire

prevent further economic deterioration.- Titus,, illegal

isr’.

; Let,, |g^

y'" A«5, S. i«7y,

"f- b'C- 8. 1«eS,

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS 55

trade has been damaging to both nations from time to time and has

been a frequent source of irritation between them.

ILLEGAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

The illegal economic activity reviewed in the preceding section has

been engaged in by Indian citizens as well as Nepalese. Nepalese and

Indian sources generally agree that Indian commercial interests

overseas and Indian capital were primarily responsible for much of

the initiative taken. It has not been uncommon to read in the Nepalese

press that Indian businessmen have “infiltrated” into Nepal with

their “black” hard currency to import consumer goods from overseas

and, with the “connivance” of Nepalese government officials, smuggle

them into India. Although the Indian press has generally been

more diplomatic about profit-making government officials, bolli

Nepalese and Indian, it has been equally critical of the Indian bu.siness\*

men. According to one journalist:

Nepal’s economic needs should be treated with the maximum under-

standing and generosity even if India has to suffer minor lones here

and there, and provided no grave damage is done to the Indian minorny.

Some such damage has been caused in the past because of a diversion

of Indian exports, smuggling into India offoreign luxury goods originally

brought to Nepal under a dubious gift-parcels scheme, and (he hot-

house establishment in Nepal of stainless-steel and synt|ie(ir;.fi(,r,.

industries. Most Nepalese realize that these have done no goorl (o

Nepal or India. But this has yet to be impressed on a pariirijlarly

unsavoury group of Indian businessmen in Nepal who have been (he

main promoters as well as beneficiaries of the various racket.';, Jl al[ovvf-n

unchecked, the activities of these ugly Indians may do irieaff.uJahle

damage to India-Nepal relations.^’

In the past, some Nepalis have branded such Indian hu'.ine"m,.n

as instruments of an Indian-government policy designed (o'makc

Nepal more dependent upon Intiia. Ironically, during llir: ,

scheme period, some Indian businessmen appeared (o h^. in^rurnf-nts

of Nepal’s “independent” economic policy, and u v.as q,,.

government that condemned them.

-'>Siimiksha ll'retlr, Oct. 9, 1969.

=»Indcr Malhotra, “lndia-Ncp.al Relations: Dell., s Diplomacy,,,,

lalcutta), June 12, 1970, p. 6.

56 regionalism and national unity in nepal

An unfortunate side effect of the gift-parcel scheme 1 '^ ^cn jn-

creased resentment expressed by some lull people toward pl

people. Particularly the business-caslc groups among the plains peop

suffer from a grossly overgeneralized reputation for era ty

scrupulous business dealings. By permitting unscrupulous

businessmen to operate in Nepal on a particularly large sea e

the gift-parcel-scheme period, Nepalese government '

tingly reinforced the stereotype. Many hill people have ddheu y

distinguishing between plains people who are Nepalese citizens an

those who are Indian. And, imperceptibly, this stereotype ma es i

more difficult for plains people to interact with hill people in the course

of their daily lives. The problem is most pronounced in the relaftons

between members of the Kathmandu elite and members of the business

castes in the tarai towns. When such stereotypes create suspicion an

inhibit cooperation across communal lines, they hinder the growth o

national unity.

THE BLURRED BORDER

A distinction needs to be made between a closed border and a controlled

border, A closed border is one across which there is no movement

of people or goods. Neither the Nepalis nor the Indians want to close

the border. Such a move would seriously dislocate, if not destroy,

Nepal’s economy, encourage political instability and undermine

India’s defenses, limited as they are, in the central Himalayas. Both

nations seek to establish a controlled border, across which people

and goods move in an orderly fashion.

Before Nepal can hope to establi.sh such control, it must solve some

formidable problems. Bijaya Bahadur Pradhan, a Nepalese economist,

has attempted to work out the logistics for effective border administra-

tion. He assumes that the border that needs careful administration is

800 miles long, and that a customs post is needed every four miles

along its length, that is, 200 posts. There are approximately 90 posts

at present. He also estimates that an antismuggling check post manned

by border police would be needed every quarter mile between customs

posts. There would be a total of approximately 3,000 of these check

posts. Implementation of the plan would be extremely expensive but,

as Pradhan points out, the substantial increase in revenue collected

would finance the system. Without such border administration, he

suggests that commercial, fiscal, and foreign-exchange policies will

NEPAL-INDIA BORDER PROBLEMS 57

be impossible to carry out effectively, and that it will also be impossible

to collect the type of statistics about Nepal’s trade and international

payments upon which national-development planning must be

based.

Even if Pradhan’s plan could be modified without losing its effective-

ness, it is doubtful that the Nepalese government would be able to

implement such a plan in the near future. Border control is not only

expensive but also administratively complex. Therefore, the naticin

will be forced to live with the realities of an uncontrolled border.

This reality includes the existence of a blurred line of separation

between the tarai region of Nepal and India, at least as percdved tr.

many tarai villagers. The blurred border makes it diffiojlt for their

to understand clearly the distinctions of sovereignty that also set^artrre

Nepal and India. The border therefore remains an unsolved rcobien.

for Nepal as it moves to integrate the tarai into its nations: fisttito'tnn

Chapter IV

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI

The problem of national integration vis-a-vis the tarai has arisen

because people from one cultural background have migrated into a

region over which people of another cultural background have esta-

blished political control. Migration is an important topic in this

study, because the movement of people, still in large numbers today,

determines to a large extent the cultural composition of the tarai.

MIGRATION FROM NORTHERN INDIA INTO THE TARAI

The early history of the tarai is a record of the ebb and flotv of people.

Kingdoms successively arose and disintegrated. People have been

migrating into the tarai since the first Aryan tribesmen pushed east-

ward from the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna Rivers around

900 B.C. During the period 900 to 500 B.C., the Aryans penetrated

into what is now northern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and the powerful

kingdom of Videha was established in northern Bihar and the eastern

tarai. The capital of Videha was called Mithila, and it may have been

located at the site of modem Janakpur in Mahottari-Dhanusha district

of the eastern tarai, Janakpur, the centre of extensive ruins, is named

after King Janaka of Videha, who married his daughter Sita to the

of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana.

A line of less powerful rulers, the kings of Sakya, had their capital

at Kapilabastu in the mid-western tarai. The Buddha was born in

^ Sakya king at Lumbini, near Kapilabastu. Ruins

01 the capital have been excavated by a team of Nepalese and Japanese

pst^ nr important kingdom of the ancient period

H' ^ ■ 't a Simraun Garb in the southeast corner of Bara

thefirct 1 kingdoms of Videha and Kapilabastu,

Arvan h™ ^ °i, probably the leader of a marauding

ArrVipnlnlt ^ P“skcd into the tarai forest from the south and west.

Simraun P iT!! discover, when excavations are undertaken at

arh, that the first kings were chieftains in the Vrijjian

58

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI 59

confederacy, a loose association of Aryan tribes that settled in this

region around 600 to 700 B.C. In the tarai exist many other ruins

which, when identified, will shed more light on the long and complex

history of tlic repon.

It appears that nearly all the settlers in early tarai history were

of Aryan or pre-Aryan indigenous stock. The ancient and medieval

history of the region is a cyclical one in which men and forest have

dominated in turns. From time to time, people from more settled parts

of the Gangctic plain pushed back the forest, cleared the land, and

established settlements that grew into kingdoms. When the kingdoms

withered away because of natural calamities or ivar, the forest

reclaimed the land.

Information about settlement in modern times comes from three

sources — records of Brirish East India Company officials, records of

Nepalese government officials, and oral histories of the tarai villagers

themselves. The British records, particularly the reports of Colonel

William Kirkpatrick and Francis Hamilton, provide the earliest infor-

mation. Kirkpatrick crossed the tarai at the head of an expedition to

Kathmandu in 1793 and described the settlement pattern in what is

now Bara and Parsa districts. He observed that the land 'vas cleared

and settled from the border north for about four miles and then partly

cleared for another four or five miles. From there, dense and uninter-

rupted forest extended north to the Siwaliks.' Hamilton found that

a majority of the inhabitants of the eastern tarai were plains tribals,

Tharus throughout and Rajbanshis, Mechis, and Gangais in the far-

eastern tarai. ^ He reported that they practieed slash-and-burn eultiva-

tion, shifting their location every three or four years when the land

lost its fertility. Although the land feU into disuse, it was not reclaimed

by the forest because of condnual grazing by herds of co^^'s and buffalos

driven north from India during the dry season by Ahirs and other

caste Hindus.

The Nepali-speaking Sen kings of Palpa and Makwanpur gamed

control of the mid-western tarai in the fifteenth or sixteenth century

and extended their control to the eastern tarai around the mid-seven-

teenth century. They looked upon the dense, malarial tarai forests

'William Kirkpatrick, A. Account ef\* / (London^ I8I f 12-16.

^Francis Hamilton, An Acnounl oftk hmgdom oj Mpal (Edinburgh, 1819), pp. 156,

164, 169. Hamilton nas an administrafve officer of the East India Company tn the

earlv 1800s His account is much more detailed than Kirkpatricks and furnishes a

considerable amount of valuable information about the tarai’s economic and cultural

history.

60 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

as a defense against invasion from India and, therefore, did not en-

courage settlement. Instead, they drew tarai revenue from logging,

the trapping and selling of elephants, and taxing the seasonal pasturing

of cattle. The Shah kings wrested the eastern tarai from the Sen kings

in the 1770s and permitted some settlement.®

Still, it was not until the 1860s that those who controlled the tarai\*

felt that the region had lost its utility as a defense perimeter and that

diplomacy was a more effective defense against increased British

intervention. For its military assistance to the British during the Indian

ilutiny, 1857-58, Nepal received title to the far-western tarai, terri-

tor) t le British had taken away from Nepal during the Anglo-Nepali

ar of 1814-16. Jung Bahadur Rana, the founder of the line of here-

itar^ ana prime ministers, immediately began to encourage settle-

ment m t e far-western tarai and in other parts of the tarai as well.

Mamp c, he promised to grant the status of free men to all Nepali

arc ■ T there.® Details of the new' government policy

■ ‘n government documents of the period.®

was not solely the result of more

the \Ii r ^ eolations between the Nepalis and British following

of the population pressure and the expansion

prices \* fooghout the subcontinent, accompanied by rising

and to niir^t"^^ revenue to finance the government

iis 'r i" I" R“'»« “"U 1='

cultural activiiy'In ih I operadons and agri-

farminawenit r logging and clearing land for

orca.s, cncouraccd bv large numbers to forested

The oral hism •' ownership and low tax rates,

settlement rniierm ° ®6eds further light on tarai

stories i h .’"-7 refers to

journeys throuch 'the^n \*^\*’\*^’^ fathers’ and forefathers’

the problems with onM • 7 "^ °PPortunitics. Despite

and the distortions of 7 ^ limitations of memory

drawn from tl,ai sour,- 7’ valuable generalizations can be

source. Much material of this type was gathered in

' "• •PP. '>1,131-132,

Inj'\* tlinf" l}](^ I?

T' XX dal-

I'M. MR,, C. , T«,

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAl

61

villages and towns of the tarai during the period 1966 - 68 , but very

little ofit can be included here.

Generally speaking, the oldest continually inhabited villages in the

tarai arc those established near a religious site such as Sita’s birtl nl-

at Janakpur or near a fort of some long-forgotten king. Still other

villages grew up around customs posts, police stations, or rest stations

along trade routes between the plains and the hills. Early settlements

were also cut out of the forest along riverbeds which, during the dr

season, furnished broad, flat roads for travel through the dense iuntrl

Some of the earliest settlements were those of Tharus, deep in tlie

forest, isolated from nontribal people. None of the headmen in Tharu

villages could even hazard a guess as to how many generations a

their ancestors settled in those villages. Of the eleven villages in Bar

district for which oral histories were collected, seven had been settled

by Tharus, but all the Tharus had moved away from the four closest

to the border, thus evidencing their retreat further into the forest '

the face of competition for land with more sophisticated caste peon/”

Plains Hindus and Muslims appear to have moved into Mahotta ^

Dhanusha and Bara and the districts contiguous to them earlier th^^\*

into other parts of the tarai. Villages in the southern part of h

districts were mostly settled seven to ten generations ago altl V

one village in each of the two districts was reportedly itablis/^ .

fifteen generations ago. Farther north in the district, vilJagej - ^

settled four to five generations ago, and the ’Northernmost

were begun by hill people in the 1930s. In Kapilabasm and itc

neighboring mid-western tarai districts, the villages "o

within the last eight to ten generations, and even the Than,, S

recall how many generations ago them villages svere esta/i ^ f

Jhapa district is experiencing in a three-generation span the tL/

that Mahottari-Dhanusha and Bara districts underwent in

three hundred years, from a dense forest re^on hiding g . or

villages to an uninterrupted, cultivated plain dotted

villages. Kailali district, representative of the far-we 3 t '^

about at the stage of settlement in which Kirkpatrfeb ft.

district in 1793, or the stage in which the first Newa^

found Jhapa district when he moved to Bhadrapur m I 917

the first tile-roofed house there. . • thp ta ■

The first plains caste people ^ ^ 1 often ,,,

, cowherds by occupation, who grazed ca the

^ nlltS ITltn ■

)V occupauoii, & . • '■‘^rairf, - ”

and gradually turned seasonal huts into

dry season

■ore Ahirs-

vh‘-

‘“Oient dwf-

62 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

Other early arrivals were yeoman-farmer groups such as the

Kiirmis anti similar quasi-caste groups among tlic Muslims. Lower-

case agricultural people also arrived early, followed by occupational-

a nd business-caste people after the agricultural economy had developed

beytJtid the rudimentary stage.

The pattern of extending agricultural settlements gradually north

hfint the liorcler was followed by trading settlements. As the Indian

railroads svere c.\tended to the border in the late nineteenth century,

frontier trading communities grew up around the railheads. People

living in the tarai and the hills would bring tlicir produce to these

places to sell or barter for such items as salt, sugar, cloth, and metal

utensils. Gradually, businessmen from these railhead communities

moved across the border into the tarai to out-mancuver their competi-

tion by making it unnecessary for villagers to transport their produce

'o (,ir south. I he first commercial centers in the tarai were just across

ilic border from the railheads, and many of these centers have

developed into important towns. Finally, the businessmen began to

establirii their trading locations at the foot of the Siwaliks in order to

in.d.r tlu rnsrlvcs available to the hill people as they reached the

pain'. loday, micIi n trading community is located at the foot of

cverv- major trail leading out of the hills,

h isvtcn the IhfiOs and 1951, the Nepalese government encouraged

II irnir ( ivdopmeiu in the tarai and made an effort to settle hill

propr )i) the rcgirm. However, the hill people responded only in

mi miunirs, hrr.iu'c the tarai seemed unfamiliar and unpleasant

I m, hoi, flat, and malarious. Therefore, the government

(onnm itself wjtl, letting migrants from India develop the

1 iiiv o, 1 If t.irai. Until the last several dccndc-s, tarai history has

}'i>\* prim.irily by rvrm.s farther soutlt on the plains, by

ini', t' \* r""-' 1 'tfowih ami the spill-over of people

h\*. uni l!-'r ! represented by the railroads,

'll '■ h-,- !^' '■'■'mmunities .and advcniuresomr husincssnicn.

I-,,, 1 \*\* '\* of events which the Nepalese government

" '■Ml'-' ;rd to ronim! to any significant degree.

•'Ih! me

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI

63

the Himalayas have always attracted adventurers and mystics, they

have offered little more than subsistence-level living conditions for

most hill people.

This is apparently not a recent phenomenon, and may have begun

as long as 3,000 years ago. Some of the Aryan tribes may have separated

from those moving east onto the Gangetic plain and instead moved

eastward along the Himalayan foothills. The balance between popula-

tion and available resources must have narrowed quickly for the

settlers in the dry and inhospitable western Himalayas, pushing them

eastward into less densely populated and less dry hill regions. This

process — migration, settlement, gradual overpopulation, agricultural

deterioration, famine, migration — produced a kind of Malthusian

peristalsis, pushing people farther and farther east along the hill

ranges. The eastward migration of people speaking a Sanskrit-based

language, an early form of Nepali by the time they reached the central

Himalayas around the twelfth century,’ began to sweep the hill tribals

along with it.

This west-to-east migration can be documented in Nepalese and

Indian censuses. For example, many Magars and Gurungs have left

their ancestral villages in the western hills of Nepal and have migrated

into the eastern hills. The 1961 census of Nepal enumerates 67,327

Magars and 6,938 Gurungs living in the eastern hills.\* The Indian

census data are even more illustrative of this west-to-east movement of

people. Already in 1901, the Indian census enumerates nearly 200,000

speakers of Nepali and hill-tribal languages settled m India, s most

of them in Darjeeling and Jalpaigun districts of W«t Bengal, in

Sikkim and Assam. By 1961, slightly more than one milhon speakers

of these languages were enumerated in n la.

Demographic and economic problems have a so been responsible

for the much more recent migraUon from the hills into the tarai. Many

writers have explored these problems as they exist on the Gangetic

plain, but few have studied or wntten about them as they affect the

hill people. In 1954, a United Nations was one of

the first to issue the warning that ‘ erosion but surely robbing

the Mahabharat of habitable land, because drainage basins arc

=T. tv. Clark, InlToduction to Nepali "22-23^Ttcs"''figuf« ^

of Nepal, 1961, vol. II. PP- -nclude ,he ,

nner tarai as well as the eastern i s.

“See relevant volumes of the Cea^ f ’ ^ 141-183.

laCensus of India, 1961, vol. I, part H-G (lO. PP

64 KEGIONAUSM AND NATIONAL DNITV IN NEPA^^

being deforested. He went on to observe Aat t c c o

erosion were causing a decline in Y agricultural

and were even changing climatic conditio • exhausted

productivity is itself one of the spurs to to

"oil and a drier climate reduce the ^rence. New

bring more land under cultivation to ma e up marginal

land brought under cultivation is genera y and the

value, high on the mountain slopes. It must b .^^6ng the

terraces often wash away dunng the rainy season, p P

erosion problem. It becomes a vicious cycle; declin P

more land brought under cultivation, more erosion

still greater decline in productivity. The American

John Hitchcock, and his wife Patricia have ^ V^rmer

Himalayan Farmer,” which is a poignant story o ® Sham-

caught in this vicious cycle. Two Nepalese scholars, as up

shere and Mohammad Mohsin, have completed an

of leadership in the villages of the eastern hills, in which .

of the 243 village leaders they interviewed slated that the pro u

of their land was declining.'^ . ,

Charles McDougal, another American anthropologist, has uno

taken the most detailed study of these economic problems ^

He studied 640 families in six villages of the far-western hills and doc -

mented the growing imbalance between living expenses an oca

producible income, a factor which has forced a large number o

from these villages to seek employment in India or the tarai.

He describes three types of migration from the hills into the tarai M

India. The first is permanent migration. Of the 640 families t a

lived in five of the six villages in 1965, 39 had moved away during

1965-67 (6 percent of the sample), a large loss of population for a

two-year period.^'' Thus, McDougal’s study begins to measure tie

^^Earnest Robbe, Hepou lo the Government oj Mepnl on Forestry (Rome, 1954],

ReportNo. 209, pp. 14,45.

’M Study Report on the Pattern of Emerging Leadership in Pamhayats (Kathmandu, h

'’McDougal produced two preliminary reports of his survey, both mimeographr't-

The first, issued in June 19B7, is entitled Economic Survey of Doti District: Preiminary

Report, and the second, issued in September 1967, is entitled Village Economy w ar

Westrm JLepol. His final report, which includes the results of his surveys in Doll, Sa yan,

Kailali, and Dang-Deukhuri districts, was subsequently published as VUI^g^

Homhald Economy in Far Western J(epal (Kathmandu, 1968). He uses the term ‘ house-

hold” for family.

Economy in Far Western Nepal, p. 15.

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI 65

magnitude of tlie problem that has resulted in the permanent settle

ment of more than a million Ncpalis in India,

The second type of migration is semipermanent, that is, migration

for periods of six months to ten years or even longer. Whereas perma

nent migration involves women and children and is often mig o

to rural areas, the semipermanent migration consists a mos exc u

sively of men going to urban centres, leaving their wives e in

to manage family a ffaim in the village. Of the 640 families in

McDougal's sample, 234 (36 percent) had one or more memb r

working in India or the tarai for

stay away from the village was jean P

work chiefly as gatekeepers and J preference for

wealthy families in India s cities. Nep S , . . ^ g.g.gj

these jobs because of their reputation for fearlessness, physical rugged

ness, honesty, and loyalty.

■ • ,r.,nv wav.s comparable with army

This type of employment is in J of many parts of

service, long a source of hveh i company for several

Nepal, Men often remain emp oye j^onths on leave at intervals

years, returning to their ^ „s cloth, and other comsumcr

of2yearsorso, when they bring back savi g ,

goods to their families.'®

. ic seasonal and usually occurs for a

The third type of migraUon season. It is cold

period of three to four months u (ge higher altitudes,

in the hills at that dme ^ j,„j.icultural work is to be found.

The harvest season is over, an pejjj-uary or March,

In the tarai the harvest season hart-csting and threshing

and hill people are often ab e gemipermanent migration.s

rice and mustard. Both the seaso people. The migrants

serve important economic nee^ jjjfpcult for them to do in the liills,

earn their subsistence, '^^‘"^sential goods needed by the families

and they save a little money jjjjght be expected, tho.se who

they left behind in the hi J employment m the tarai or India

are most frequently force o jyjost of the land is owned

are members offamilies and Chetris and, in the case of McDougal’s

by upper castes, it the lower-caste people such

villages, Magars as we

p. 17.

p. 15.

66 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

as the Kamis, Sarkis, and Damais who leave their villages in the

greatest numbers.”

Although McDougal’s study emphasizes the greater vulnerability

of low-caste people to economic hardship, it should be pointed out

that a large number of upper-caste people have also been forced to

migrate out of the western hills. For example, during a severe drought

in 1966-67, large numbers of people moved from the far-western

hills into Kailali district in the far-western tarai. Although approxi-

mately 200 families belonged to the lower castes, 250 to 300 families

were Brahmins and 400 to 500 were Chetris, all as destitute as their

lowcr-caste brethren.”

the tarai as a POPULATION VACUUM

Economic deterioration in the hills and in parts of the Gangetic plain

has necessitated out-migration, and positive factors in the form of

economic opportunities have encouraged migration into the tarai.

Most important has been the opportunity for the land-hungry W

obtain land, cither free or at relatively little cost. As agriculture has

developed, the tarai has presented businessmen with new opportu-

nities as well. The tarai can be called a population vacuum, as a

comparison of population densities in the tarai and surrounding areas

indicates. The most important point illustrated by map 5 is the greater

population density to the north and south of the tarai than in the

region itself. The density in the eastern Indian border districts is two

or three times greater than in the eastern tarai districts, and the density

IS three to four times greater in the western Indian border districts

t lan in the western tarai districts. If one keeps in mind the fact that

licrc is much less cultivable land available in the hills, the density

0 population on cultivable land is much higher in the hill districts

t lan m the tarai, and perhaps even higher than in the Indian border

1 istncts. The greatest disparity is in the far svest where, for example,

1C tarai istrict of Kanchanpur had adensityofSl people per square

mie in 61 and the neighboring hill district, Dandcldhuraj had a

d^^nsnyofMG, nearly five times greater.

|'7\*i-Gpp. H, if,. 17.

i' 'l'"'?\*"' M low-ca«c people in die hill region ofUtlar Pradesh

n , . ' ”■\* ' ^erreman in “Caste and Economy in the Himalayas,”

“Intrrsl-«'r'n ^ '552), 390-394.

Jnn.3 soxral miles norih of MalaHicti baza\*ir>

^ TARAI DISTRICTS

dJ]] INDIA'S BORDER DISTRICTS

68 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

Population pressure in the hills and on the

persisted for many decades. This has been evi ence

scale migration of hill people into northeastern n la,

Bhutan over the past sixty or seventy , J jg earlier,

the tarai did not begin to draw large numbers of hiU P P

A partial answer is to be found in their preference or

other hill regions when possible, because the surroundings

familiar. However, malaria is largely responsible, an r

to the malaria scourge punctuate historical records a ou

That disease was one of the defenses of the hill kings agains

threats from India. It was as responsible for decimating

Kinloch’s expeditionary force in 1767 as were the long, curve

(knives) of the hill warriors. A saying current among hi

recently illustrates the prevalent fear of malaria. ‘ In ^ »

tarai)onerupee’sworthofriceisenoughtolastamanuntilhis un

In view of the high death rate caused by malaria before the

government, in cooperation with the World Health j 5

and U.S./A.I.D., began its eradication campaign in^ the 1

amazing that settlers were willing to clear and cultivate Ian

throughout the modern period. Long-term inhabitants of tie

recount tragic stories of their families being decimated by the isea >

asked why they chose to remain, they often reply that simply now e

iccuum udgic btoi ws oi men laiuuics ucuig uk-i-iiiiu.'.-- “j

asked why they chose to remain, they often reply that simply now e

else could they find land to make a living. During the past few

the malaria-eradication campaign has been highly effective, an

fear that once discouraged so many potential settlers is no longer

factor. More than anything else, eradication of malaria has turne

the taiai into an in-migration region.

In order to assess the extent to which the tarai has potential or

absorbing a rapid increase in settlers, one must find out how muc

cultivable forest land is still vulnerable to the settlers' girdling knives

and axes. As map 6 indicates, the most heavily forested tarai districts

are in the far-eastern and far-western tarai, although some other

districts still retain heavily forested areas. The clearing has been

taking place from south to north, although now some hill people are

beginning to clear areas at the foot of the Siwaliks. Forty percent ot

the entire tarai was forested in 1967. Kanchanpur district had the

highest percentage of forested area, 71 percent. Saptari and Siraha

districts had the least, a little less than 6 percent.

Of the 3,662 square miles of forested land recorded in 1967, 1,22

square miles lie on the steep, stony, and uninhabitable southern slopes

Map 6. Forested and cultivated areas of the tarai. Source: l-inch-to-30-milc foklout map, Government of Nepal,

Dept, of Forests, Forest Resources Survey, Forest Statistics for the Tarai and Adjoining Regmis, 1967, p. 2.

70 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

of the Siwaliks, If the remaining 2,435 square miles were cleared and

were settled at a density of 31 1 people per square mile, the lig t zMcn

density of the entire tarai in 1961,\*® the forest area wou provi ^

a habitat for 757,285 people. In the not-too-distant future, the popu a

tion density of the tarai is likely to reach that of Indian border istric .

When that unfortunate time arrives, the tarai may support at a su

sistence level a population of 800 people per square mile, ^ ^tita

about 6,626,000 people, 3,741,000 more than lived in the tarai m

1961. If this is allowed to occur, the population vacuum will be, m

the minds of Nepal’s leaders, no more than a wistful recollection o

lost opportunities for systematic regional planning.

THE SCALE OF MIGRATION

Let US turn now to a discussion of current migration into the tarai,

especially to the four following characteristics: scale of migration

(the number of people migrating), the caste and communal character-

istics of migrants, the location of their previous residence, and their

economic status. This study of migration patterns in Nepal is the

first of its kind because the necessary data have not been available.

The data for the study were collected as part of the 1967-68 field

survey.\*\*

From the data in table 9 it is immediately apparent that there is

little migration into the sample villages of Mahottari-Dhanusha,

Bara, and Kapilabastu districts. In Kailali district, the number of

newly arrived settlers is more significant, but only in Jhapa district

is the scale of migration great enough to effect rapid population growth.

One should bear in mind thatstatements made about these five selected

districts are meant to be applied, albeit with caution, to the subregions

of the tarai in which they are located.

The table breaks down migration for Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara,

and Kapilabastu into two subcategories, the plains cultivated area

in the southern part of each district, where most of the population is

concentrated, and the forest and fringe-of-forest area in the northern

part, where land clearing is in process. More settlement is taking

■KmmoJ mpal, 1961, vol. I, pp. 1 - 4 .

the the average popula^on density of the eleven Indian districts bordering

•iM

units j.\* tot the 1967-68 field survey were collected in terms of family

unite, not individuals.

by District and Subregion ofDistrict

Migrant familm as a

percentage of families

q

Ci\*

r>.

in

O)

CO

lO

o

to

c

0

jVo. of migrant families,

1958 - 67 ^

ff families in tillage,

1958

jVo. of nonsample villages

surveyed

to

05

Tf"

CM

'V

o

o

v

rt

T3

O

CM

Migrant families as a

percentage of families

CD qq«^ lOqq ^ ^

CM — cr» CM CM c^^

CO CO ^

jVo. of migranl

families

CO CO 5^

CO CO —

O CO CD

tn -f.

^ CO o/

CM y

&

w

£

c:

o

jYo. of families in

village

Xo. of sample milages

surveyed

cn

o

in

r--

Cj

CO

CM

CO

to

o

CO

r\*^

cc

CO

”?\*

CO

rv

CO

CO

co"

CO

cc

to

^4^

o

CM

M

^ o.

O

table 9

^krant families as a

P^'^entage of families

00

cn

^rveyed

^fnonsampie village.

lO

hv

to

<9

13

«J .

w C y

.S o S'

^ y S

ii « 3

•T —

V O

M w M

^ c ^

O -5 to

\_ «

L« C

cj rn

•D •« >

I

-O c -5

^<3 C

^ JD —

C ^

O =

-'- c ^

“5 .is

O\* CB Q

^ c §

“ R 2

S tb.Sf

S 5 5

« - n

•n ^ o

ft> Q \*-

o~^

E g."

g

o O g

-W tc

> u its

^ « c

O Q, to

C u 'K

O g.) 4^

y

c OlS

2 u «

\_b0 E o

P t!

C W >N

.1 I J

.5 ^ J2

u w »i vO

r. C ^

4 )

S S'

-C E g s

I s fl .

= J3 toS «

E o E<C li

b -f ^ tm «

^ S P u

o ^ ‘C ^

C E 9J 3 C3

^ o TS TJ

5 ■^'' ;S S

^5 0^'“

o

^^‘‘'‘ifmiliesasa

of families

mi f

lO

»n

o

CO

CO

CO

1

s «

■§ -S ^

■S

.-3 .5

(3

\*<3

r'^ J w

^ U s

fS

^ cd i

^ tr> ^ {

V O) ^

u f

"? c n ^

ui , •'

o

" I ” s ">

.2P.S2 ^ c

E U 8 5

g .s ^ 8

? "•

-Ef) c c ^ <

^ > ^; o

I u ^

J> ho to ;

-2 ;;

<S ’S ’> i

T3 C .E

§ S S c

«3 r

S — T 5J «2

Q <3 > ^ 0^

5 E E-

{°^<S

II 'o'S'

< b 8 i

-S

S i s !

.33:

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI

place in the fringe of forest areas than in the plains cultivated areas.

The only villages into which strikingly large numbers of settlers are

moving arc the most recently settled villages of each district, represente

by the nonsamplc villages in the table.

CASTE AND COMMUNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

Many Nepalese government officials tend to assume that migration

into the tarai is primarily from the hills and that these migrants,

their numbers grow, v\'ill gradually change the hill-plains cu tur

equadon, bringing about a Nepaiization of the region. This assump

results from the fact that hill settlers are more conspicuous t an se ers

of plains origin. The plains people tend to settle in ^

established villages where visiting officials have more i cu y

idendfying them. On the other hand, many of the hill setters are

cutting down the forest, bringing themselves to the attenoon o or

cangen. They also present malaria-cradicadon teams wit ^ \*

problem: their newly established forest dwellings must e

that their huts can be sprayed and the people treate '

carriers of malaria. Furthermore, touring government o

to notice settlements that did not exist on re-

Rcea. However, if we assume that the five distnets o j,,;„i.ants

present the entire tarai with fair accuracy, the majori y

^re, in fact, of plains origin; 59 percent of plains origin, P

hill origin, and the remaining 6 percent tribais in analyzed

To be more meaningful, this j/.^m on: Lb-

reore closely because migration patterns v y g caste

re^on to another. In Kailah, 71 percent o ® Tj^^pa and

Hindus and tribais from the hills. In evenly between

Hapilabastu, the numbers of migrants are nd and those of plains

the castes and tribes of hill origin on the one a majority

.Hg.n „„ .Ke o.h.r, I„ B.ra and

of migrants are of plains origin, 71 percen nercentage of plains

!■ must ba amphanzad. howavar, Jat a P

migrants than hill migrants are shifting rom nyrai equation

ivithin the same distrto. and thus not altanng the aal.ur.l eq

of the district. sun'eyed

="Some fringe-of-forest ''""S'® oflhe districts as a whole, 1

despite the fact that they were nol repwen -

of the interesting sodoeconoinic dc'e p

. because

in them.

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI 75

already installed, the hill people will find it difficult to gain control of

economic resources and political power. If, on the other hand, the

I migrants settle among the relatively unsophisticated plains-tribal

peop e, the hill people are able to acquire local leadership rather

quic y. Plains tribals such as the Tharus tend to have little

sop listication about economic affairs. They are prone to borrow

money without understanding the interest terms or the consequences

0 indebtedness, and thus fall prey to the false dealings of money-

enders and lose control of their land.

The village of Kushmaha in northern Kapilabastu district provides

a fairly typical example of the land-alienation process which the

harus experience. The village was settled by Tharus but, sometime

a ter the turn of the century, the Nepalese government granted it

ns part of a zamindari to a businessman of plains origin. During the

1930s, the price of rice fell sharply on the Indian market and the

businessman could not raise the revenue needed to pay the government

on the zamindari. In 1936, the zamindari was turned over to a

Chetri with family connections in Kathmandu. Gradually, because

of relatively high land taxes and the Tharus’ mismanagement of their

finances, many of them became indebted to the Chetri, who eventually

foreclosed on them, gaining title to their land but retaining them on

the land as tenants. In 1963, when the Chetri heard that the govern-

ment was planning to pass land-reform laws for the Ukhada land-

tenure region of the mid-western tarai which would force him to

return land titles to tenants on holdings that exceeded a 40-acre

ceding, he decided to sell the land before he was forced to forfeit it.

Although loopholes in the law have made it possible for individuals

to control much larger acreage than the established 40-acre ceiling,

the Chetri had considerable land elsewhere and, because his Tharu

tenants could not afford to buy the land, he sold it to thirty-one

Brahmin families from the western hills. In late 1963, when the Brah-

min families arrived in Kushmaha, the sixteen Tharu families that

were tenants or day laborers of die Chetri were evicted and forced to

move away. They left behind nine Tharu families that had managed

to hold title to their land.

Until recently, the plains people were primarily responsible for

encroaching on the Tharus and other plains-tribal groups. Neverthe-

less, today the hill people more than the plains people are moving into

the fringe of forest areas where the plains tribals live and, therefore,

are currently putting more pressu

76 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

In a few limited areas of the tarai, hill-tribal people sucli as Magars,

Gurungs, Rais, Limbus, and Tamangs have been settled for a number

of decades. These people share with the plains tribals a propensity

for indebtedness and vulnerability to eviction. They migrated to the

tarai in the first place because they lost control of their land in the

hills, mostly to upper-caste hill people. Now they arc again losing

control of their land in the tarai, often to upper-caste hill people,

sometimes to plains people.

When the hill tribals and low-caste hill people such as the Sarkis,

Kamis, and Damais migrate into tarai areas already under the control

of plains people, they find themselves at a disadvantage. This has

occurred in northern Mahottari-Dlianusha district, and the accultura-

ration process is one in which the plains culture is gaining a continually

stronger position. Upper- and business-caste plains people arc

gradually acquiring control of land settled by hill tribals.

The village of Bimban in northern Mahottari-Dhanusha is a good

example of this process. Where Bimban is now located, two sons of

the Rana Prime Minister, Bir Shamsher, had been granted a birta,

or tax-free land. During the early 1950s, these brothers persuaded

Tamangs and Magars to fell timber in return for tenancy rights on

the cleared land. After the Birta Abolition Act in 1959, the tenants

acquired title to the land they had settled. However, since then, most

of them have fallen in debt to Teli and Sudi moneylenders and have

lost their land titles. Although the moneylenders preferred that the

hdl tribals stay on as tenants because they work hard and are undeman-

ding, most wandered off. The moneylenders then brought members

of their own castes and other low-caste plains people to Bimban as

tenants-eight families, four of which are Telis and two Sudis.

It IS not possible, therefore, to conclude that all fringe-of-forest

areas are becoming Nepalized. Nepalization is taking place throughout

the far-western tarai and in forested areas of Jhapa and Morang

istncts in the far-eastern tarai. It is also occurring in or near the

lorest m the mid-western tarai. However, in the northern part of the

tarai between Mahottari and Saptari districts and perhaps to a lesser

extent also in northern Parsa, Bara, and Rautahat districts, the plains

people are consolidating and extending their control.

PREVIOUS RESIDENCE OF MIGRANTS

place of previous-residence data in table 10 reconfirm the

movement of hill people into the tarai, particularly into the heavily

TABLE 10

I’crcrntntTC of MiKf:uit Families Settling Permanently in Sample Districts,

by Region in Which Migrant Families Resided Previously-

"D.ii.i coUccirti iltniui; firfd survey ofciglity-onc villages, 19G7-68.

.NVirtlir.iirrni IikIm iiichulrs the two hill districts of West Bengal, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. It also includes Sikkim, Assam,

.uul M-uiiptir. I hr migrants from those areas are predominantly people ofNcpalcse hill origin.

I lacr-ol-prcviou'i-residence tiata were not systematically gathered for the migrants of Bara District.

78 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

forested districts of the far-eastern and far-western tarai. The data

also confirm the migration of similar numbers of people from India

into all parts of the tarai except the far-western districts. These data

disclose two additional patterns of migration. The first is the significant

intradistrict migration in the most populous districts, such as

Mahottari-Dhanusha, where people are moving from the more crowd-

ed southern villages to the more recently established villages farther

north. This is part of the process that is strengthening the plains culture

in these populous districts. The second migration pattern^^ is from

east to west in the tarai, exactly the opposite direction of the general

west-to-east migration in the hills. For example, there is a movement

of people from the relatively densely settled districts of Saptari, Siraha,

and Mahottari-Dhanusha into the less densely settled neighboring

districts of Sarlahi and Rautahat to the west. There is also a western

movement of people from Banke district in the far-western tarai and

Dang district in the western inner-tarai valley into the two most far-

western tarai districts of Kailali and Kanchanpur. This is mainly a

migration of Tharus who have lost title to their land and are looking

for land to settle in the dense far-western tarai forest.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF MIGRANTS

As important to the question of hill or plains cultural dominance in

tarai as the factor of caste ranking is the factor of economic status,

he two are usually related, that is, low-caste migrants usually have

ow economic status. Complete economic data exist for only three

of the five districts surveyed: Jhapa, Kapilabastu and Kailali. A

comparison of the economic status of migrants into the three districts

IS given in table 11.

The economic categories are landowner, tenant farmer, farm

worker, and shopkeeper. A tenant farmer

e ne as one who rents land from a resident or absentee landowner,

laborer is one who works on a daily or hourly basis for

0 er armers who are either landowners or tenants. One who earns

ivmg y ollowing his traditional caste occupation may be, for

examp e, a onar who makes jewelry, a Halwai who makes sweets, or

Chamar who cleans latrines and skins dead animals. Of these five

onomic groups, the tenant farmer, farm laborer, and caste-

prcslmed in the highly condensed data

iO

<7i

a

o

’rt

o

H

o

b/3 Q

P3

CO

3

3

00

u

e

o

c

- o

u

yf «

0^ “O

lO c

<?) rt

« u

ci

c ^

rt

£ -

u

U

Ph

bO

C

S «

S ^

£ -I S

.0^ <5

vS S fe

2i Cl

S § £,

>5^ ^

~ S

M ^ w

I 2^5,

fen e« \*

S g -2

<2\_ 53

^ -53 «

•VJ

C ^ C5

'sS S

c “5^ G

.«3J3 \*5

S

CM

CO

q

CM

rj"

CO CO

^ r-,

^ o

CO ^

cq

r^

CD

r>\* CM m

CD O^

X2 •«

cj ;3

33 rt

cu .-p

Cj c^

^ UJ

•U

C

X

0

1

~0

"v

(C

w

c

’u

3

T5

=^ a

••3 "O

^ e

ra .y 2

rt -s ^

3 i o

” JS"®

Q

80 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITV IN NEPAL

occupalion worker arc i.sually poor, low-casic

little capacity to exert innuence in local ' ‘ and

afTairs arc, as a rule, ilie domain of the largest of the .

occasionally sliopkccpcrs of importance. nCrniiTranis

The data indicate that a considerably larger pcrccntag . '

into Kailali and Knpilabastu districts arc landowners than is ■\_

for Jhapa district. Although a caste Iircakdown is not me tn

table, caste data indicate that there are no tenant •.

farm laborers among the caste and tribal people, from the n

arc settling in Kapilabastu and Kailali districts. On the oi ic • >

43 percent of the bill caste people and 79 percent of the In

settling in Jhapa district are either tenant farmers or farm a m

The probable explanation for the considerable difference m

economic status of the hill people in Jhapa district and the ot ic

districts is the fact that the hill migrants arriving in Jliapa m m

of the land under the control of two tribal groups, the Kaj

and the Tajpurias, wliicli have managed to protect tlicir

much more effectively than have the Tharus in the other two c is nc

Data in the table indicate that a significant number of migrmi .

into Jhapa and Kapilabastu districts arc shopkeepers. Most of these

businessmen establish small village shops. Pew bring enough

with them to become large-scale businessmen. In none of tlic survey

villages of Kailali were there any recently settled shopkeepers, because

there is still little commercialization in the district. \_

Although a few shopkeepers may' be economically and politico y

important in their villages, most of the migrants who assert leadership

roles are landowners, particularly the largest landowners. In i m

Jhapa district sample, twenty-.six of the thirty-eight migrants " in

acquired land are hill Brahmins and Chetris, and six others arc o

the two plains tribal groups, Tajpurias and Rajbansliis. Only two

hill-tribal migrants and three caste Hindus from the plains were ab e

to acquire land. No Muslims or plains tribals in the sample were able

to do so.

Evidently, the hill Brahmins and Chetris made the largest inroads in

terms of land ownership in Jhapa, and it is interesting to note front

whom they acquired their land. Of the twenty-six Brahmin and

Chetri migrants who acquired land, four obtained it from the govern-

ment’s Land Reform Office, ten from other hill Brahmins and Chetris,

seven from Tajpurias and Rajbanshis, three from hill tribals, and two

from other plains caste people. The transfer of land from one high-

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI

81

caste hill family to another does not alter the economic standing of

the high-caste people relative to other caste groups. The high-caste

hill people made their gains primarily at the expense of hill and plains

tribal people.

In the Kapilabastu-district sample, thirty-seven of the forty-four

migrants who acquired land are hill Brahmins and Chetris, the other

seven are hill tribals, plains Hindus, and Muslims. The hill Brahmins

and Chetris obtained their land from nineteen other Chetris, sixteen

plains Brahmins, one hill tribal, and one Tharu. Although these

data seem to indicate that the transfer is mainly from high-caste plains

people to high-caste hill people, this is due to the distortion caused by

the small sample. Evidence obtained from oral histories of sample

villages indicates that the pattern of land transfer in the district has

been from Tharus both to high-caste hill people and to plains people

of business and yeoman-farmer castes such as the Kurmis and Ahirs.

Because there is a considerably lower rate of migration into Kapila-

bastu from the hill region than is the case in other districts surveyed,

it is unlikely that a shift in land control will occur rapidly enough to

make a substantial difference in the cultural equation for a long time

to come.

In the Kailali-district sample, twenty of the twenty-nine migrant

families acquiring land were hill Brahmins and Chetris, one was Newar

and eight were low-caste hill families. Of the twenty high-caste hill-

migrant families, eighteen acquired their land from Tharus and from

the Land Reform Office. The Newar and eight low-caste hill families

also obtained their land from the Land Reform Office. All this was

land confiscated from Tharus who owned more than the legal limit.

Although the Kailali sample is small, it appears to be fairly representa-

tive of the shift in land control from the Tharus to the high-caste hill

people in the district and throughout the far-western tarai.

In all three districts for which these economic data were collected,

therefore, the hill Brahmins and Chetris represented by far the largest

percentage of migrants who acquired land : 50 percent of all migrants

acquiring land in Jhapa, 75 percent in Kapilabastu, and 48 percent

in Kailali. Given the large-scale migration into Jhapa and Kailali

tills will eventually put much of the land in these two heavily forested

districts into the hands of hill Brahmins and Chetris. Tlie government

is reinforcing this trend by putting most, if not all, of the land con-

fiscated through the land-reform program into the hands of .settlers

from the hills.

82 regionalism and national unity in nepal

The government finds itself cauglit in a particularly difficult bind

with regard to the large-scale unplanned settlement of hill people in

the forest areas of the tarai, On the one hand, there is a growing aware-

ness of the important economic resource represented by the stands of

commercial timber in tarai forests, the sale of which is a major source

0 revenue for the government. As settlers move into the forest, they

estroy it. On the other hand, the government views this pattern of

sett ement as an answer to its problem of Nepalizing the tarai. Both

protection of forests and Nepalization of the region arc important

0 1 le government, and this results in policies which sometimes appear

contradictory. For example, in years like 1972, when heavy rains

fn ^ ^ growing season in the hill region unusually short and the

0 scarcity more acute than usual, destitute hill people migrated

n very large numbers to the tarai forests to clear land and reestablish

rantr<.r Ac confrontations between them and forest

rennrt^A^'^^" pohce, were numerous, with shootings

occurred I’t R districts. The most serious incident

than 4 Ono 1 northern Morang district, where more

iuts ^tempts ro burn their

one settler w forest. The government admitted that

press es ir J ‘he angry crowd, but

1972 thesmvf^ ° high as seventy-five.-® Yet in

of ownership ^^^^0 \*of "^hh the granting

land, in effect "^h® had recently cleared forest

not yet have the blessing upon a process which it does

occasional effort, to control. Despite the ■

is not likdv to nh° settlers out of the forest, the government

governmentofRdalssuTperofh'^"'^\*®^^'''^ P^P'\*"’

suspect of being migrants from India.

government-sponsored resettlement projects

public 'slateiTahoT'r"'^'\*’ S^'^^rnment officials make

;j,r .rrv" ““

confirm the government’s statements would

plains people in the r • rscomfort about the predominance of

express similar attitnrl^^\*\*^”’ ""ould invite the Indian government to

j ‘ 3 / 4 , Jtcjml Times , Apr. 12, 1972.

migration into the tarai 83

■ India and would add another serious irritant to the always sensitive

^"lations between the two countries. The only publicly stated evidence

tLt some people in Kathmandu endorse resettlement for political

nurooses appears occa.sionally in Kathmandu newspaper columns

LeLtine that Gurkha soldiers retired from the British, Indian and

Neoakse armies be settled along the border as a paramilitary force

to orevent smuggling detrimental to Nepal and to prevent raids by

bandit gangs from India.^’ The Gurkhas, being hill people, are

assumed to be more loyal to the government than others who might

settle along the border. One Nepalese newspaper, noted for its public

sunoort of plains people, has charged that the mam object of the

government’s policy to settle ex-servicemen and other hill people in

fhc tarai during the past ten years has been to change the cultural

composition of the population so that the plains people will fi„d

themselves in a minority. The paper warned that this would encourage

•Lmmunal tension” and suggested that the government avoid this

by providing landless plains people of the tarai with an opportunity

‘°Thelfare"I°fow !matl-scale resettlement projects, and the govern-

ment plans to undertake others in the future. Despite the political

SicLions of these projects, the government is careful fop,,ify them

n Sictly economic terms: relief of population pressure m the -erely

overcro'^ded hill region, and increased food production the ian J

brought under cultivation by the settlers. The stated economic

borders e

. Israeli government agreca m ^

' fsraeli g tarai and,,:..,

proximately 800 arm ^ ■

84 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

resetde ex-soldiers on nearly 3,000 acres of land in Jhapa district.^

Resettlement projects such as these affect the lives of few migrants

because, as already mentioned, the government has as yet been unable

to direct or control the large number of hill people moving into the

tarai forest. The government has been unable to play a more active

role because resettlement projects require the availability of unused

ut cultivable land, capacity to finance the settlers’ development of

the land, and resettlement administrators with the skills needed to

undertake this highly complex economic and social operatiori.®®

t fhe first of these three prerequisites, cultivable land, is

vai a e to the government, the other two are not. The minimum

ost Q resettling a five- or six-member family was estimated at 1,390

epa ese rupees in 1965. Most families are without capital funds,

and they need this amount in the form of a long-term loan, if not an

an I material to build a house and dig a well

fund?” fertilizer. This figure does not include

L spend on access roads, schools, and

fund? Th ^ government is unable at present to allocate adequate

nation? d^^ ^ provided by foreign governments, but most aiding

The " , projects,

settlemen't^'^'-\*^ ' ^ of Nepalese personnel trained to manage re-

Malavsia another handicap. Indeed, aside from Israel and

of the^IsraT personnel trained for this task. The success

of Israeli projccts can be largely attributed to the loan

Without such administrators to the Nepalese government,

wisely These d””” V funds tend to be invested un-

"" in.. h.„\* of

?»“'™ orpiannecl

leaders have mo ^ ougration phenomenon. Some Nepalese

.k

ofNepalis into the rural and large-scale migration

ratively small mieration of \*'^\*^\*\*^ compa-

Indian armies.== Because nTdI to join the British and

British in Hone Kon. aT mercenaries are stationed by the

the Tibetan border,

“'■Li'nd Seltlemenl Schemes

MIGRATION INTO THE TARAI 85

they constitute an irritant to the otherwise cool but correct Nepal-

China relations.

If migration creates one problem for the Nepalese government, it

alleviates several others. Migration into the tarai and into India

represents a kind of pressure-release valve for the hill people, preventing

discontent that might otherwise be translated into organized opposi-

tion. The migration also provides the government with an instrument

for national integration through Nepalization of the tarai. Because the

government’s administrative capability for implementation of various

national integration-oriented programs is still limited, migration

becomes a central factor in the integration process. It requires no

direction from the government, no investment of funds, and little

administrative effort.

Perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, malaria eradication has become

the most effective of all government programs that encourage Nepali-

zation, apparently without conscious design on the part of its initiators.

The eradication of malaria has been a far more important stimulus to

settlement of hill people in the tarai than the resettlement projects.

For generations, a few landless hill people were willing to clear and

settle forested areas because the odds of dying from starvation in the

hills were greater than the odds of dying from malaria in the tarai.

The malaria-eradication program now has eliminated the fear that

previously impelled a great many migrating hill people to settle in

India instead.

To what extent is the tarai being Nepalized through the migration

process? In another generation or two, when most of the remaining

forest has been cut down, one will be able to draw a line east and

west across a map of the tarai, separating fairly clearly the settlement

areas of the hill people and the plains people. The line will follow

closely the southern fringe of the forest as it stood at the time of the

1951 revolution. Most of the four far-western tarai districts, half or

more of Sunsari and Morang districts, and most of Jhapa in the

far-eastern tarai, tlie northern third of Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi,

and the three mid-western tarai districts will be settled predominantly

by hill people. The rest of the tarai will remain settled mostly by

plains people. Of course, there will be a mixing of hill and plains

people in the towns of the region. Hill Brahmins, Chetris and Newars

will probably continue to become more influential in district-level

politics. Members of these three castes, along with the more aggressive-

upper- and business-caste plains people, will penetrate each other’s

no

regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

^reas, gaining control ofland and forming commercial ties,

inteeratin r factor in the economic and political

the more " of Nepal, a prerequisite for

in

Chapter V

THE POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship bestows the right to participate in the governing process.

It grants access to power. It is a symbol of legitimacy for people living

within their national boundaries. Citizenship is a bond between the

individuals and the government of a nation and, therefore, important

in the process of national integration. The definition of citizenship

eligibility is a complex and often vexing dilemma for leaders of deve-

loping nations faced with the need to create stable national polities

out of populations composed of competing, occasionally hostile groups

from different geographical, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

This has been a dilemma in Nepal. People of the nationally domi-

nant hill culture and people of the regionally important plains culture

have lived separate existences until the last several decades, often with

suspicion of each other. Citizenship legislation framed by representa-

tives of the nationally dominant hill culture during the 1960s reflects

this suspicion, for it makes the acquisition of citizenship more difficult

for people of plains origin living in the tarai. For this reason, the

political dynamics surrounding Nepal’s citizenship policy, the motives

behind it, and responses to it in the tarai provide insights into the

national-integration process.

STATUS OF TARAI SUBJECTS BEFORE 1951

Changing citizenship regulations reflect changes in the attitudes of

Kathmandu’s decision makers toward the plains people of the tarai.

Let us first take a brief look at attitudes that prevailed in Kathmandu

before 1951, before citizenship was defined in modern, constitutional

terms. In 1769, Prithvi Narayan Shah, king of the western hill princi-

pality, Gorkha, conquered Kathmandu Valley. During the next

four years, he extended his sway over the eastern hills and the eastern

tarai, creating the geopolitical entity which has become Nepal.

With the conquest of the tarai came the need to define the responsibili-

ties and rights of the people who lived there. Government documents

87

88 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

of the mid'19th century tell us that zamindaris and minor government

posts in the tarai were given to tarai inhabitants in three preferen-

tially ordered categories. First preference was given to “hill folks,”

and second preference to “those who are settled in our territory with

their family members, those who are rich, . . .faithful and of res-

pectable ancestry. ...” Only if such individuals could not be found,

could an Indian be appointed, an Indian being defined by in-

erence as a plains person living in the tarai without his family, i.e.,

living there temporarily.! It is likely that this distinction was made

soon a ter Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the tarai, because it

was necessary to establish criteria for recruiting people into local

mmistrative service. Hill people were given preference over plains

p op e sett ed in the tarai, so that the plains people were relegated

0 a SKon class status. This is understandable when one remembers

hat the tarai was viewed before 1951 more as a colony than an in-

egrated part of a modern nation-state.

different from the hill people and geographically isolated

to hp people living in the tarai were considered

estahlistif 1 No administrative procedure was

or Tnrii ^'individual’s status as a Nepalese

when lndians Shiva Ratri feLal,

Temolein to make pilgrimages to Pashupatinath

to stoD at tVi ''es'dents as well as Indians were required

proeSw „K r." obtain a passport before

Garhi on the P^^^pois were then checked at Chisapani

Sri, w- n„

1931 one’s nlr 1 - ° abandoned entirely until 1958. Before

on a linguistic\*Ta^ determined primarily

spoke NeLli or hm i were the “hill folk” who

For this reason, passponr^\*^ Newari, Magar, or Gurung.

into Kathmandu VallL from the eTi

Indeed it ha? ^ u ^ eastern or western hills,

draw a distinction betwe ‘^^”.\*^ouit for the average hill person to

Whether the hill n '^"^^"'Pooplelivinginthetaraiandlndians.

before L advlntrrr 'T ' ^g-ulturalist or a merchant,

the tarai to sell produce rndTuvT^'^T^‘°" across

were alwavs hurried Hi? if, I “PP tbc Indian border towns

yU REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

settlement of 1951 among the Ranas, the Nepali Congress, and King

nbhuvan, exercised considerable influence in Kathmandu through

t e appointment of Ambassador G. P. N. Singh, Govinda Narayan,

personal advisor to the King, and other Indian officials. As might be

expected, Nepalese le^slation of the early 1950s was similar in content

corresponding Indian legislation. The 1951 Interim Government

^ Nepal Act was "a hastily prepared adaptation of the 1950 Indian

Constitution.”''

Indian citizenship legislation, from its first enactment in 1852,

s been nondiscnminatory with regard to naturalization eligibility.

Im r themselves in positions of political prominence

me la e y a ter the revolution had no experience at drawing up

uTntpT^- and, although there is no evidence that Indian advisors

An if Representation Act and the Citizenship

The c J ‘ the spirit of such legislation.

citi 7 Pnshln°'i M 'mportant reason for the nondiscriminatory

of the 5 1950s was the close association

education in from the tarai obtained their

many -nd univei^ities of northern India;

occasionallvsnp'!7- Indian national movement, and

denTe in 94? th ^Rer Indian indepen-

--d their

they viewed the British The Tn antipathy that

wastheanti-Rpna r • ^Pfl\* ^°ogrcss Party, founded in 1946,

drawn. Unfortunate! ^^'7 °''S^mzation into which most of them were

there have been n tumultuous history of the party,

to document the clos " records destroyed, making it difficult

party. of many plains people with the

the Nepali Concress election m 1959 and the composition of

indication of this associa?""^?\* followed the election give some

who won seats in Parljam?t preceding decade. Of those

constituencies, twelve were^Dl”" ^ ^ Congress ticket from tarai

Although it is surprising thaf"\* people,

very small percentage of hill Z P“P\*®’ S'ven the

U .r, \*' "Si”, •k' l»" P»Pl'

>956), p. 488. Democratic Innovations in Kepa! (Berkeley,

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP 91

included a number of party leaders such as B. P. Koirala, S. P. Koirala,

udra Prasad Girl, and Subarna Shamsher, men who had close

^rsonal ties with tlic region. Two of the seven ministers in the Nepali

ongress cabinet were plains people— Ram Narayan Mishra, a

'faithili Brahmin from Janakpur, and Parashu Narayan Chaudhari,

a Tharu from Dang in the western inner-tarai valley. One of the

eleven deputy ministers was of plains origin, Suryanath Das Yadav,

an Ahirfrom Saptari.^

These data are not as illustrative of the association between hill

people and plains people in the party as are stories told by plains

people of their fathers’ and brothers’ involvement in the party during

the dangerous days of the late 1940s, when party leaders and weapons

were hidden from Rana officials, jails were attacked, and political

prisoners were released, despite superior Rana forces. The elders of

niany tarai villages tell such stories. The heroic content has perhaps

swelled with the passage of years, but the message is clear. There

was a time when men of the hills and plains worked, fought, and

occasionally died together and, when the struggle was over, they

governed together.

CITIZENSHIP LAWS IN THE 1960s

Citizenship legislation of the 1960s was formulated in a much different

atmosphere. The royal coup had taken place. Both hill people and

plains people associated with Nepali Congress leadership were in

jail or in exile along with the leaders of the several other political

parties that had included representatives of the tarai population. Few

people in Kathmandu could command attention when speaking for

the interests of the plains people. In addition, during the first several

years of the decade, when citizenship requirements were being

reformulated, there was underground Nepali Congress activity in

the tarai and border areas of India. As this posed a threat to the royal

government, it tended to undermine whatever willingness to accom-

modate tarai interests might have existed in the Palace.

Citizenship received detailed attention in articles 7 and 8 of the

1962 Constitution. Article 7 of the 1962 Constitution is a repetition

of article 2 of the 1952 Citizenship Act; it gives qualifications for

those who can be classified as citizens automatically, that is, by birth

and marriage. The major difference between the two documents

“Nepal, Election Commission [Results of the First General Election, 1959].

REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

lay in the requirements for naturalization. Article 8, section 2, of the

1962 Constitution stales;

2. While making law in pursuance of clau.se (i) it shall be, inter alia,

stipulated that a foreigner may qualify for the acquisition of citizenship

if—

(a) he can speak and write the national language of Nepal ;

(b) he, engaged in an oceupation, resides in Nepal;

(c) he has taken steps to renounce the citizenship of the countiy of

wliich he is a citizen; and

(d) he has resided in Nepal for not less than a period of two years in

case of a person of Nepalese origin, and for not less than a period of

twelve years in case oi a person other than of Nepalese origin.'^

Clause (a) of article 8, section 2, requiring knowledge of llie national

anguage Nepali, was not included in the 1952 Citizcnsltip Act

ecause t tc linguistic ramifications of nationalism had not yet been

e ate y epalese leaders in the early 1950s. Although it is not

unreasona c to require applicants for citizenship to speak Nepali,

thTearl? tosn Nepal’s population (4 percent in

^ LI ^ I'igher a decade later), it does seem

nnttr, ^ require applicants to write it as well. Most developing

reanir^m'"''!''' ^ ^.'^Suage-speaking but not a reading or writing

multil naturalization legislation. In the ease of such

^00 language has

ment tends m ^ nnllying factor, the language require-

of lanauao-c applicants to speak one of a number

of anguages commonly spoken within the country.

from IndiaP^pOT people migrating into the tarai

learn Nepali rplat"\*’r\*™^r

Nepali speakers whh whom IhevT

and farm laborers who settle in

if any Nepali snpal- ■ • the tarai where there are few

to say nothincr nrjpc •’ to learn to speak Nepali,

Rules’ made no nmvtcio” r 7” “■•swage. I ne isoa uitizensmp

Aat this requirement is LforilT tT ‘T’ ™

requirement would represent a’ changed, the

applicants. major stumbling block for many

see pp'' 3^5 for amides tfoiuhVadon „f (Kathmandu, 1963) ;

See Rules, schedule 6, Mepal G.^e, voL XVIII, No. 8. June 3. 1968,

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP

93

Clause (b) places an unusual requirement upon citizenship appli-

cants. In many countries, immigrants must provide proof of their

financial solvency at the time they immigrate. Since there is no control

of immigration in Nepal, this requirement would be impossible to

enforce. However, at the time one applies for citizenship, he must

prove that he earns a living in Nepal. No such requirement is included

among the naturalization requirements of other South Asian nations.

Clause (b) is worded in a way that implies there are people who reside

in Nepal without any occupation, presumably Indian businessmen who

are attempting to evade Indian taxes. If they are the object of this

restriction, this reflects yet another way in which tlie Indian business

world is intertwined with Nepalese affairs and also reflects Nepalese

resentment of Indian businessmen.

Clause (c) is another requirement for naturalization not included

in the 1952 Citizenship Act. Most citizenship laws forbid dual citizen-

ship, and it is likely that the inclusion of this proviso is the result of

the not-infrequent public debate which has swirled around prominent

Nepalis allegedly holding both Indian and Nepalese passports.

Clause (d) is the most restrictive of the four naturalization clauses.

It extends by seven years the length of residence required for some

people who seek citizenship, and it shortens the period for others.

This is not uncommon. Burma has extended the period to eight years

and Sikkim to fifteen years. By so doing, these countries hope to dis-

courage immigration, or at least limit the influence of immigrants.

It is doubtful that the extended residency requirement is having this

effect in Nepal. It may give a few large-scale businessmen second

thoughts. However, most of the migrants arc villagers who cross the

open border in search ofland and employment, unaware of citizenship

laws.

It is in this clause (d) that cliscrimination against people of plains

origin is evident, more in the vagueness of wording than in the stated

fact. “Ncpale.se origin.” or as it is occasionally translated, “Nepali

origin,” is not defined in the 1962 Constitution or in the Citizenship

Act of 1964 interpretation is left to officials granting citizenship

certificates. There arc two possible definitions. One. that the applicant’s

parents, grandparents, or even great-grandp.ircnts were born within

tlie political borders of .Nepal, which, of coiirst. include the tarai.

Two. that the applicant is of hill oricin. (hat he, his parents, or even

his more distant tmresiors were born in (he geocultnral region called

d so!. XUI, F-ximoriiinarv I"iif No. -'a, 1 rb. -'<1. loijj

94 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

the hills. There is a linguistic dimension to this

person of Nepalese origin speaks Nepali either as a mo he g

if a hill-tribal person, as a second language. This is essential y

definition rather than one limited by political geography. i

definition excludes the tarai plains people but includes ma y

people living in Sikkim, Bhutan, and parts of northeastern

The failure of the authors of the Constitution to make the same

distinction regarding “Nepalese origin” that was made by t c au

of the 1952 Act, i.e., “A person one of whose parents was bo

Nepal,” may have been unintentional. However, it would not i

been difficult to write a straightforward statement for clause (dh

It is understandable that lawmakers of a small nation ^

threatened by migration from a large neighbor nation and t at

might wish to discourage this migration by legal means, ut sue

means are not effective, and the citizenship laws of the 1960s are aii

affront to the plains people, many of whom have lived in the ta

for generations.

CITIZENSHIP REqUIREMENTS FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

To protect its citizens from the competition of other nationals,

the Nepalese government required citizenship for continually more

forms of economic activity during the 1960s. For example, imported

and owners of small-scale firms must now be citizens. On the basis

of citizenship status, the government has instituted a policy of pre

ferential hiring for laboring jobs in Nepal’s largest industries. The

management of these industries has been directed to seek permission

from the Industries Department before hiring Indian citizens or

firing Nepalese citizens. Teaching is yet another activity for which

citizenship is now required. The requirement was first made in 1957.

and included in the Education Code of 1961 asfollovys: “First priority

shall be given to Nepali citizens, and then to emigrant Nepalis.

persons of neither category are available, or lack the essential quali-

fications, foreigners may be appointed on a temporary basis.”®

Citizenship is also now required for land acquisition, and this has

been the most controversial application of the requirement. The

1952 edition of the Muluki Ain (Legal Code) allows foreigners to

settle on land, pay taxes on it, and become landowners ; in continuance

'“Education Code, 1961,” art. 12, sec. 27. (Trans, by Rcgmi Research Project.)

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP gg

of this policy, noncitizens can retain title to their land under the

Lands Act of 1964.i« However, one must now be a citizen to acquire

land. This requirement has been incorporated into land-reform

measures enacted since 1964, and it has caused difficulty for some

people of plains origin living in the tarai, particularly tenants. Most

of the agriculturalists in the tarai are tenants, a much higher percent

than in the hills,\*i and they must prove that they are citizens befor

they can buy land, or before the title to land they work can be registered

in their names.

Neither the 1964 Lands Act nor the 1964 Lands Rules staK- ..

state speci-

ncally that a tenant must produce a citizenship certificate before

purchasing land. However, schedule lA of the Rules >2 is ^ form for

recording in considerable detail information about tenants’ citizensh"

as required in article 3, section 3 of the Rules. Thus, in practice

tenants are being required to prove their citizenship. The reason the

Nepalese government has not made the citizenship requirement for

land ownership more explici t in the land-reform laws may be its concern

that the Indian government would retaliate. This would cause seriou

trouble for many Nepalese families migrating from the hill rem

into the agricultural regions of West Bengal and Assam. Accord" ^

to the 1950 Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty, article 7, nationals'^f

either country are guaranteed the right to own property in the othe

country.

The citizenship requirement has caused tenants of plains orim l

most difficulty in the Ukhada land-tenure subregion of the tarai" h

three mid-western tarai districts of Nawal Parasi, Rupandeh^^' ^ ^

Kapilabastu. The Ranas encouraged the settling of the mid i

tarai between the 1890s and 1930s. Under the Ukhada system"

dars, most of them Indians, were given title to large land hohi”'"’

which they parceled out to tenants, also mostly Indians, fQ,. ,

and farming at rental rates low enough to attract the tenants

of the tenants did not acquire citizenship certiheates betwee

when it was first possible to do so, and 1964, when the land!'

program was inaugurated. The 1964 Ukhada Land q-p

states that title to Ukhada lands in excess of land-holdin “‘‘'i .^ct

shall be transferred from the zamindars to their tenant

'J'tivators,

ofiabic

lablc 7 in ihc volumes lorvaiiuus

vol. XIV. E.\traoniman\* Is^uc Xo. 21, i .3, lo\*-.

"^parison

96 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

unless the tenants are proven to be aliens. The Ukhada Land Tenure

Rules enacted shortly thereafter provide; “In case a controvers)

arises with regard to the citizenship of Nepal, the peasant shall submit

a Nepali citizenship certificate within a time limit not exceeding

seven days as prescribed by the Ukhada authority. In case sue i

certificate is not produced, the land shall not be registered in the name

of the peasant.”'"' The Rules add: “Land of the following categories

shall be retained by and registered in the name of the landowner

in the following circumstances: (a) Ukhada land cultivated by any

peasant who is proved to be an alien in accordance with the particulars

submitted by the landowner under Rule 3, or, (b) land registered under

these rules in the name of any peasant who is proved to be an alien.

By giving the zamindan license to accuse their tenants of being aliens,

the government provided the zamindars with an opportunity to retain

control of the land. These large landowners could then sell the land,

if it exceeded the land ceiling in size, or transfer the title to relatives

or other associates, making informal arrangements to retain de facto

control. Thus, the law and accompanying rules perpetuated the

economic and social status quo by encouraging a kind of class struggle

in which the government legitimized the landowners’ interests.

Tlic.se provisions of the Ukhada land reforms yield an insight into

the traditionalist nature of the “reforms.” The reforms reflect the

attitudes of decision makers in the government about landlord-

peasant relationships and about fundamental social and economic

change. In respect to these attitudes, the land reforms arc discussed

at greater length in chapter IX. Here the focus must remain on the

question of citizenship, and the attitudes of decision makers about

distinctions between people of hill and those of plains origin. Parti-

cularly with regard to the Ukhada reforms, there is some conflict of

attitudes. Altliough the citizenship laws discriminate against all

plains people, the land reforms have been of benefit to many landowners

who are plains people. It must be remembered that hill people re-

present a considerably higher percentage of large landowners in the

tarai than of the general tarai populaUon. iMany of the largest land-

owners in the tarai arc hill people with con.sidcrable influence in

.uhmandu, and it is likely that they helped to shape the provisions of

Del I’l ’’ F.xiraorclin.ir>-

“Riiln, srrtiftn 7. .\V;d vo|. X|V, No. 41, Jan. 25. 1965.

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP 97

the reforms. The benefits to them accrued also to the landowners

of plains origin who, being considerably more sophisticated

and influential than their tenants, were usually able to acquire the

citizenship certificates they needed. But, because the process of obtain-

ing certificates often involves months of bureaucratic delay and

sometimes considerable financial outlay, when landowners filed

claims in local land-reform offices alleging that their tenants were

not Nepalese citizens, large numbers of tenants, most of whom had

lived in the tarai for longer than twelve years, were helpless.

Growing popular discontent in the mid-western tarai was the

result. Perhaps the government grew uneasy about the situation,

because it drew up the Ukhada Land Tenure First Amendment Act

m 1965, designed to alleviate the landowner-tenant conflict. The

Act declared: “In case such peasant is, or is subsequently proved to

be, an alien, the Ukhada lands cultivated by him shall be registered

m the name of His Majesty’s Government, which may sell or distri-

bute such lands to landless Nepalese peasants on any condition.”\*®

This made it useless for landowmers to take action against their tenants.

However, it placed the tenants in an even more precarious position.

Under the 1964 Rules, being unable to prove their citizenship, they

would have remained tenants of their landlords. In reality, they

would have lost nothing but the prospect of owning the land they

worked. According to the 1965 law, however, the tenants were tlireat-

ened with dispossession. It was now to the landowner’s advantage to

evict his tenants and cultivate as much of the land as possible himself,

with the help of daily paid farm labor, as a means of retaining control.

It became the government’s responsibility to prove that tenants were

not citizens. When this happened, the government, after making

financial compensation to the landowner, could confiscate the land,

evict the tenants and resettle “Nepalese peasants.” Because of the

hill-culturc-oriented definition of citizenship, the Nepalese tenants

would tend to be people of hill origin.

If the government had carried out the provisions of the Ukhada

land-reform program, there would have been widespread uprooting

of the population in the mid-wcsicm tarai districts and the relocation

there of many hill people. This has not occurred, although eviction

of tenants has been common and the population has become more

restive tlian anywhere else in Nepal. Rioting in Nawal Parasi district

replnccs article 3, section I, of the 19G4 Act, .W/Htf Oa;r!l(,\o\. X\’, Extraordi-

nary' Issue So. 11, July 14, 19G3.

98 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

'n 1966 and in the other two mid-western tarai districts in 1969 was

part y the result of alienation caused by the government’s

tizens up and land-reform policies. These disturbances arc discussed

in chapter IX.

tinn tr. Sojernmcnt announced that it was formulating legisla-

in oreigners from working as agricultural laborers

the remn''"LT° appointment of all new tenant farmers

means LTtheteliCo'f officials,” which probably also

citizensliin rp • of new tenants w'ould be based on their

ciS n r it will use

into the tarai Re discourage migration from India

distineuish her j! \*\* difficult for government officials to

ship qualificatio\*^^" of plains origin who meet citizen-

>n yet more hLdship,,^or

region. According to one observen

tion disctimilatt^aSrf 7''

violation of the 1930 fC "

Indian government presen ted' Friendship] treaty. The

subject in lune lOfif; j ^ ‘‘’de memoire on the

Mahcndra durinsr t, ’ ^®”dhi also discussed it with King

ThelnrntitrV'” ^etober of that year.

Kathmandu imnlemente fh° 7 d’orouglily

i ements the discriminatory legislation.'\*

■to more and more forms' T ^dd citizenship restrictions

experienced bv the nio- ° activity and the disadvantages

Nepalese citizenship or"\* P^r’Ple of the tarai, whether eligible for

Indian government rniehtr^ I- discernibly more acute, the

Jr large community of peoDie'77'‘V7^-''‘'“' ''.'''“■ictions against

^ns IS a possibility of w'hich th/- M 'origin living in India,

inhibits the enactment of 1 ' i aware, and it undoubtedly

even wider range of amivi7"" ^fFly'og citizenship restrictions

cultural divisions within NeM^R"" recognition to the

” \_ Prople citizenship after two ?' provisions for granting

'^Gorhhapaira, Mar 23 1970 residency and plains people

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP

99

citizenship after twelve years’ residency, the legislation creates dis-

crimination reminiscent of an earlier period. If the growth of hill-

oriented nationalism results in the Kathmandu leadership reverting

to pre-1951 attitudes toward the large and economically important

tarai minority, the process of national integration will suflfer a serious

setback.

CITIZENSHIP-APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The citizenship-application procedures are difficult because they

involve considerable contact with government officials, considerable

filling out of forms and, occasionally, some politics. Whether applicants

apply for citizenship by birth or by naturalization, they must obtain

the written endorsement of a gazetted officer, a town panchayat

chairman or a district panchayat chairman.\*® Prominent merchants

are likely to have easy access to at least one of these officials, whereas

such access is a greater problem for most villagers.

If the application is for citizenship by birth, the applicant must

provide evidence of birth in Nepal. Inasmuch as there are no birth-

registration procedures in Nepal, outside the several hospitals in

Kathmandu Valley, this can become a problem. Officials arc generally

ready to accept the fact that an applicant of hill origin was born in

the country', but an applicant of plains origin often needs to find one

or two prominent people from his village to verify that he was born

there. If the applicant is following naturalization procedures, he

must furnish evidence of having rclinqui.shcd Indian citizenship or

of having started the procedures toward that end. One familiar with

Indian bureaucracy will understand that even a 'scalthy merchant’s

resourcefulness could be tested by the task of acquiring the necessary

evidence.

If an applicant has powerful poliiica enemies, he have

additional difficulties. If he is involved in factional politics in'onr of

the urban centers of the tarai. and members of the oppo^jj^g faction

liave influence with government officials they may attempt to per-

suade officials to investigate and reject Iii.s application -

govcrnmcni y—.’ attempt to

’technical

grounds. There arc reports uiai \_• .us have

Irvcld c.-,„<lida.c. for P»ncl,.V.„ «»!«■

'•‘■N.p.l ati7.n0.ip V.’tV

v.,....-.,......,. --- ' fj-ircurtl fitTircn t!, June 3.

1968. Mov dl.iricis hnvc ten m t'wmj i

frif timr.

at am

100 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

as a maneuver designed to disqualify them. It is likely tha

and powerful individuals not eligible for citizenship ave use

influence upon occasion to obtain citizenship certi cates

to buy land or participate in politics. .

Citizenship-application procedures present problems c ne ^

tarai rdllagers with little or no education or influence, s m ^

days, they must take advantage of paternalistic patterns,

adwee and support from locally important men u'ho have \_

with government officials. In return for guiding villagers app tea

through the proper channels, these “benefactors sometimes ^

financial remuneration. If a villager can not find a locally m ue

person willing to assist him or if he can not afford the expense into i >

a citizenship certificate may be beyond his reach.

CONTROVERSY OVER CITIZENSHIP

Considerable public controversy has been generated by the citizenship

issue. The issue first arose in 1951, when there was public

for national elections. Virtually everyone in the tarai tvas eligm e

vote after the Public Representation Act of 1951, whicli gave

rights to everyone who had resided in a constituency for six mon

or more. After the 1952 Cidzenship Law was passed, defining a citizen

as a resident of five years or more, the voting lists were drawn up

again, but local administration was inadequate for the task during

that chaotic period, and there were many charges that Indians were

included in the lists. The charges w'ere reneived with greater intensit)

after the general-election date was set for early 1959.

The mostexlreme claims were made by the Citizenship Amendment

Committee and the Nepal Prajatantrik Mahasabha. The Citizenship

Amendment Committee was formed in September 1958. Its president,

Jagadish Nepali, declared : “The voters’ list prepared by the Election

Commission is defective in many respects. Several foreigners have

got their names registered, especially in the tarai districts. It was with

a view of having the elections held fairly and impartially that this

committee was formed.’’^”

In August 1958, Ranganath Sharma, president of an uUranation-

alistic party, the Nepal Prajatantrik Mahasabha, demanded that in

the elections only those wlio had lived in Nepal for at least eighteen

“Ciliztnship Ammdmtnl Cmmitttt Bulletin, Sept. 23, 1958.

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP 10]

years have tlie right to vote.-’ Tlie daily newspaper Halkhabar, sympa-

thetic to the Mahasabha, agreed witli Sharma that no Indian or

Pakistani who had migrated into Nepal since 1942 should be granted

citizenship. The newspaper accused many businessmen and cultivators

who had moved into the tarai since 1942 of remaining loyal to India.

“We fear that these elements can have great influence on the elections

in the tarai. And these elements may even be able to enter Parliament

to work as fifth columnists.” Members of the Mahasabha claimed

that Indian businessmen flocked to the tarai to avoid Indian income

taxes, that these Indians purchased a few acres of land in the tarai,

but carried on business in Banaras and Calcutta. Halkhabar continued

during the months before the election to articulate the concerns of

those hill people whose nationalism was at least in part an expression

of hostility toward Indians and toward the plains people of the tarai.

More moderate spokesmen advocated that the government take

steps to insure that only those qualified for citizenship be allowed to

vote. As the election date approached, it became obvious that the

crescendo of voices raising the citizenship question was not motivated

entirely by the purest patriotic sentiments. Only those who were

members of Kathmandu-based political parties, which had depended

on Palace favor rather than popular support, could raise the citizenship

issue. For these parties, alienation of the tarai population could do

little harm, and the issue might block the election which would other-

wise lay bare their claims of popular support. The tarai region, with

a third of the parliamentary seats, had to be taken seriously by any

party contending for the national-leadership role.

The two parties with the broadest national organizations, the

Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal, played down the

issue. The editorials of the Nepali Congress newspaper, Kalpana

urged the King and the Election Commission to proceed with the

election and to ignore demands for amendment of the Citizenship Act

because, these editorials observed, the controversy had been motivated

by various political factions wanting to sabotage the election. There

were also reports that some election officials sympathetic to these

factions were demanding that tarai villagers produce citiz(;f,j|^jp

^'Halkhabar, Aug. 7, 1958. This party was formed in November 1957 ^

limited form of democracy under the King’s guidance, and was rumored

dally supported by the Palace. See Joshi and Rose, op. cit., pp. 206-207,

^^HalkhabaTy^unc^, 1958.

Sept. 19, 1958.

Sfivocated a

be finan-

102 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

certificates before tlicir names could be included on the

Because it was impossible for most villagers to produce certi

large numbers of them were being disenfranchised.\*’' Even the ni c

Democratic Party and the Gorkha Parishad. parties with more

support in the tarai, were determined that tlic issue not be al ouc

to delay the long-awaited first national election. This determination

appears to have been a deciding factor with wavering onicias in

Kathmandu. The election was held in 1959, and tlie advocates o

a more restrictive citizenship policy had to wait another several >cars

until the political parties had been banned and leaders of the major

parties could not oppose them.

The question of citizenship was also raised during the 1950s an

1960s with regard to students selected by the government to stu 5

abroad. Scholarships for study abroad arc highly coveted in Nep® !

because the nation’s educational institutions have yet to develop

graduate programs in many fields. Furthermore, some scholarships

offer the opportunity to travel widely and to earn prestigious degrees

from overseas institudons. A number of cases have been reported ol

Indian students and Indian teachers from colleges in the tarai claiming

to be Nepalese citizens in order to apply for these scholarships. IVith

a more highly developed educational system in India, there is even

greater competition for the few scholarships available in India and,

no doubt, some Indians have taken advantage of the “blurred border

discussed in chapter III to apply for Nepalese scholarships.

Afairly typical casein point is that ofK. N. Iha, reported hy Bachhlfit

in 1958;

It is reliably learnt that K. N. Jha, an Indian citizen, was sent by the

Government of Nepal to study electrical engineering at tlie Biliar

Institute of Technology as a Nepali .student. K. N. Jha had, however,

applied for a seat in the same in.stitutiQn as a citizen of tlie village o

Masahia in Darhhanga district (India), prior to the award of the scholar-

ship to him by the Government of Nepal under the Colombo Plan

Technical Cooperation scheme. He claimed himself a resident of

Madhwa Birta, Mahottari district of Nepal at the time of tlie grant.

No inquiry was made due to the gross negligence of the Education

Department, and hence he wassent on the scholarship. . . . Itis reported

that an Education Department employee is his relative and has been

trying his best to suppress the matter. The students of Kathmandu are

reported to be terribly dissatisfied.--'

9- 1958; Sept. 4, 1958

''BarWita, Jan. 8, 1958.

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP i^o

T, .

Jha IS a Maithili Brahmin name. The Maithili Brahmins are pcrha

the most aggressive of all the castes in the tarai in pursuing mocicrp

as well as traditional forms of education. Only 31 of Madhwa’s 100

families are Maithili Brahmins, but Madhwa, the village in question

is a Maithili Brahmin \'illage in every other sense of the word All

4 of the village’s representatives to the 'local panchayat are Maithili

Brahmins; one of them is chairman of the panchayat. All of the 1

landowners in the village are Maithili Brahmins. All 3 students from

Madhwa working toward B.A. degrees, a large number for a vill

of this size, are Maithili Brahmins, as are all but 2 of the 25 studeims

attending nearby high schools.^®

Madhwa is a five-minute walk from the Indian border, and the

Brahmins of the village have marriage tics in villages across the border

The children receive their high school and college education acro'-.s

the border simply because those are the high schools and colIe<-/e''

nearest to Madhwa. ^\^lethe^ K. N. Jha or his father was born^' ^

Madhwa is unknown. However, he most certainly has a number

close relatives who live there, one of whom, according to Bachhii ^

worked in the Education Department at the time. Madhwa is ''

extremely atypical tarai \dllage because twenty-seven ofits inhabits

are Government of Nepal employees, all of them Maithili Brafimi

five of them in Kathmandu.^'

REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

into government service, and for students and teachers from the tarai

to obtain scholarships to study abroad.

dual citizenship

th the Indian and Nepalese governments prohibit dual citizen-

■ 1950s there were acrimonious debates about

ua s who allegedly possessed this status. Accusations were

ona y made against students or teachers, but more often against

in political leaders. A well-publicized example occurred

fnr tL ’ '\* 1 . important tarai town. Birganj is the grain depot

'^'^^cts. Bara, Parsa, and Rautahat. In the

rice dica ° j 1 ’ administration was almost nonexistent,

local ^ completely from the Birganj market and the

A crowd°Lt’ hoarding of local merchants, rioted,

chants’ liv threatened mer-

meantime ;7 7 u’' 5‘°P ‘he looting. In the

they were N "'I ° ^ merchants who had previously claimed that

S Sv ®^‘hi!^On the plea that they

intervene citizens, they requested the Indian government to

or the larffesrale”’ 'l!’' '”o''olt'‘nls in Kathmandu, The majority

Of the hvenfv-fi 1 ’ origin during the early 1950s.

and two were Ra'^'^ merchants, thirteen were Marwaris

Only six were Hp 7'77 of merchants of plains origin.

Brahmins.ss The faa^th 1 ° 7!\*,”"^"’ ‘hcce Newais and three hill

scale merchants have bcL H of Kathmandu’s large-

been a source of irriiah’ ^ \*‘hl are of plains origin has

‘he Ncwan,1he .rndh r r"’ ^^h'ey, partifularly

The resentment was he’ f '"enchant class of the Valley and hills,

naerchants, ^vho had earl'^ 1950s when Marwari

bon by claiming Ner)al77°v\*’\*7‘;'\*^^^'hty from the local popula-

ci izenship, presented themselves to the

3 , 1958 .

10 import cloth from India in 1952^s7\*v permitted by the govemtnt

a 0 at that time. Four names rn among the largest mercliants

“ could not be identified by caste.

POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP 107

to students of Himalayan affairs.^\* There is no need to retell the drama

here. Indian leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, went on record

disapproving King Mahendra’s termination of Nepal’s parliamentary

system and, during the period 1961-62, the Indian government did

little to discourage Nepali Congress rebels from attacking Nepalese

government officials and installations from Indian territory. When

the 1962 Constitution was being written, reinforcing the Kings

position at the apex of Nepal’s political system, anti-Indian feeling

was at its height in Kathmandu. The citizenship restrictions are to

some extent at least an expression of a kind of nationalism fostered

by anti-Indian feeling, a reaction among Kathmandu s governing

elite to Indian influence. And, in this respect, the plains people living

in the tarai could not escape their association with India.

«See Girilal Jain, India Meets China in Xepal (Bombay, 1959), Anirudha Gupta

Politics in Ar/ia/ (Bombay, 1964), Joshi and Rose. Democrattc Innovat.ons ,n ^epat, and

Rose, jXepal.

106 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

resulted in Ceylonese citizenship legislation which

against the Tamils. Nepal’s neighbors, Sikkim and lu

reacted similarly, ironically enough to tiic large-scale migr

hill people from Nepal. \_ pj-

Reports of large-scale migration from the Indian border s

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal periodically find their

the Kathmandu press, most of them reports of Muslims escaping

wrath of their Hindu neighbors. Only the vaguest estimates o^^^^

numbers of migrants accompany these reports. During t c

there were occasional reports of large migrations of Muslims

Bengal into jhapa district, but the 1961 census of Nepal

that little more than 3 percent of the district’s population was us i ^

In 1972 the press reported that large numbers of “Bihari ^

were moving into Jhapa from Bangladesh because of persecution

the hands of Bengali Muslims following the establishment o

independent government there.” Although it is doubtful that sign

ficant migration of Muslims is occurring as a result of the Bang a

crisis, data presented in chapter IV document the fact that there i

substantial migration from India into some parts of the tarai. Because

Nepalis have not yet attempted to study this migration systematica y,

there remains only a vague awareness of it in Kathmandu, but one

which is disturbing to those most anxious to extend the dominance

of the national hill culture into the tarai.

ANTI-INDIAN SENTIMENT AND CITIZENSHIP RESTRICTIONS

Anti-Indian feeling was certainly an important factor contributing

to the citizenship restrictions included in the Constitution. As the

liberal Citizenship Act of 1952 was partly the result of a very close

relationship between India and Nepal at the time, so the citizenship

articles in the 1962 Constitution were partly a response to antagonism

between the two nations during the early 19605. The 1950s and early

1960s encompass a period of traumatic father-son-type relations

between India and Nepal — the paternalism of India and the depen

dency of Nepal during the early 1950s, followed in the late 1950s

and early 1960s by a striving for independence, even defiance upon

occasion, on Nepal’s part. The period culminated in late 1962 w'd'

India’s adjustment to the fact of Nepal’s political maturity.

The volumes that analyze this love-hate relationship are well known

’‘Jot/j Ja,gn'(i Wtekly, Ang. 11, 1972.

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

Although a few of the fifty Commission members objected to the

use of Nepali as the sole medium of instruction, the majority listed

the justifications for their recommendation as follows:

1. If the national language is made the medium of instruction, [tiiis

would avoid] preparing textbooks in many languages. . . .

2. It wll be imperative to adopt a general policy to give status to a

language which is spoken by the majority of the people.

3. The national language will be easier to learn than Hindi. No truly

Hindi-speaking people inhabit any part of the country.

4. As an official language for a long time, Nepali has been current

everywhere and therefore is not difficult for the local people to

understand.

5. ... The different communities of Nepal, easily understand the

language. . . .

6. Nepali bears a closer affinity with Hindi than any other local

language.

7. ... To solve the problems of multiplicity of language, stress and

importance will have to be laid on one language, if the integrity and

sovereignty of Nepal is to be maintained.^

Justifications I and 6 are certainly valid. Nepali may be an easier

language to learn than Hindi, as stated in point 3, primarily because

Nepali does not have the more complex gender system of Hindi, but,

as will be documented later in this chapter, Hindi is already spoken

by a significant portion of the tarai population. The most important

points are 2 and 7, because they base the language recommendations

upon nationalistic considerations.

GOVERNMENT LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE LAKGU.AGE

CONTROVERSY, 1956-58

Although the first jarring notes of the language controversy were not

heard until 1956, sentiment against imposition of Nepali on the plains

people of the tarai began to be voiced as early as 1951. In that year,

the Nepal Tarai Congress was organized under the leadership of

Vedanada Jha. The party objectives were stated to be; (a) establish-

ment of an autonomous tarai state; (b) recognition of Hindi as a state

language; and (c) adeejuate employment of tarai people in the Nepal

civil service. “

■Ibid., pp. 62-<i3.

‘SlaUsnan, May 4, 1953, p. '.

Chapter VI

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

The Nepali language has been developing for at least 700 years,

perhaps longer, and now it is a major component of Nepalese nationa-

lism. The language was carried along the footpaths which have

Krved as trade routes through the hill region and, more recently,

it has spread into all parts of the country through the educational

system. As nationalism became a force in the 1950s and national

leaders began to encourage the teaching of Nepali in the schools,

representatives of other language groups resisted, and the language

question bccaine a hotly debated political issue. As in many other

eve oping nations, language became a stumbling block along the

road to national unification.

The end of Rana rule in 1951 brought with it a whole series of

c langes, perhaps none more pronounced than those in the field of

ucation, A new generation of young Nepalese leaders came into

p omiMnce in 1951, Although most of them had studied English in

n la uring the 1940s and knew it well, they were nationalists,

flip establish for Nepal its own national image. For most of

imni ' Nepali as their mother tongue, tliis included the

^epali-Ianguage instruction in the schools and

oerinW '^eishroom during the immediate post-Rana

beeanir, organize a national educational system

Commission.

in Nefinl M 1 r L Commission published its report, Education

subsequently ignored, L the foUow-

policy formed the basis for the government’s language

arade on °'\*!i medium of instruction, exclusively from the third

school bedus^fr even optionally, in the primary

the teaching of Nepali' """

1926), p. 104. ' Planning Commission, Education in Ecpal (Kathmandu,

108

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 1 1 1

area around Biratnagar, an ultranationalistic group of hill people

called the Nepali Pracharini Sabha (Nepali Publicity Organization)

began distributing pamphlets, displaying posters and collecting

signatures as part of a campaign to pressure government authorities

into using Nepali for local administrative business. Tarai Congress

leaders warned government officials that the Nepali Pracharini

Sabha was creating conflict between the majority of plains people

and the Nepali-speaking minority in the Biratnagar area. The Nepali

Pracharini Sabha responded by sending a delegation to Kathmandu

to acquaint the government with the intransigence of both local

officials and the Hindi advocates. In early September, there were

reports of “incidents” resulting from the controversy in the eastern

tarai towns of Biratnagar, Rangeli, and Dharan.\*

In July, the King had appointed K. I. Singh Prime Minister and,

in October, the K. I. Singh ministry issued a directive, inspired at

least in part by the Commission’s report. It ordered all schools to

use Nepali as the medium ofinstruction, unless they received Education

Ministry permission to use another language. In addition, it ordered

all teachers to demonstrate within two years their ability to use Nepali

for instructional purposes, and also ordered all teachers to provide

evidence ofNepali citizenship within six months.®

The directive was fuel for the fire. An immediate outcry was heard

from political leaders in the tarai and public meetings were organized

in toivns throughout the region. At these meetings, several themes

ran through the protest speeches. First, the directive was seen as a

government effort to force the hill culture upon the plains people.

Second, the rights of the plains people were being undermined because

they were being prevented from using the language most familiar to

them. Third, the decision was undemocratic, since representatives

of the tarai population had no voice in the policy-making process.

And fourth, the directive would destroy the unity of the nation by

creating dissension between the plains people and the hill people.

The Tarai Congress announced its decision to organize a “Save Hindi”

campaign, and Save Hindi committees were formed in a number of

tarai towns. Although it appears that the Tarai Congress leadership

initiated the campaign, the issue cut across party lines, and leaders

of the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal, the United

Democratic Party, and thePrajaParishad quicklyjoined thecampaign.

^Scc Connonrr, .AuR. 13, 1957, p, 1 ; Sept. 3, 1957, p. 3; Scpi. 5, 1957, p. 1.

Oct. 12, 1957.

1 10 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

The genesis of the Tarai Congress is to be found in tlic tarai’s status

as a quasi-colony during the Shah and Rana periods. A state of near-

anarchy resulting from the collapse of local administration at the

time of the revolution gave Tarai Congress leaders the courage to

advocate regional autonomy within the Nepalese national structure.

Because the government was paralyzed by factional strife, party

leaders did not have to fear that their radical demands would be

Suppressed. Not until 1953 was the government in Kathmandu stable

enough to begin reconstructing local administration. The Kathmandu

leadership quite naturally viewed with alarm these embryonic

separatist sentiments. Once the government had reestablished local

control, the Tarai Congress demand for an autonomous state became

muted and was dropped from the party's list of demands.

Although Hindi had been advocated as a second national language

since 1951, not until 1956 was Nepalese nationalism articulated

clearly enough to challenge the role of Hindi and other plains langu-

ages m the tarai. Since establishment of schools in the tarai was not

permuted during the Rana period, the termination of Rana rule

re ease a burst of school-building activity in the region. A fc"’

ttiese schools were constructed for 'the Nepali-speaking children of

government officials in district administrative centers of the tarai,

tiese were staffed by Nepali-speaking teachers. Few Nepali-

speakmg teachers settled in the tarai because it was as unattractive

tl,,. T agriculturalists from the hills. As a result, most of

Bcra'" established by plains people for their own children,

r., ^ ^ ^i^alified teachers among the plains people

nf tV, • I of these schools were forced to recruit many

larvp India. This was not difficult, because of the

and T ° educated but unemployed young men in the towns

^rti 1 1- U«a' Pradesh In addition, the

teachers thanT ^ Culturally more familiar to the Indian

hi ml, IV counterparts from the hills.

Plannin\*. Cn ^•\*^'\*\* '''h’ch the National Education

lanvuaee responsible for provoking the

its contents before the report was officially released,

the language recomme V I'ro-Hindi meetings to protest

during the surino- r ‘'t a number of tarai towns

that the w until the summer of 1957

proportions. In the

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 1 1 3

cratic Front agitation of late November, December, and January.

The language issue became one of a number of grievances important

to this loose organization of political parties — the Nepali Congress,

the Nepali National Congress, and the Praja Parishad. The major

goal of the Front was to obtain from King Mahendra a pledge that

national elections would be held. Pro-Hindi advocates were strong

supporters of the Front, because they believed a popularly elected

government would be much more responsive to their demands than

the Palace-oriented governments that had come and gone during

the preceding years.”

On December 15, the King reached a partial accommodation with

the Front and issued a Royal Proclamation setting the national election

date for February 1959. Agitation continued until February 1, 1958,

over the question of whether the election would be to a parliamentary

body or to a constitutional assembly. The pro-Hindi forces, along with

other interest groups represented by the Front, felt that a constitution

drawn up by a constitutional assembly would give them more power

than one drawn up by King Mahendra and his advisors. On February

1, the King issued another Royal Proclamation ruling that the election

would be for seats in Parliament. Although the Front reluctantly

agreed to accept this, Hindi supporters, at least those who sought for

Hindi the status of a second national language, were ultimately proven

correct in their assumption that a constitution drawn up in the Palace

would not satisfy their demand.

In January 1958, the Ministry of Education, now under the King’s

direct control, issued a second directive concerning language.^® It

made some concessions to the pro-Hindi forces, but none of the con-

cessions were fundamental, and leadership in the tarai was not

mollified. On one point the January 1958 Directive reversed its

predecessor. It dropped the citizenship requirement for teachers,

a requirement that could not have been enforced without closing

down many tarai schools dependent on Indian teachers.^^

The October 1957 Directive had stated that all schools would be

required to adopt Nepali as the medium of instruction. The January

1958 Directive gave up attempts to carry out this requirement at the

’’Commoner, Sept. 4, 1957, p. 1 ; Oct. 16, 1957, p. 1.

t^Department ofEducation, “Notice,’\* Nepal Gazelle, vol. VII, No. 43, Feb. 10, 1958.

'•See chapter VII for a breakdown of high-school and college teachers by place of

birth. Although many of these teachers have managed to obtain citizenship certificates

since 1958, few held such certificates at that time.

112 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

The K. I. Singh government was forced to issue a press communique

explaining (hat the introduction of Nepali into the schools of non-

- epali-speaking parts of the country was motivated by the need to

develop a national language undemood by all citizens and, through

t IS common language, to unify the nation. The government attempted

to soften the impact of the directive by insisting that Nepali be intro-

duced immediately only into secondary schools and colleges and not

unti a later date into the primary schools. However, this did not

mollify opponents of the directive. At the end of October, the govern-

ment issued a ban on all forms of protest against the directive but,

espi tc tile ban, protests increased. The Birganj Save Hindi Committee

the government, threatening to begin “a

u,p e agamst the directive on November 11 ifit were not withdrawn

rv. • p°mmittees in other tarai towns supported the Birganj

timatum and, when the ultimatum deadline expired,

vovrrnmr Mahendra dismissed the K. I. Singh

str;itmn t! assumed personal responsibility for Nepal’s admini-

influenrM 'l^e King had been

had eiinrri m agitation ; others were not so sure. Their campaign

one of T that they did not wish to hinder simply because

hustled from the "seel e MeLinv^ ^ prime ministers had bee

Biratnavar P-,. d -l- . protest marches and strikes in

immedidteiy foiiowini ‘”'1’^."'' continued during the days

govemmen Ti ^ dismissal of the short-lived K. 1. Singh

November 1 q serious incident occured in Biratnagar on

ofsevcnl ihoits Committee organized a procession

nie.sircctfiirhtinpan II crowds soon faced each other.

At IcaM iwcmv-fiv ■ ' ““‘’aS 'hat ensued was ended by police action.

After ihc }V ' ‘'’j'‘'cd, a few seriously."

‘'’'ctheposiiionThadVddr'^"''/'''' controversy began to

poUtir.il aiiemion t v ^ 'he center of national

The ituemity of tiic'r^.r ' center of political activity in the tarai.

'h:u, rmulicd caused T in Biratnagar and the violence

mote cautious jr, handlT ' ""d pro-Ncpali leaders to be "

rotitroverse i? ^ important, the language

V — V , \* ' 1 " "orbed into the broader United Demo-

P-2-

•• Nrn. 23, IMI, p, j

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

115

During 1958, the language controversy received less and less

attention in the press and in public meetings, as pro-Hindi and pro-

Nepali forces aligned themselves with political parties preparing for

the national election on more generalized platforms aimed at attracting

support from a broad cross-section of Nepal’s population.

IS HINDI THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE OF THE TARAI?

This question was debated throughout the period just discussed and

needs to be answered before proceeding further. The Hindi advocates

answered the question with an emphatic yes and the Nepali advocates

with an equally emphatic no. Some Nepali-speaking people maintain-

ed that Hindi was spoken nowhere in the tarai. On the other hand,

Tarai Congress leader Vedananda Jha claimed that Hindi was the

language of four milhon tarai inhabitants. However, until the

1952/54 census of Nepal was released to the public, all judgments

about the number of Hindi- and Nepali-speakers, and for that matter,

all judgments about numbers of people living in the tarai, were based

on personal estimates of claimants in the controversy.

Although the census was not ready for public distribution until

late 1958, the language figures found their way into the press in

January 1958, while the lingering eeho of the language eontroversy

could still be heard. The figure supported the contention of the Nepali

advocates that few Hindi-speakers lived in the tarai. According to

the 1952/54 census, 29 percent of the tarai population spoke as “mother

tongues” plains languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, or Bengali, or

plains-tribal languages such as Tharu, Rajbanshi, or Satar. By far

the largest number of tarai inhabitants, 63 percent, were assigned to

no recognized language classifications but appeared instead under

headings such as “eastern tarai dialects,” “mid-western tarai dialects,’

or “Morang Pradesh dialects.” Another 5 percent were listed as

speakers of Nepali or various hill-tribal languages such as Magar,

Gurung, or Tamang. Most important for our consideration here is

the fact that the census claimed that only 3 percent of the tarai popula-

tion spoke Hindi as their mother tongue.^®

'’/iirf., Nov. 22, 1957, p. 2.

'®Nepal, Department of Statistics, Cmsus of Popi:htion, J{epal, 1952/54 A.D. (Kath-

mandu, 1958), pp. 44-45. The population of the tarai, that is, of the seventeen outer-

tarai census districts, was 2,386,813. Nepal's fust census seas taken in two stages, the

first in eastern Nepal in 1952 and the second in western Nepal in 1954.

1 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

pnmaiy-school level, conceding the obvious fact that it would be

mpossibletofindNepali-speakingteachersforthehundr^^

schnolc T \* L 1967-68, 75 percent of primary-

Brahm' plains origin, 47 percent of these plains

school r\* T Undoubtedly, the percentage of primary-

e s M °"Sin was even higher in the 1950s, befoJe

teac S r ‘^e tarai. Most of these

S h" Z I T little or no contact

'‘’'^f^epah-speaking world.

eoIceSSr wn ?? 1958 Directive made yet another

Schools] abouuLcr the Boa 7Vn-‘’

the foresaid Section 2 H ‘a u Po™ed according to

Language as tl j- “ is not feasible to make Nepali

intpartefth'o t " -• instruction shall be

Board of Directors for language as decided by the

inadc.”UiAlthorifri M i- and till another arrangement is

sufficient to maL U f ' applauded this as the compromise

claimed it was no policy workable, Hindi advocates

directive put local «?)! because another section of the

government officials control of district-level

officials posted in the ttiajority of government

uffcct, changed not onlv iL l^cpali-speakers,is the directive, in

in many cases their c It ^.P°"'^\*^ structure of the boards but also

amenable to the ^niposition, thus making them more

Committee delegation ^"/H-Nupal Save Hindi

lum to witlidraie the la mid-February, requesting

assured by the Kinv of}"'\*”'^^' Directive. The delegation was

"as taken to revoke nr m "re P^°P" consideration, but no action

"D'Ua collrcrra '‘'^cctivc.

. ’VV»^^«cni«,vprvf/v'''r'‘^’'

1 rcarilon lo it tiiis notice ^vas published

iri «ri,.n.epubiicbcroreiu' " "1. "’''''-.fan-ry. mdicn.intt ,l,n, it was

''‘SfniTO2or ^ be referred

fZTlh!^y'''' Nsrirdic’ or?”"'’''’''’''''' '1'“'

hv i),r,r '‘^‘''■''S'^f'ii'rnnn’or "“"S°‘''^rnmcnt person appointed lo rep-

'h ™ tt h" mer^m r''™'- <=ZLn appointed

an»Kr«f T ' ibe Drmrr^” ^ government official must also

“Sr-Po-,?' " ’ “‘'\*‘‘'''d dircciK' membets, including the ebairman,

’cc'innonp(;!iiir5'ai'i'h\*^'r S"'’ernmenl.

■ tfb. IJ-Sr, ior.1, P ' ^^''^lerlmnci level in ch.Vtll.

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 1 1 7

definition for Nepali, including in the Nepali category speakers of

various dialects and perhaps also some other languages, thus inflating

the figures so that Nepali could be claimed as the mother tongue of

a majority of the population. For example, in Baitadi and Dandel-

dhura, districts in the far-western hills bordering on the Kumaon

region of India, the inhabitants are enumerated as Nepali-speakers,

despite the fact that Nepali-speaking district administrators deputed

from Kathmandu understand little of the local language. It appears

that the people of Baitadi and Dandeldhura speak Kumauni, the

language of 96 percent of the people in the contiguous Indian hill

district of Almora.

The 1961 census of Nepal reported 447,090 Awadhi-speakers

living in the mid-western and far-western tarai.^i According to a

grouping of dialects in the 1961 census of India, Awadhi is one of six

dialects comprised in the “Eastern Hindi” category. The 1961

census of India lists only two districts of Uttar Pradesh in which

Awadhi-speakers represent a significant percentage ofthe population

24 percent in Lakhimpur Kheri district and 14 percent in Sitapur

district.^® Only one of these two districts, Lakhimpur Kheri, borders

on Nepal, but it is conriguous to the far-western tarai districts where

almost no Awadhi-speakers were recorded by the 1961 census of

Nepal. In the mid-western tarai census districts of Palhi, Majkhanda,

Khajahani, and Shivaraj, the census of Nepal reports that 87 percent

or more of the people speak Awadhi. In contiguous border districts

of Uttar Pradesh, the census of India reports that 85 percent or more

of the people speak nondialect Hindi. Thus, those classified by the

Nepalese census as Awadhi-speakers are obviously speaking the lan-

guage classified by the Indian census as Hindi.

Members of Kathmandu’s governing elite tend to view Hindi as

the symbol of the plains people’s resistance to the hill culture. This

attitude has prevailed in the absence of an effective political-party

system, during the periods when both the 1952/54 census and the

1961 census were produced. It is not improbable, therefore, that

Nepalese census administrators in Kathmandu have found it difficult

to avoid pressure to deemphasizc the importance of Hindi in the

'^Census of India, 1961, vol. XV (Uttar Pradesh), part II-C (ii), p. 271.

■'Census of.Yepai, 1961, vol. II, p. 18.

■•■Census of India, 1961, vol. I, part II-C (ii), p. ckiv. The other 6ve dialects arc

Bagheli. Chhattisgarhi, Kosali/Baiswari, Bagliclkhandi/Rnvai, and Laria/Khaliahi.

“Vol. XV, part Il-C (ii), pp. 256-355.

116 regionalism and national UNiry in nepal

S ince these figures undercut the position of Hindi advocates, their

J ction 0 the validity of the statistics was predictable. Jha accused

epartment of Statistics of manipulating its data for political

HLmT because of this criticism, th e Department of Statistics

Sneat ^ ^ while preparing the 1961 census,

included 111 Pradesh and Morang Pradesh dialects were

Bhoimiri ^ (hose of castern-tarai dialects in the

dialect-! i of mid-western and far-rvestem-tarai

that mnrr ^ Called Awadhi, If Hindi advocates had hoped

tors to a,? y ^ ”^^1 categories would force the census enumera-

ivere d numbers of Hindi speakers, they

countrv wf j number of Hindi-speakers in the entire

1961 cLus census to 2,867 in the

Departmenfnf language categories, administrators of the

of Statistics usetTv' renamed the Central Bureau

academics wh^lan. .a South Indian

national language for India"\*

living elsewhere in ^ and Allahabad. The people

therefore they do not sne somewhat differently,

Bihari or, as the Cent^ ^ Hindi but languages such as Rajasthani,

Awadhi. In this wev of Statistics administrators claim,

call the dLSlan^agf

included under adminisDators in New Delhi have

which they claimed are V i ^heic both Maithili and Bhojpuri,

underljing political rea This was done for the same

A’epalis to insist that Hi anti-Hindi South Indians and

difficult to make nnrelv !■ languages. Because it is

languages, nonllnffuistie distinctions between dialects and

(he language controvenv ' "l ^^^^ons are used, and this has fanned

is abating in India ce oountries. Now that the controversy

«t “v'’’'- V'' '««' (K-'hmandu. 1967),

small ^Hpun were used in the i952-54

ofpeople were ineluded in them.

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 119

is a gross underenumeration. We can safely assume that at least half

of all speakers of Maithili, Bhojpuri, Bengali, and the plains-tribal

languages speak Hindi as a second language. Among the speakers of

non-Hindi plains languages, almost all males and those females who

have contact with the world beyond their villages speak Hindi as a

second language. O n the basis of these assumptions, it can be concluded

that in 1961 at least 46 percent of the tarai population spoke Hindi as

a second language. If one adds to the 46 percent the 17 percent who

speak Hindi or dialects of Hindi as mother tongues, at least 63 percent

of the tarai populadon spoke Hindi as either a first or second language

in 1961. It is doubtful that this percentage has declined since 1961,

given the growing commercial contacts between the tarai and India.

Although the point was never made clear by cither the pro-Hindi or

anti-Hindi forces in the language controversy, the use of Hindi as a

lingua franca of the tarai population rather than its use as a mother

tongue made it a symbol around which regionally conscious political

activity could be organized.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS NEPALI SPOKEN IN THE TARAI?

At the same dme that a few Hindi advocates were claiming that nearly

half the populadon of Nepal spoke Hindi, Nepali advocates were

claiming that Nepali had become a generally understood second

language in the tarai. The Nepalese historian, Dilli Raman Regmi,

went so far as to say: “In the whole Nepal tarai, with the exception

of some Indians who have recently migrated there, all the people,

even along the Indian border, cannot only speak but also plead in

Nepali in the courts.”^® As a result, debate about the use of Nepali

among the tarai people became as much a part of the language con-

troversy as the quesdon about Hindi.

According to the 1952/.54 census, only 4 percent of the tarai popula-

tion spoke Nepali as a mother tongue. Another 1 percent spoke other

hill languages as mother tongues, and it can be assumed that they

spoke Nepali as a second language, because Nepali is the lingua franca

generally asked only of heads of households, and census enumerators tend to assume

that women in these households have the same language facility. However, this is

often not true, because women have less education and less contact with the world

beyond the household and village in which the mother tongue is spoken. The data are

therefore unreliable.

\*®Nepali National Congress, Ghoshanapatra (Kathmandu, n.d.).

118 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL ^

tarai by putting Hindi-speakers into a “mid-western tarai la

category in 1952/54 and then into an “Awadhi”

Although Hindi advocates were justified m questioning g

ment’s language data, they were not justified ^ ctafistics

numbers of Hindi speakers they did. The Centra ° pnresent

figures for speakei. of Awadhi, Hindi, and Urdu^^ combined rep es

only 17 percent of the tarai population. Even if this were an

estimate of 10 to 15 percent, the fact remains that people P

Hindi as a mother tongue would still be a minority of the P P •

tion. The tarai has larger numbers of both Maithili an

speakers. econd

Hindi is important in the tarai because of its use as a s

language by plains people who need to communicate across

language barriers. It is the language in which business actw

carried on throughout most of the Gangetic plain, and it is use

the tarai wherever itinerant traders or craftsmen meet the loca peop

One hears Hindi spoken in the village markets and in the

the towns. It is the language used by tarai villagers wlien they tra

to India, a relatively frequent experience for many who visit re

or attend religious festivals. ,

Many people in the tarai and, incidentally, also in Kathman a,

learn Hindi by attending the Indian films that are shown in the oca

cinema halls. Although attendance at these Hindi films is the major

pastime of only a small, affluent segment of the urban population m

either the tarai or Kathmandu Valley, the Hindi films, with t eu

singing, dancing, and melodramatic plots, represent an occasion

enthralling escape from the mundane existence of all but the poores

villagers. Nepalis also learn Hindi by listening to All India Ra ‘O

and reading Indian newspapers printed in Hindi. ,

The 1952/54 census of Nepal reported only 68,932 people in Nepa

who could speak Hindi as a second language. Of this number only

half, that is, less than 2 percent of the tarai population, were liste

as people whose mother tongues were other plains languages.\*

\*'Il is more difficult to define Urdu than to define Hindi. The Urdu of educated and

urbanized Muslims contains many more words of Arabic and Persian derivation t

docs Hindi- However, Muslims and Hindus at the village level use about

\ocabulary for speaking. The dificrcnce is primarily in the script; literate Mnsi

'illagcrs employ the Arabic script and literate Hindus the Devanagri.

’Tmruj 0 / Fopukim, ^'tpal, 1932/54 A.D,, p. 47. At the time this study was complet-

ed, no 1961 census data were available on the use of various languages as secon

languages, h should be noted that questions about the use of second languages ar

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 121

THE LANGUAGE ISSUE DURING THE PERIOD OF THE NATIONAL

ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE NEPALI CONGRESS GOVERNMENT, 1958-60

In preparation for the 1959 election, all political parties drew up

platforms that contained statements on the language issue. These

language planks closely resembled each other and, in some cases,

were almost identical in wording. Although this appears surprising

at first, a closer examination reveals few fundamental differences

among the aims of most pardes. The Nepali Congress language plank

was typical of most others. It recognized Nepali as the national

language, but encouraged the development of local languages at the

same time.^” K. I. Singh’s United Democratic Party, which a year

earlier had forbidden the use of regional languages even in primary

education, now followed the line of other parties. Even the ultra-

nationalistic, hill-oriented Nepal Prajatantrik Mahasabha unbent on

the language issue, conceding that “Our national language is Nepali

and will remain Nepali, but proper regard will be given for the growth

and presentation of the regional languages. With minor variations,

this was the approach of other parties except the Communist Party

and the Tarai Congress.

The Communist Party produced a language plank that placed a

greater emphasis than those of other parties on the importance of

regional languages. The party agreed that Nepali should be the

language of government business, but did not specify Nepali as the

national language. It supported the use of Hindi as the medium of

instruction in tarai schools, but stated that it would be “the correct

national attitude to encourage all the languages of the country

equally.

The Tarai Congress advocated that both Hindi and Nepali be

adopted as national languages. The party’s election manifesto played

down the importance of Nepali, referring to it as Gorkhali,®'\* and

suggested that Gorkhali had become important because it was “the

court language” in Kathmandu. On the other hand, the manifesto

“"Nepali Congress, Chunao Ghoshanapatra (Kathmandu, 1958).

“'United Democratic Party, Chunao Ghoshanapatra (Kathmandu, 1958),

^^Nepal Prajatantrik Mahasabha ko Abashjakata ra Uddeshya (Kathmandu, 1958).

““Nepal Communist Party, “Chunao Ghoshanapatra,” .A'invy'!/,?, Nov. 26, 1958.

“'Although Nepali was the court language of many minor hill kings in the past,

it was commonly called Gorkhali after the kings of Gorkha conquered Nepal and this

is still a commonly used term in the hill villages.

120 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

except in the far-western hill districts bordering on

snnkp W to the 1 96 1 census, 6 percent of the tarai population

hill 2 percent spoke other

cedures because of inadequate enumeration pro-

ST; m t / plajpeople who can speak

those wlin ° underenumeration as the data on

5 perc t ^ second language. We can be sure that

population that is, the hill segment of the tarai

”” » ».nd in 1952/54

speak Nenali\* \* ^ added the plains people who

»« Sfc" T'"?'- “■"' p'“"' ■'“p" “ !\*'

government arlm' ' ®^™®d Nepali through contact with

Villagers of Nepaii-speaking businessmen,

settled along f contact with hill people

moilTy knowfcdge of Nenj/rT’ “‘‘“’’‘“''y “9“" " "“i':

colleges in the tami are afc i ^ attending high schools and

only a small urban- j ° ieaming Nepali. But, because there is

eastern and far-westem “ ‘be tarai and because the far-

reasonable to estimaf uistricts are sparsely settled, it would be

people have learned tbJ percent of the plains

in the tarai are included People of hill origin living

tion speak Nepali as 25 to 30 percent of the tarai popula-

io'ver percentage language, certainly a much

first or second language ^ percent who speak Hindi as a

Kathmandu assert that r\*^\*\*\*^^’ ^‘^bo^^rs, and journalists in

people in the tarai the '^"fiorstood by most of the

people they have contaL'^Tj! understood by most of the

‘oachen, office clerks me tnrai: businessmen, students,

sophisticated villagers wb\*\*^”^\*\*^’ relativ'cly wealthy and

links between other villa ° brokers’’^® or communication

‘:‘=u'ers. government officials in the district

-S™ 5 1952/54 A.D., pp. 44 \_ 4 ,\_

=»A5 V 'S61,V0l. II, pp. |g\_ 2 ,\_-

=»As F r n ‘™b vol. u

»63i.n!: them i

'^63), pp, 60..65

m Politics erti Social

Charigr: Orissa in 1959 (Berkeley,

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 123

ported the use of Hindi and the debate lasted only briefly. Hindi as

a language of communication in Parliament was thereafter accepted,

if somewhat grudgingly in some quarters, throughout the eighteen

months of the Nepali Congress government.

Except for Pashupati Nath Ghosh of the Praja Parishad and Kashi

Prasad Shrivastava of the United Democratic Party, the leaders of

the Save Hindi committees appear to have been drawn primarily from

the Tarai Congress and Nepali Congress parties. Vedananda Jha and

his Tarai Congress associates were the first to capitalize upon the

issue, but Nepali Congress leaders gradually came to dominate many

of the local committees and finally, in the person of Mahendra Narayan

Nidhi, chairmanship of the All-Nepal Committee. This can be ex-

plained by the fact that a large number of the tarai’s most active and

experienced political leaders were drawn into the Nepali Congress

ranks and by the fact that the party had superior organizational ability.

The Tarai Congress had attempted to capitalize upon the resentment

felt by educated plains people toward Kathmandu officials and toward

the encroachment of the hill culture upon their lives. However, after

the party cast off its demand for a semiautonomous state, it became,

in effect, a one-issue party. Other parties anxious to gain support in

the tarai were forced to include in their platforms at least a few sympa-

thetic words about the regional languages. In so doing, they defused

the language controversy and undercut the raison d Hre of the Tarai

Congress. Throughout the period of campaigning, Jha claimed that

the Tarai Congress had the support of the tarai population. However,

the election proved a disaster for his party. All twenty-one candidates

who ran on the party’s ticket lost. Even more humiliating, they all

lost their deposits of 250 rupees because they received less than 20

percent of the votes cast in their constituencies. Jha contested the

election in his home district of Saptari and lost his deposit there.

Most of the tarai people were illiterate and probably little concerned

with the government’s language policy because it did not affect the

village primary schools. The directives of October 1957 and January

1958 had direct bearing only on the high schools and a few small

colleges in tarai towns and, therefore, affected only the children of

the urbanized business and landowning elites of the region. This

segment of the tarai population was important, because from it were

drawn most of those who became politically active. They were con-

cerned about the language issue and felt that Hindi was a symbol of

='Ncpal, Elecuon Commission [Results of the First General Election, 1959].

122 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

continued; Hindi is the only language understood by people through-

out the tarai.®“

Factionalism within the United Democratic Party illustrates how

divided a party could become as a result of the language controversy.

K. I. Singh, a Chetri and the mainspring of the party, while serving

his brief tenure as prime minister, had been responsible for issuing

the October 1957 Directive that brought the language controversy to

a head and, in effect, put him at the forefront of the pro-Nepali forces.

The party s general secretary, Kashi Prasad Shrivastava, a Kayastha

from the mid-western tarai was, like Singh, a strong personality. After

the United Democratic government issued its controversial directive,

Shrivastava embarrassed his party by advocating Hindi as a second

0 cial language for Nepal. The language controversy caused consi-

erable strain within the party at the time, but it was Shrivastava’s

\ lew that prevailed a year later when the party prepared its election

p atform. The about-face of the United Democratic Party aptly

Illustrates how easily the professed goals of a party could be altered

^ ® ^ °fbs power base from the Palace to the popular electorate,

ow much the tarai population served to gain from this shift.

^eek before the voting, King Mahendra proclaimed a new

lenri ' ^ ^ publicized as the product of a consensus among

thp ^ ^ Riajor parties but, according to Joshi and Rose, it was

“Tlip” ^^wromodation that these leaders could make witli the King,

expcnu\*\* ^ ‘s ment of the Crown as the source of all legislative,

DrQrkm!f-^" judicial authority, an essential feature of the 1954

last anH n™’ ’'^‘^ed in the new Constitution.”^® One of the

national "'S'' Constitution affirmed that "The

In effect , shall be Nepali in the Devanagri script.”®’

‘"sr

its status Lose mention Hindi, the question of

A member of Parliament convened in July 1959.

and another member objecLL ^

J ed. The Nepali Congress leadership sup-

P- 285. Oemnralic /mmations in Mtpal (Berkeley, 1966),

POLITICS OF LANGUAGE 125

Nepal Company Act required all companies, small as well as large,

to maintain their records in either Nepali or English. The majority

of Nepal’s registered companies are located in the tarai, primarily

managed by people of plains origin, hence it is likely that many have

records that are kept in Hindi or some other plains language. Inasmuch

as most Nepalese government officials speak and understand Hindi,

the government’s refusal to recognize Hindi for the use of company

records is a pointed assertion of national consciousness.

One minor reaction to the government’s language policy occurred

m 1965, and it was not the Hindi but the Newari advocates who were

heard publicly. In April of that year, Radio Nepal terminated its

daily ten-minute news broadcasts in Newari and Hindi. A number of

Newari organizations reacted indignantly, but not a note of protest

was heard from the tarai.

Thus, soon after the ouster of the Nepali Congress government,

King Mahendra’s government took an unequivocal stand on the

language issue, confirming the January 1958 Directive that had been

issued fay a preelection government under his control. The type of

Nepalese nationalism represented by the requirement that Nepali

be used outside the Nepali-speaking region of Nepal has received its

most forceful support from the King. In an atmosphere that has dis-

couraged criticism of government policy since December 1960, no

public protest has been raised in the tarai. Dissatisfaction has remained

a muted, privately expressed sentiment.

«“Nepal Company Act 196+,” GazMf, vol. XIV, Extraordinary Issue

No. 18A, Nov. 16, 196+. , . .

«Many of them have studied in Indian colleges and univeraties.

'matribhurni Weekly, Apr, 22, 1 965. Some tension has long existed between advocates

of Nepali and Newari, dating back to 1769, when the Newari-speaking people of the

Valley were conquered by Nepali-speaking people from the western hills. During the

Rana period, Newari, then called Nepal Bhasha, or language ofNepal, was vigorously

suppressed. Since the 1931 revolution, some revival of Newan has occurred in Kath-

mandu, Bhaktapur, and Patan, the urban centers of the Valley where Newars arc

concentrated. The Nepali-Hindi controversy spurred Newan advocates to increased

activity in support of their language. At the time of the B.ratnagar incident, for

example, the Patan District Committee of the Nepal National Student Federation

demanded that Newari be used in the schooU of Patan. See Sak Sandesh, Nov. 1 9, 1 957.

LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION 127

the tradition of reading by literate villagers to illiterate neighbors.

Although it is easier to deliver mail in the tarai than in the hill

region, mail service in the tarai does not yet appear to have been

established effectively, even during the dry season. Literate villagers

throughout the region complain that they receive only an occasional

issue of newspapers and magazines to which they subscribe. This

limits the government’s ability to communicate by printed word

beyond the limits of the tarai’s urban centers, where literacy is higher

and the mail-delivery system is better established. Whatever the

reasons, circulation of newspapers in tarai villages is quite limited,

as verified by the following statistics. In the eighty-one villages of the

1967-68 field survey, individuals in only ten villages were receiving

newspapers. Five English-language papers published in India were

received in four villages, seven Hindi language papers published in

India were received in six villages, the government s Nepali-language

daily, Gorkkapatra, published in Kathmandu, went to five villages, and

nongovernment Nepali publications\* to three villages.

These statistics are instructive. Only ten villages (12 percent of

the sample) received any publications, and in only half of these villages

did any individual subscribe to the government-published paper.

Of the twenty newspapers received in the ten villages, thirteen were

published in India; these papers naturally focus on Indian rather

than Nepalese events. Of course, these papers also tend to present

the Indian point of view in matters of mutual concern to the two

governments. Of the twenty papers, eight were Nepali-language

publications, seven were in Hindi, and five were in English. Although

the government publishes newspapers and magazines in Nepali and

English, it does not publish in Hindi or in other tarai languages. It

is difficult for the government newspapers to compete with many of

those published in India because the latter, particularly the English-

language papers, tend to be much more comprehensive in their

coverage of international news. This is particularly the case in urban

centers of the tarai, where many members of economic elite groups

speak English and have an interest in international affairs. However,

the government could compete more effectively with the Indian

press in the tarai villages if it modified its language policy, published

also in Hindi, Maithili, and Bhojpuri, and concentrated on events

'■Mpal Sandtsh (Patna, India), Dhamka (Janakpur, Nepal), and RuprMa (Kath-

mandu).

Chapter VII

LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, AND

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

An essential aspect of the national-integration or nation-building

process is the definition and articulation of economic, social, and

political ideals and goals for the new nation. In Nepal, this process

as been going on during the past several decades among the educated

cpalis living in Kathmandu and a few other urban centers. These

goals must now be communicated to the rest of the nation’s inhabitants,

w 1C 1 IS a difficult task because most Ncpalis live in relatively isolated

vt ages, n regions of the country where people do not speak Nepali,

there is an added dimension to the problem. The government can

communicate with Nepali-speaking wllagers through various channels '.

ra ;o, newspapers, local-government officials’ personal contact with

r educational system. But the government must also

e M mg to communicate in languages other than Nepali if it hopes

to do so effectively with most tarai villagers.

iKfc PRESS AND THE RADIO

ment difficult, but not impossible, for the govem-

AccordingTfeTSsr\* '''“'"‘r

school flo-P p m census, only 4 percent of the population of

undoubfprilJ ° ^ Although the rate has

of the bwelt stgnificantly since then, Nepal still has one

of the tarai var ™ the world. Rates in various subregions

tion. In urbaniza-

district the literap ^’t'tsha, perhaps the most-urbanized tarai

urbanization and the T

living in settlempm. ' i j ®re predominantly tribal people

» "i 2 " C 1 ™ ”'»» -«W ty den., rore..,

'Nepal, Department ofs Communication possible is

“andu, 1958), pp. 39 ^, "f J^ipai, 1952/54 A.D. (Kalh-

titnc this study was completed data on literacy were not available at the

126

LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION 129

All India Radio or its regional stations at Patna, Lucknow, Calcutta,

or Kurseong in Darjeeling district. Radio Nepal was mentioned

42 times. Radio Ceylon 8 times, and each of the following once: Radio

Sikkim, Moscow, B.B.C., and Voice of America. Thus, of the 130

responses, 59 percent were All India Radio, 32 percent Radio Nepal,

and the other 9 percent stations in other countries.

Most popular with the villagers seemed to be programs of Indian

film music. Villagers mentioned listening most to news on Radio

Nepal. It is not clear why Radio Nepal music programs did not seem

to be very popular, even among the villagers of hill origin. Possibly

Indian film music is not broadcast as much by Radio Nepal as by

All India Radio. Villagers talked at greatest length and with the

most enthusiasm about All India Radio evening programs in the

regional languages. These programs are broadcast from Delhi and

Lucknow in Hindi, from Patna in Maithili and Bhojpuri, from Calcutta

in Bengali, and from Kurseong in Nepali, and they focus upon farming

problems, local customs, festivals, and other information of interest

to people in the various linguistic regions.^

Despite the fact that the Nepalese government appears to reach a

considerably larger segment of the tarai population by radio than

through its publications, it is communicating less effectively than the

Indian government through its All India Radio programs, especially

since the Nepalese government terminated its ten-minute news broad-

casts in Hindi and Newari. The Nepalese government may be unaware

of the popularity of All India Radio regional-language broadcasts,

but as a result of its failure to broadcast similar programs, it is losing

an opportunity to establish a more significant channel of communica-

tion. If regional-language programs could be produced attractively

enough to win an audience in the tarai, they could be used to inform

large numbers of people about government policies and development

programs and could begin to build a sense of national identity among

many who heretofore have had little contact with Nepalese national

concepts. The government can not persuade Hindi, Maithili, and

Bhojpuri speakers to learn Nepali by broadcasting programs in Nepali

only. As long as people have the option to tune in these regional-

language programs broadcast by All India Radio, the government

only succeeds in cutting itself off from these people, thereby eliminating

‘There may have been some overreporting of Radio Nepal because village headmen

usually thought that my assistant and I were associated with the Nepa cse government

and some appeared anxious to please us by mentioning Radio Nepal.

language, communication, and national integration 129

All India Radio or its regional stations at Patna, Lucknow, Calcutta,

or Kurseong in Darjeeling district. Radio Nepal was mentioned

42 times, Radio Ceylon 8 times, and each of the following once : Radio

Sikkim, Moscow, B.B.C., and Voice of America. Thus, of the 130

responses, 59 percent were All India Radio, 32 percent Radio Nepal,

and the other 9 percent stations in other countries.

Most popular with the wllagers seemed to be programs of Indian

film music. Villagers mentioned listening most to news on Radio

Nepal. It is not clear why Radio Nepal music programs did not seem

to be very popular, even among the villagers of hill origin. Possibly

Indian film music is not broadcast as much by Radio Nepal as by

All India Radio. Villagers talked at greatest length and with the

most enthusiasm about All India Radio evening programs in the

regional languages. These programs are broadcast from Delhi and

Lucknow in Hindi, from Patna in Maithili and Bhojpuri, from Calcutta

m Bengali, and from Kurseong in Nepali, and they focus upon farming

problems, local customs, festivals, and other information of interest

to people in the various linguistic regions.^

Despite the fact that the Nepalese government appears to reach a

considerably larger segment of the tarai populadon by radio than

through its publications, it is communicating less effectively than the

Indian government through its All India Radio programs, especially

since the Nepalese government terminated its ten-minute news broad-

casts in Hindi and Newari. The Nepalese government may be unaware

of the popularity of All India Radio regional-language broadcasts,

but as a result of its failure to broadcast similar programs, it is losing

3^n opportunity to establish a more significant channel of communica-

tion. If regional-language programs could be produced attractively

enough to win an audience in the tarai, they could be used to inform

large numbers of people about government policies and development

programs and could begin to build a sense of national identity among

many who heretofore have had little contact with Nepalese national

concepts. The government can not persuade Hindi, Maithili, and

Hhojpuri speakers to learn Nepali by broadcasting programs in Nepali

only. As long as people have the option to tune in these regional-

language programs broadcast by All India Radio, the government

only succeeds in cutting itself off from these people, thereby eliminating

"^There may have been some overreporling of Radio Nepal because village headmen

usually thought that my assistant and I were associated with the Nepalese government

and some appeared anxious to please us by mentioning Radio Nepal.

130 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

P p the most effective form of communication presently available.

government officials’ contact with villagers

iiM 3 'if ° best channel orc>.n.mn«ca.

government offi"' personal contact between locai-

ro.7Ifl, rf. \*' P"«"tial of even more

\*ee tbeTn? •■‘"'™tr.tiot. htw improved gre.tl,

transnorlao'on f T" ’ti ” severely hampered by a rudimentary

ip S e. 7”: “ »■« difficni; and sometime;

by ftSaion d t b I" '""b i"””'"'

rivets. Tracks to ril'a,oi„l“?'°““’' “““Ppear into streams and

monsoon season thc^taral to footpaths. During the

cut off to all hms of tr»n villages are

foot travel. sportation except by elephant and arduous

more contact ^between ’mproved, there will be continually

course, tax collectors andTaw-eilf''"\* villagers. Of

to generations of villagers K, ► officers have been familiar

are beginning to make tL • government officials

survey, the headmen of c ^PP®^''ance. During the 1967-68 field

Irow frequently various rnero"f were asked

villages. Since the data government officials visited their

limited, but they do solely on memory, reliability is

contact between governmJnf^m^"'^ indication of the frequency of

zonal commissioner was tb ' ''Piagers.'^ In 1967-68, the

districts called a zone Th ^ important official in a group of

was the chief develonmpnf^ "nporlant official in each district

Bara district had visited fiv f T chief development officer of

are hundreds of villages in^ c seventeen villages. Because there

can get to only a few of thpm \*\*rrict, the chief development officer

.^tore importanrin

middle-level officials who ^iirect contact with villagers are the

Pyogram officers. Land-reform\*" ^ i^nd-reform and cooperative-

VI ages, Once or twice a month'\*' '\*\*^\* visited ten of the seventeen

'Because the villa k \*'\*'"\* ^ccpcrative inspectors

“‘'^^■'=1 f'°vnd U difficult to

P'li'd'ng data m the <>\*4 n>»de to collect

language, communication, and national integration 131

had visited eight of the seventeen villages, also rather frequently in

some cases. These officials are attempting to implement government

programs, hence they must be informative and effective in persuading

villagers to cooperate.®

Potentially the most effective communicators of government policy

are the lower-level government workers called junior technical assist-

ants, who are individuals assigned as agricultural advisors to groups

of villages. They live in the villages they serve and are responsible

for creating a link between demands for agricultural improvement

in their villages and district-level supply centers for seed, fertilizer,

and farm implements. Junior technical assistants lived in nine of the

seventeen villages and regularly visited five others. Only three of the

seventeen villages received none of their attention. The majority

of junior technical assistants in the tarai are semiurbanized young

men of plains origin. Because of their at least superficial urbanization

and their extremely low salaries, they tend to be unenthusiastic about

their jobs. Also, because they are on the lower rungs of the government-

employee ladder, they are not in close contact with the pulse of govern-

ment activity and usually are not able to articulate government policy

to villagers as clearly as some of the middie-level officials. On the

other hand, they have \dsited Kathmandu, can speak Nepali, and

understand the workings of the panchayat system. Therefore, along

'vith the various other officials who visit villages less frequently, tlie>

are beginning to create a significant channel of communication to

the villagers.

Language is probably not as great a barrier to personal communi-

cation between government officials (most of whom arc Nepali

speaking hill Brahmins, Chetris, and Newars) and tarai villagers as

might be expected. Many of the officials have studied m India or

travelled extensively there and have learned Hindi as a second

language. However, officials tend to post in Nepali announcements

of government policies or programs. More often than not, tlicse

announcements, in highly Sanskritized Nepali, can not be deciphered

hy villagers. Even though printed announcements have limited value

among largely illiterate populations, the refusal of the government m

‘There have been numerous .-idministraiivc changes since the field sursej-. The

chief development officer has now received some of the

‘he zonal commissioner. The l.ind-reform prograni will eveiilua ly be completed and

the land-reform officers watlidrascn. The cooperative program las not P™' J

successful, and the cooperative inspectors may be less in cs idcncc than t lej '

1907 - 68 . ‘

130 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

P haps the most effective form of communication presently available.

government officials’

CONTACT WITH VILLAGERS

Although radio may be the government’s best channel of communica-

a-ovprnmp''! present, direct personal contact between local-

imoart villagers has the potential of even more

PaC . Although district-level administration La. nrrativ

has the potentia] of even more

since the Ra administration has improved greatly

transDortati \*\*\*\*\* severely hampered by a rudimentary

impoLhlf 7 “■^vel is still difficult and sometimes

serve as the '"^"t bullock-cart tracks, which

hy irrieation \* \*” "\*\*\*\*\* intersected

rivers. Tracks to disappear into streams and

monsoon season the^tar • u footpaths. During the

cut off to all (nrL c a sea of mud, and villages are

foot travel, \* '''ansportation except by elephant and arduous

more contact \*betwf>e " improved, there will be continually

course, tax collecZTndr'‘"r\* \*\*\*\*\*™\*\*

to generations of villatrers officers have been familiar

are beginning to make tLi types of government officials

survey, the headmen nr \* “PPcarancc. During the 1967-68 field

how frequently various^tTOtTf ‘\*\*\*\*"‘^\* ^\*\*'"\*'

villages. Since the data ^ ^ government officials visited their

limited, but they do n \*^^\*^\*\* \*”\*'\*\*^ memory, reliability is

contact between governmemnffl"'! ^"‘^^cation of the frequency of

zonal commissioner was tl. \* ^"\*\* ''b'agers,^ In 1967-68, the

districts called a zone Tl ^ \*’^c’st important official in a group of

was the chief develonmn T re\*\*\*\* important official in each district

Bara district had visited fi ° r^\* ^\*\*^ \*^\*\*^^^ development officer of

'^re hundreds of villages ' seventeen villages. Because there

can get to only a few off K ” '®^ct, the chief development officer

middle-level officials who contact with villagers are the

program officers. Land-mfn \*\*^^<y>\*\*\*^ land-reform and cooperative-

villages, once or tvwce a mo^th^' \*\*^'\* fo® seventeen

‘Because the vili ”” cases. Cooperative inspectors

difficult to

g data in the qther four districts°f^\*^\*^\*\*’ ^“'^rnpt was made to collect

lan'guage, communication, and national integration 1 33

Act to expedite the work of producing educational materials in Nepali.

Although materials in Nepali are now being produced by the govcrn-

fRent, no effective system of distribution has yet been devised. Private

book publishers, spurred by the profit motive, have been more successful

in distributing their own books but, without the educational expertise

of the government publishers, the books produced by private publishers

have tended to be inferior translations of Hindi and English books,

"’hich often reflect the political and cultural values of the latter.

Ncpali-language textbooks are now being used extensively in the

high schools of the tarai, but apparently this textbook policy has not

yet been fully implemented in the colleges of the tarai or indeed

elsewhere in Nepal. The problem is a familiar one to educators in

many developing countries. The Nepali language docs not liavc the

vocabulary needed for translation of many college-level textbooks,

particularly those in the scientific fields, because the language is a

product of a culture which has had no technological orientation until

recently.

The cfieclivcncss of the language policy in the tarai naturally

depends to a large extent on the language proficiency of the teachers.

In the absence of specific data about the proficiency of teaclicrs, only

limited assumptions can be made in this regard, on the basis ofinforma-

fion about the cultural backgrounds of teachers. The following data

'jere collected about 214 teachers in 21 high schools of 5 tarai towns;

51 percent of them were hill people, and the remaining 49 percent

plains people. Nineteen percent of all tlie teachers in the survey were

plains people born in the tarai and 30 percent of the total were plains

People bom in India. It is unlikely that any of tlte plains people horn in

India speak enough Nepali to use it for teaching purposes, beeause

most, if not all. of them were educated in India and had little contact

'’■ith Nepali until they were hired as teachers. The .same may even

lie true of many of the teachers of plains origin born in i!>e tarai.

Eetvscen 30 and 49 percent of the te.achcrs in the survey probabK

had little or no knowledge of Nepali.’

132 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL ^

print such announcements in the regional languages limits ur e

its ability to communicate with the village population o t e tar

THE INTEGRATIVE FUNCTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A nation in which all citizens speak the same language is

naturally avoids a whole set of language-oriented a

problems and the disruptive conflicts of language factiona ism.

theless, there are nations which have welded diverse cu tura g

into a stable polity despite the absence of a language that is s

by all or even the majority of the population. Nepal has an a

over many other nations in this respect. A majority of Nepal s m

tants speak Nepali either as a mother tongue or a second

Even if there were no policy to encourage the learning of

gradually more people in both the hill region and the tarai "O

learn the language through the slow process of acculturation.

ment policy seems to be based at present upon the assumppon

ability to speak Nepali is associated with first-class citizens ip

Although Nepali is a primary symbol of Nepalese nationalism, tie

two need not be viewed as inseparable. As demonstrated m o

multilanguage nations, loyalty to the nation need not be tied to

ability to speak the designated national language. Whatever ti

assumptions that underlie the government’s language policy,

government is pushing ahead \rith efforts to introduce Nepali into

the tarai schools, and it is useful to assess the outcome of this effort.

Before the government could expect Nepali to be taught in tarai

schools, it had to ensure that teachers could use the language and that

Ncpali-language teaching materials would be available to teachers

and students. The October 1957 Directive stipulated that schoo s

should start using Ncpali-language textbooks immediately. However,

few Nepali textbooks were being used at that time, even in Kathman u

N'allcy, and no system had been developed for their distribupon

outside the Valley. Most of the textbooks were written in Hindi ur

English and published in India. The National Education Commission

in its 1961 report recommended that textbooks be svritten by Nepalese

citizens and published by Nepalese publishers, and that a committee

of Nepalese educators judge the quality of the books.’ In 1964- the

government passed the Nepali Language Publication Corporation

•National Education Commission, Jtrfiort of tht Ji'ational Educalm Contmiss'”'’’

(Katlimandu, 1961), pp. 15-16. (Trans, by Rcgmi Research Project.)

language, communication, and national integration 135

p students in these institutions during the 1950s, are now enrolling

institutions across the border in India. This exodus is explained

y t e fact that they find it much easier to study in institutions that

Se t eir mother tongues as the medium of instruction. For example,

^tge numbers of students from the Maithili-speaking subregion of

e tarai enroll in northern Bihar colleges at Madhuwani, Darbhanga,

^^^ffarpur, Sitamarhi, Motihari, and Jaynagar, where Hindi is

le medium of instruction and where some subjects can be studied in

aithili. In the recently established college at Jaynagar, an Indian

I'ai head south of Mahottari district, about 50 percent of the students

come from Mahottari and adjacent tarai districts. A college established

Bhadrapur in Jhapa district has been struggling to survive because

C'lost of the college-bound students of the district are Bengali-speakers

and find it easier to study in the colleges of West Bengal.

On the other hand, the children of Nepali-speaking hill people,

mostly urbanized hill Brahmins, Chetris, and Newars in government

service and business, now find the curriculum in the tarai high schools

and colleges easier. These three groups arc predominantly middle

class in orientation and place a high value on education as a means

of obtaining economic resources and social status. Now, instead of

being sent to Kathmandu to live with relatives while obtaining their

education, children from these groups are being enrolled in local

institutions. Because of the increased numbers of Nepali-speaking

students, the use of Nepali in the classroom and in nonclassroom-

related activities is encouraged, and this in turn discourages the en-

rollment of students who speak Hindi and other plains languages.

Evidently, the education system has become an effective instrument

for Nepalization of the tarai.

134 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

the tarai and 45 percent in India. Again, Nepali, still

teachers of plains origin born in ^ no knowledge

about halfofthe college teachers probably bad httl

of Nepali." Thus, there is a much pe^centag t

among high-school teachers than among college teac people

Of fteii compared with 27 perce., or>he^

have the advanced degrees needed for teaching a

and those who are qualified prefer to necessary

reason, colleges in the tarai more than hig i;.speaking

to recruit teachers from India. The greater number ot Nepa p

teachers and the greater accessibihty of Nepah-languag

in the high schools indicate that students of plains

contact with the hill culture at the high-school level than

It is at the primary-school level that the governmen \_ ^

the greatest difficulty. This is verified by the

96 teachers in the primary schools of the eighty-one vi g

in 1967 and 1968. Of these, 37 percent were plains

whom received their education in India or the high sc oo

tarai before the new language policy was implemented. ^ to

few of them can speak Nepali. Although tliis situation wi .

change as graduates from high schools with the new Nepali curri

become primary-school teachers, it will take considerably

before enough primary-school teachers familiar with Nepa i "

available to make an impact at this level. , jg

The progress being made at the high-school and college

reinforced by the rapid increase in the percentage of students o

origin enrolled. The following data were collected from the twen

high schools and four colleges already mentioned ; 43 percent o

high-school students and 51 percent of the college students

of hill origin. The percentage of students of hill origin is muc i > ^

in both the high schools and colleges than the percentage of hi

in the tarai population, a little more than the 8 percent recor

the 1961 census of Nepal.

Because of the Ncpali-languagc curriculum, children o '^fP. ,

and busincss-castc plains people, who represented the large maj

‘The data were collected in 1966 from one college in each of the were

Illiadrapur, Biratnagar, Rajbiraj, and Janakpur, all in the eastern tarai. '

the only colleges in these towns at the time of the survey, \_ . princi-

'”Th«e data were gathered from the registration books in these

pals, headmasters, and teachers assisted with the caste identifications in

cases,

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 137

certain features of Uie ‘National Guidance’ system in Egypt and

ndonesia, the ‘Basic Democracy’ system in Pakistan, the ‘Class

rganization’ system in Egypt and Yugoslavia, and the panchayat

system in operadon in several Indian states.” ^ In the Royal Proclama-

on promulgating the new Constitution, King Mahendra inferred

t at the parliamentary system, being a foreign creation, was not as

rnuch in “step with the history and traditions of the country’’^ as

the panchayat system.

Panchayat means council or assembly. Ever since the caste system

too hold in the villages of India and Nepal, each caste group has

ormed its own panchayat or council of elders. These may include the

caste members of only one village or a number of neighboring villages.

hen problems involving the relationship between individuals from

different caste groups arise in a village, the ciders of the different

castes in that village gather in an informal body, the village panchayat,

to solve these problems. There is no evidence that any of the previous

governments in Nepal’s history attempted to systematize or formalize

these local bodies and, to the extent that the current system above the

village level is an adaptation of Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian, Egypt-

ian, and Yugoslavian systems, one wonders how much more Nepalese

It IS than the parliamentary system borrowed from the British. Never-

theless, by suggesting that the panchayat system had its roots deep

in Nepal’s history, the King was able to tap an essential source of

support in the vital stirrings of nascent Nepalese nationalism.

The panchayat system, as set out in the 1962 Constitution, appears

in diagram 1. Since the Constitution was written, zonal panchayats

have been eliminated and a few other lesser modifications in the system

have also been made. However, its basic structure remains the same.

With the King at the top, supported by two separate four-tiered

structures, one for class organizations and one for panchayats. The

government has had difficulty activating the class organizations

at all levels, but particularly below the district level, primarily because

the classes as listed in the Constitution, i.e., peasants, youth, women,

industrial laborers, ex-servicemen, and college graduates, bear little

resemblance to the real class structure of Nepalese society. The econo-

iTiic classes are based chiefly on ownership of land, and the cultural

classes are those of the caste system. To the extent that the class

p. 396.

d^^oclamationSy Speeches and Messages of M, M. f^ing Mahendra Bit Bikram Shah Deva,

''ol- II (Kathmandu, 1967), p. 149.

Chapter VIII

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE

tradition

a succession of poLiScIlTiir^ experienced

(1169--1846i an !• A ^ "monarchy under the Shah kings

I Icit'S:/"

and various political na ,• shared by the monarchy

(1959-60) and reest hr u (^^^1-59), a parliamentary system

I^’otwithstanding the v^eT""

same economic and cult,. A f forms, many of the

Nepalese politics tlirm.trt, \*^\*°'^\* determined the tenor of

the formal structure of following sections of this chapter,

along with the ‘'torrent political system will be analyzed,

behavior. This analysis factors that determine political

the extent to svhich the n framework for an assessment of

the nation’s political life of the tarai is being integrated into

AND

pakchayat system

^>ng Mahcndra, with armv

eovernment in December terminated the Nepali Congress

his direct control. This re established a government under

die basic conflict betsveen^A\*^”'^\*^ ^othoritarian resolution of

Revolution,’’! a reformist by-products of the 1950

monarch. During the next ^\*’'°‘^’^^''t:ally oriented elite and a strong

mental structure that wouM A VT" searched for a govem-

ment and yet would insure sjl^^''^\*=ments of popular govern-

•Ppotnicd a commjitcf. authoritarian resolution,

mo c 5 . - 1 - 1 ,^, these ^ '"anous political institutional

m onstitution King Mabe "i °'\*\*\*^'^ mquiries, as formalized in

countr}’ on

P 352 !\*"^” ’-■’hlwhi and L«i £. Rost /j mgenious combination of

’ (Berkeley, 1966).

136

137

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

certain features of the ‘National Guidance system in Eppt and

Indonesia, the ‘Basic Democracy’ system in Pakistan, the C ass

Organization’ system in Egypt and Yugoslavia, and the

system in operation in several Indian states. ^ In the Royal roc ama

tion promulgating the new Constitution, King Mahendra in erre

that the parliamentary' system, being a foreign creation, i\as not as

much in “step with the history and traditions of the country' as

thepanchayat sy'stem.

Panchay'at means council or assembly. Ever since the caste system

took hold in the villages of India and Nepal, each caste group as

formed its own panchay'at or council of elders. These may inclu ^

caste members of only one village or a number of neighboring w ages.

fVhen problems invoh'ing the relationship between individuals rom

different caste groups arise in a milage, the elders of the di erent

castes in that milage gather in an informal body, the village panchayat,

to solve these problems. There is no evidence that any of the previous

governments in Nepal’s history attempted to systematize or forma ize

these local bodies and, to the extent that the current systern abwe t e

milage level is an adaptation of Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian^ gyT^

ian, and Yugoslaman systems, one wonders how much more i ^a ese

it is than the parliamentary system borrowed from the British. \*

theless, by suggesting that the panchayat system had its roots eep

in Nepal’s history, the King was able to tap an essential source o

support in the vital stirrings of nascent Nepalese nationalism.

The panchayat system, as set out in the 1962 Constitution, appears

in diagram I. Since the Constitution was written, zonal pane ayats

have been eliminated and a few other lesser modifications in the system

have also been made. However, its basic structure remains the same,

'rith the King at the top, supported by two separate four ti^e

structures, one for class organizations and one for panchayats. c

goiemmcnt has had difficulty activating the class organizations

at all levels, but particularly below the district level, primari y iccause

the classes as listed in the Constitution, i.c., peasants, youth, women,

industrial laborers, ex-servicemen, and college graduates, bear little

resemblance to the real class structure of Nepalese society . ic econo

mic classes are based chiefly on ownership of land, and the cu tura

classes are those of the caste system. To the extent that the c ass

39G.

Hittnkts and .\ttssa^(s of H.

'•"I- II 'Kathnundu, 19G7j. p. 149.

M. Kin- MoherJrn ISir Mrcm Ska/, Dna,

diagram ]

NEPAL’S PANCHAYAT

system

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 139

organizations operate, they are in the hands of the economic and

cultural classes that have dominated previous Nepalese political

systems, the large landowners, most of them of the Brahmin and

Chetri castes.

The four tiers of panchayats have now been functioning since

1962. Anyone aspiring to win a seat in the National Panchayat must

win a series of four elections. He must first be elected as a representative

to the village panchayat from the ward or subdivision of his village

The average ward has about 500 people living in it. Next, he must

be elected from the 9-member village panchayat to the district

assembly. The average district, at least in the tarai region, has about

500 village panchayats and thus an assembly of about 500 representa-

tives. In the third election, the district assembly must elect him to

1 of 1 1 seats in the district panchayat. Nepal is divided for adminis

trative purposes into 14 zones and subdivided into 75 districts

each zone including 4 to 7 districts. The district-panchayat members

from each district in the zone make up the membership of each zonal

assembly and, in the fourth election, the zonal assembly elects 1 and

in some cases, 2 representatives from each district panchayat in the

zone to the National Panchayat. Under this system, the aso’

needs to win votes from only a small number of voters at

time, approximately 500 in the ward and distriet-assemblv eU \*■

assembly

9 in the village-panchayat election and 44 to 77 in the zonal

election.

The vote block one needs to control in the zonal assembly is a

much smaller than the majority of assembly members. A

down by the election commissioner, just before the zonal i ^

were held in 1967, stipulated that the nomination and second^

candidate for a National Panchayat seat must come from

district panchayat, rather than from the entire zonal assembl

bership. This means that an influential district-panchayat ^

who can gain the backing of 8 of the other 10 district

members, will be able to run unopposed in the election from^T\*^\*^^^^\*

assembly to the National Panchayat. In contrast, under th ^°tial

mentary system, a candidate for Parliament was elect P^dia-

by the voters of his district constituency. If the district ^ directly

populated, tliis meant approximately 20,000 voters. Wi'ti^\*^^ heavaly

electorate of the present system, wealth and political ley ^ small

concentrated much more effectively to determine ri,« can be

ck-c,ion. '““1“ or .1,0

regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

TABLE 12

National Panchayat Electorate

-^'alioml Panchayat

rtpramtative^

90

15

16

4

125

Electors

825"

75 ‘

5,400

6,301

total electorate

Position of electors

Members of district councils

Members of national councils

class organizations

King

Graduates

Ti

■ 5 mrmSrof 5 tTmnlT"'

'Strictly speaking, the Kine h electors.

^ elector, but he appoints 1 6 members.

a nation of approximately

•25 rcprt?sentativcs m ^•^ctorate responsible for sending

J'^blel2.Approxitnately5 Sf i—

degrees registered to vote ' i, or more advanced

1967. The number of rceisi \*" ft' ^ ^•'’^'^“^'^■oonstituency election of

considerably since then Scaduates has undoubtedly increased

dirough the only direct constituency elects 4 members

towns to the National PmcToTo?' election from the villages and

educated elite to particimt ■ opportunity for the

Itind of political safpjy nadonal politicking and serves as a

. ’cave aside, . .

no 01 political safpjy “‘‘unai politicking and serves as a

dves 13 percent of thc^’ad

5 ministers, advi,sors anH "''j f'^'^Wat membership), the King,

rmidabU :„n... \ ®'’d admmistrafnr^ (ijgir

, "'“mrs, advi,sors anri j membership), the J

formidable influence if t)„.,. '‘"’!"'\*‘''ators need to exercise tlicir

|o obtain a National Panrh^!” 950 electors in order

'Ts aiion drawn up in the Pal^ sympathetic to

riic panchayat system^'^n ocrctariat and the Central Secrc-

s "^.’‘^''''-■’^“nngeablcJoliticarnT^^^^ the King with a

' ... ‘ " P than did the parliamentary

. ’\*''Kingapooin.,i..\_

^ ‘uan uju the parliamentary

"thers. and c.an dismiss minisT National Panchayat

ets Without reference to the opinior

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 141

of that body. His ministers introduce legislation, and his veto of

legislation cannot be challenged. Under certain conditions he can

enact legislation without National Panchayat approval. Meetings

of the body are held in camera, and political alignment among members

has been at least partly circumvented by the abolition of political

parties. “By and large, therefore, the National Panchayat has more

the character of a consultative body whose opinion is solicited by the

king and his ministers than a real legislature.

With the termination of the parliamentary system, therefore,

power has shifted from the legislature to the Palace Secretariat and the

Central Secretariat, where it was located in the pre-1951 governments.

The role of the army in the events of December 1960 also demonstrated

that it is a locus of power, latent but nevertheless real and capable of

being a determining factor in Nepal’s political system.

POLITICS AT THB VILLAGE LEVEL

This discussion of village politics and the discussion of district level

politics that follows are focused on the tamt. However, patterns that

Eemine political behavior in the tara. are similar to those that

1 -T, the villages of northern India and in the hill villages

of NeirThe interaction between regionally distinctive hiH and plals

™ oSionally in unmasked compeUtion, is the distinguishing

groups, occ y .j.j.^(j,tionally, politics at all levels in

Cal Seen determined primarily by the factors oflandownership

C as s itus. In an almost totally agrarian society, health fs

llCdVythelandando^^^^^^^^^^

Landowners’ resources ^^^V^.uvity. A few politk^^^^^^^^

time needed to invest m P Newars, have their

individuals, particularly a modernize, a few j-

in family business and, as ® to invest wealth gen.

from other groups are no ^.^jj^jnercial and industrial

their agricultural resourc ^^^^^^^ership remains almost

the village level, a few large landowners ofJo

the measure of wealth, h jj^jp^rtant roles in polities

status. They occasion V P ^ in politics as lana \*

status is not usually as e advantage, and a

However, high-caste high-caste status, ^

relation exists between control and pohticaf

influence. , « w Tie Polilics of ^^'epal (Pt,

^Leo E, Rose and Margaret 1970), p. 5''

142 regiokalism and xationaj. u.vjty in nei>ai.

In cacli of the larai districts il,crc appear tt) lie a few vers- large

■ n otwicre, in u iduals wlio own ihotisamls of acres and often play

therr™ '^\*''\*\* ''•llai'c politics, hut in most villages

viltnrr '^Ti ''' oxiciisivc rcsourcTs. In many

hiitirlrw l‘yiflo\vners control no more than one or two

become considerably less. .Mthougii some of them

not evte"'lT'^''\*"V^^ rlistrici level, the influence of most does

man~ I-ftc their faihent, and perhaps

means Inv^t ° pccrieccssors, iliesc landowners of more modest

deal will ^ in (he informal councils of village elders ic

”

Particioiiion i •' ' l<andfnvncrs have transferred dicir

organiaations. I’n'^all

ofeachofthcfii ,-n ='''sc.ssmeni, the lieadmcn

the largest hnd ' '®®'~^^h‘-4dsiirs'cv were asked whether

pancray!t, ‘tr:; was a member of the village

the largest landoi '’'Pages of Jhapa district, dO percent of

Dhanula Bara

42, 20, 40 ani ’^fl percentages svere

data must be qualified ^cawn from these

owncR arc absentee

case of some wealthy l„ '"'Pages, in tarai towns or, in tlic

of them may be me ‘’"5'", 'n Kathmandu. Some

the data indicate that panchayats. Nevertheless,

"'<=ntorthevillae „ years between the cslablish-

Perhaps as many as half collected,

the villages were elen,. i, . landowners actually living in

ft is extremely diffie | '

are active and decisions^ 'fJt'dgc the extent to which the panchayats

decisions are still probalT^ ^^dc within them. The most important

An example drawn from outside tiic panchnyat framework,

tivc. In a village in tl >n Bara district may be rcprescnia-

landowner is a hill Brahm:!" e P'\*''' the biggest

year. He is a descendant of / fcsidcs in K.ithmandu most of the

advisor in tiie Palace Ma ^ '''^"'cr Raj Guru, the principal religious

‘t' was impossibi ''"'downw’s fant'')’ had

offiSis! to conccTih«e ra'^'"r"'' “fmdividual l.nnd holdings,

tacts from lax collectors and land-reform

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 143

received a small gift of tax-free land in the village area, but the Brahmin

has no interest in the politics of the village, only in collecting rent

from his tenants. The next-largest landowner is an Ahir who lives

permanently in the village. The majority of the villagers are Ahirs,

and he is the most influential man in the village. He has chosen not

to become a panchayat member, because he is suspicious of ilie hill

people who are district-level police and administrative officials,

people he might have to deal with if he were a panchayat member,

particularly if he were panchayat chairman. Therefore, he selected

the trusted Kahvar shopkeeper of the village lo be chairman of the

panchayat, and the Kalwar was subsequently elected to that post

by the Ahir majority.

Because the Kalwar is a businessman, transporting goods to his

shop from across the border, he has frequent contact with government

officials and finds it much easier than the influential Ahir, who speaks

no Nepali, to represent the village when such contacts arc necc.ssary.

But the Ahir continues to wield a decisive influence, playing a key

role in settling village disputes in counsel with other village elder.';,

only a few of whom are panchayat members. When recognized village

leaders such as this Ahir associate themselves directly with their

panchayats, the panchayats become more than a facade for village

government. It is likely that more of these leaders will be willing lo

play an active role in their panchayats if funds are put at the ditpo^ial

of the panchayats for village-development projects. This Is rioi (fl,;

place to debate the pros and cons of entrusting development funds

to the traditional elite groups, but there is no doubt that thi', v/onld

stimulate their interest in the panchayat system.

Drawing the traditional elite into the panchayat system woitl/j

activate the system, giving it substance in the eyes of the popiihiilon.

However, this in itself would cause no change in the traditional fjorjo-

economic structure of village society. To establish the groundv/ork

for any kind of fundamental change, the panchayat sy;iU:rn rrnit:l

provide those who have not heretofore shared in the dccision-roakin'/

process an opportunity to share authority rvith those who have main-

tained exclusive control over that process. Let us look at a lev/

statistics for villages in the districts of the 1967-68 field survey, S'-vr-n-

teen percent of the people living in the sample villages of

are members of various untouchable castes among the plaini IlindriS'

5 percent of all village-panchayat members in the district jn 1967

w'ere also members of these untouchable castes. Twenty-etjrfif

144 REOrONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

of the population in the sample villages of Bara arc plains Hindu

untouchables and 10 percent of all villagc-panchayat members in

1967 were included in this untouchable category. In Mahotlari-

Dhanusha, 21 percent of the sample population falls into this category

and 14 percent of all villagc-panchayat members in the same year.'

Most of these untouchables are elected to the panchayats from wards

that arc composed exclusively of these groups, wards in which they

rir> nrit VtoT.o ‘.t . .

This

,'als.

, ‘ ! -

do not have to compete with more-privileged caste groups. .

explains the mechanism that operates to place them in the panebay

Considering that members of these castes have been among the

most economically destitute and have generally been excluded from

dccision-making in their villages, the fact that a number of them now

sit together with members of other caste groups in tlic new panchayats

IS remarkable. However, it is necessary to observe that many of the

panchayats are inaedve and most of those that function arc dominated

y members of the traditional elite. Tlic Nepalese government has

not yet found a way to provide the village panchayats with a miiwi

«r«, other than that of springboard for individuals who have political

ambitions at the district and national levels.

wo positions in the village panchayat can have political and

monetary value. The first is that of representative to the district

In h” ®'^^dse from the district assembly one lias the opportunity

e e ecte to the district panchayat and then on to the National

be TP village panchayat chairman can also

nrnfif"r'^ chairman can often make considerable

orpspnf™"' 'Monetary gifts received from villagen for support in

to oecasional problems to district administrators. The need

Thpsp ® mtixenship certificate is an example of such a problem,

castes generally held by members of the landed upper

caste or trd3al'"ro inhabited exclusively by lower-

eiTlCS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

the consolidated the tarai under their control in

of whom' nw ® number of petty chieftains, some

rulers, These'^uettv nominal allegiance to the pre-Shah

'Thes d ^ ^ ehicftams were generally Rajputs, members of

“cli disiricl sumyerTh^r Chief Development Officer in

•U. s assistants helped make caste identifications.

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 145

the warrior caste of northern India, but there were also some large

landowners among the “yeoman farmer” castes — Ahirs in the eastern

tarai, Kurmis and a few middle-caste Muslims in the mid-western

tarai. Even after the Shahs and Ranas had established some semblance

of systematic administration in the tarai, the largest landowners

continued to operate as feudal lords. They gave obeisance to Kath-

mandu, but local law was their law. They maintained private “police”

forces to protect the people in their villages from bands of marauding

criminals and to enforce their will in these villages. There were conflicts

among them for control of land, conflicts that occasionally turned

into small-scale wars. The government in Kathmandu appointed

district commissioners to oversee local administration, to collect taxes

and maintain law and order. When district commissioners were

strong, the landowners lost much of their former influence, but when

district commissioners were weak or the districts were particularly

isolated from Kathmandu, the large landowners retained much of

their feudal status. Over the past two decades, the government has

improved its administration of the tarai and tightened its control

over locally powerful families. Nevertheless, administrative control

is not yet complete, and the region retains much of its character as

an open frontier, with rapid in-migration, clearing of land, and settle-

ment, along with the presence of rice barons, outlaws with local

reputations, and vigilante law.

Since 1951, politics in the tarai districts have continued to be

dominated by the largest landowners and district administrators.

Many district-level officials, especially those with a high degree of

education and a spirit of nationalism, have been striving for the past

several decades to implement development plans and to reform local

administrative procedures. In this they have often been opposed by

the traditional elite, who prefer to retain the status quo.

On the other hand, there are frequent reports of government

officials less than dedicated to the welfare of the total community.

The relationship between district administrators and large land-

owners is often less one of antagonism than cooperation to the mutual

advantage of both. Some officials allegedly receive payments from

landowners to overlook land holdings in excess of the 40-acre ceiling

established by the 1964 Land Reform Act.’ Occasionally they take

sides in factional disputes, for example, assisting a representative of

one local landlord faction to win an election over the representative

’GorWfl/)Q(ro, June 24, 1969.

146 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

of an opposing faction. According to the press, this is acconip

in various ways: intimidation of voters, stuffing of ballot boxes, p

venting candidates who are out of favor from filling the nee

preelection campaign forms, or even arresting them c ore

election.® \_ • • t other

Caste is as important a factor in district-level politics as It IS a

levels. For example, during the period preceding Nepal s only

election, the hirelings of a powerful Rajput killed two leading ” ^

in Saptari district. A few Rajput families control much of t c an

in the district, but the Ahirs make up the largest caste group t

and can be described as an aggressive, upward-mobile caste, o

Ahirs have been gaining considerable economic and political impo

tance in Saptari, challenging the position of the Rajputs. In ^

the Rajput was reported to be a local Nepali Congress leader an t

Ahirs to be organizers for the Communist Party, although mem er

of these caste groups are found in both parties, and the communists

have not been reluctant to resort to the same violent tactics aga'A

Nepali Congress workers. ,

Another factor in district-level politics in the tarai, perhaps t e

only factor not also present in the politics of the hill districts, is t a

of regionalism. The Shah kings and Rana prime ministers over t le

past several hundred years have given away large tracts of tarai forest

land as tax-free grants to family members, advisors, and retainers.

Grants of forest land, no longer tax-free, are still being made by t e

Palace Secretariat to prominent people in Kathmandu. Gradual y,

as these lands have been cleared and settled, the recipients of the Ian ,

mostly Chetris but also hill Brahmins and Newars, have become

among the most influential landowners in the region. These

powerful hill people become involved in district politics, and ncca

sionally factionalism arises along regional fines, the landowners o

hill origin opposed to the landowners of plains origin. Most of the

district administrators are hill people of the Brahmin, Chetri, an

Newar groups and there is a natural cultural ground for communica

tion and cooperation between the landowners and officials of hill origin.

Indeed, they sometimes come from the same extended families.

Although no data could be collected to document the number o

landowners of hill origin at the district level, data collected at the

village level are reflective of the district-level situation. Hill peopR

“See, for example, %oSflm<yj3n. 27, Mar. 18, l969;>^riVi IVeeilj'.Fcb. 18, 19®:

Ma Mpal, Jzn. 27, 1959; A'jw Herald, May 14, 15, 1969; Samikshc IVeelcl)', Juh' I.’’

969; Malribhumi Weeklje, Oct. 7, 1969,

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

147

represent 16 percent of the population in the sample villages of Jhapa

district; in 30 percent of the sample villages, a hill person was the

largest landowner. The corresponding statistics for Kailali are 10

percent of the sample population and 38 percent of the largest land-

owners; in Mahottari-Dhanusha, 14 percent of the sample population

and 40 percent of the largest landowners; in Kapilabastu, 9 percent

of the population and 20 percent of the largest landowners. In Bara,

the most extreme example of the disproportionate number of hill

people in the landowning category, they represent 2 percent of the

sample population and 25 percent of the largest landowners in the

sample villages.®

The following data document the predominance of hill people

in the district administration. In late 1967 and early 1968, 82 percent

of the gazetted officers posted in four districts, Jhapa, Bara, Kapila-

bastu, and Kailali, were hill people, 80 percent of all these officers

were hill Brahmins, Chetris and Newars, and 2 percent of them hill

tribals.i® Eighty-one percent of the senior-ranking police officers

posted in the same four districts were hill people during the same

period, 56 percent of them hill Brahmins, Chetris, and Newars and

25 percent hill tribals.” Eighteen percent of the gazetted officers

and 19 percent of the ranking police officers were plains people,

among them several plains Brahmins and Kayasthas, a Bhumihar,

a Rajput, an Ahir, and a Rajbanshi.

Because large landowners and government officials play key roles

in district politics, and because of the disproportionate number of

hill people among the landowners and government officials in the

tarai districts, it is clear that hill people have a decisive impact upon

politics in the tarai. As they exert their influence, they challenge the

position of the landowners of plains origin who have controlled much

of the region for generations. As pointed out previously, politics at

the village level operate only partly wthin the panchayat framework.

This is true at the district level as well. Data on participation in the

pancliayat system arc available, and they provide an insight into the

competition between representatives of the regional groups within

the tarai population. For these data, sec tables 13 through 17.

•These dai.T were collected 3s. part of the 19G7-t38 field survey.

'"Tlicse data were .assembled during interview's witli chief development ofiicers

and other administrators in each district. Time limitations did not permit the collection

of such data for Ntahottari-Dhanusha.

"These d.vta were ohiaincd during inirrviews with leading police ofiiciaU in carh

district. 'Hie ranU inchidetl in the d.ata are superintendent, 'iTUfy 'uprrintenrfem.

inspector, and -suhinsperlor.

TABLE 13

Jhapa District: Participation in Village- and District-Level Panchayat Bodies,

by Caste, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation"

S'

-c;

Vj

<y>

CO

i CTi

S:

R CD

J 2

:2

04

CTi

CO

5

a CD

.5

S CO

.5

to

CD

Th

O

id id

o

to

to

rf

o

CM CM —

o

c^i

rv

Cvf

CO cd oi

o

o

CD rh

o

CM

CO o

o

io‘ rh

o

CM

r^\* o

o

to

CD

CO

o

CO

CO CM

CM

cq CM

q

r>»‘ CM

CM

r>. CM

o

lO

to

CO rj-

o

CTi CD

to CO

CM lO

q

zz

CD\* CM\*

— «’ cd

o

to lO

o

R

S

CM

CM

CM CO

to

CO

q

•S

CD

Oi

^ CM

CD

cd

o

§

lO

to

tJ'

o

3

in (N CO m to

£4 t}«\* CO c4 D) to

Data not available

o

o

— ^ O — — CO CD

-t\* CV CD CO CD CO\*

CO

lO

n

g-cd

’"51^

c ^

— CTJ

u

V ^

i|

o S

ri

E ^

k

> 5

V

Q C

''™'" die records of the Chief

TABLE 15

Bara District: I’ariicipalion in Village- anti District-Level Panchayat Bodies,

by Ca.sle, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation'’

C'l CO CO

CO CO\* ^ ^

— \* CO CO

CO CO IT)

r^‘ f>.’ cj.'

c^l iT)

CO\* cv

— ‘ h’s

O

d

o

o

d

o

lO Ci Ci CO

oi ^

— »-«(£> —I CO

lO o

CD d

o

Data not available

to

tq

CO

CO

CO

o

r-^

d

d

cd

d

to

CN

CO

o

Oi

C)

CO

CO

cq

O

cd

cd

d

cd

d

■rf\*

d

to

o-

o

Data not available

f^coto\*rj>co«^co r^o

•i' r>»’ CO irj d d

CO o

to f>- -i\* iq

d CO irj CO

— Oi

o

d

o

‘■Data collected ftom the records of the Chief Developmcrtt Officer in Bara district

TABLE 16

pilahastu District; Participation in Village- and District-Level Panchayat Bodies,

by Caste, Tribal, and Regional Affiliation"

c

Vi

a

Vi

S

Ss

I

a

Vi

-Ci

c

s:

Vi

S

\*§

ID

S

-a

I o

Vi C' .£

^ v>

c: ^

"5

m

04

o r-

lO «D

CN CD

CO to

in

m

q

CD

<o

05

iri

in

05

d

CO

m

o

Oi ^

to

05

q

04

'tt'

o

to

CO

cd

r>-’

04

CD

CD\*

d

C7i I

<o

CO

o

«M

lO

04

c-

q

q

CO

q

CD

cd

05

oi

05

d

d

G)

CO

CO

o

CO

CO

<£>

q

\_

04

q

to

m\*

cd

iri

d

05

•—

in

r-m

CO

o

CV

to

p

ri'

05

o

CO

cd

cd

iri

to

05

d

Gi

to

G)

o

evi

q

Cs.

q q

04

o

tri

in

05

05

c4

04

d

Gi

m

—

05

o

Data not available

to lO o

cc ’ ID CO ID

irj —

p to O

to — '

CTi

O

o

tr \*0 C c

js s ^ ^ a u

c.~ t ^

^ -r P .= ^ ^ > 'Z

Z S SC c c —

S ■£ E £ ■•! s J ■§ o I

=: ^

^Data collected from the records of the Chief Development Officer in Kapilabastu district.

Data collected from field survey of nineteen villages in Kapilabastu district, 1967-68.

TABLE 17

c

CQ

C

U 2

> O

u \*2

J .5

.y @

h <

S g

•c o

C ’&

fT CJ

i

JS c

— p:

^ 1 =

.S -a

<T

CL sr

'p^ r:

M U

I s

I-

^ <N

§ O

C ^

52

Ci

£

g CM

s 2>

C ‘i

; V .S

m

lO

lO m

O

rt\*

lO lO

d

ICJ

lO

■si- ^

o

to

m

lO to

o

id id

d

to

to

rh

o

•o

to

lO lO

o

d

ai

o o

d

lO

try

o

to

try

to to

o

cK

ci

6 d

d

»o

lO

■ti\* -tf-

o

th

to to

q

CM

CM

r-H

d

»o

to

rj«

o

C)

M ..~

o

cd CO

d

t£

to

CO CO

o

a CM

« CM

to « to

lO o

''j'\* ‘

«0

cd cd d

— d

f- o\*

o

CO CO

(0 CO

CO

lO lO

^ o

to

•d

d — ’

CM d

CO CO

o

to

to

CM

CO r\*

o

ci

CO d

d

CO

o

“Inala colkcicd from ihc records of the Chief Development Officer in Kattali district.

Data coUecicd from field survey of eight villages in Katlali district, 1967-68.

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 153

Analysis of these tables should be prefaced with a word of caution.

The village sample of population is included in each table to give

the reader a base for comjparison of other data in the table. It must

be remembered that the small sample results in some minor distortions

of the real village population of these districts.\*^

Looking at the tables, one is struck by the continually larger per-

centage of positions in panchayat bodies that the hill people obtain

as they move up the panchayat ladder. In all five districts, hill people

constitute a larger percentage of village-panchayat members than

percentage of villagers and a larger percentage of village-panchayat

chairmen than panchayat members. This is most pronounced in

Kailali, where in 1967 hill people were 10 percent of the village sample,

15 percent of village-panchayat members, and 62 percent of panchayat

chairmen.

In the districts of Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara and Jhapa in 1967,

the percentage of hill people serving as village representatives to

district assemblies was even higher than their percentage of village-

panchayat chairmen. The increase was particularly high in Jhapa,

Hill people represented 16 percent of the village sample, 35 percent

of village-panchayat members, 47 percent of panchayat chairmen,

and 60 percent of representatives to the district assembly.

Moving a rung higher up the panchayat ladder from the district

assembly to the district panchayat, one again finds a continually

larger percentage of hill people represented in three of the five districts,

Mahottari-Dhanusha, Bara, and Kapilabastu. In 1967, the largest

percentage increase was in Mahottari-Dhanusha, from 22 percent

of the district-assembly membership to 35 percent of the district-

panchayat membership. In both Jhapa and Kailali, the hill people

suffered five percentage-point declines while moving up this rung of

tlie pancliayat ladder. It is interesting that the decline in representa-

tion took place in the two districts tliat have majorities oftribal people

This is an exception to the general pattern of political behavior evident

in the tables, as tlie plains tribals usually encounter considerable

difficulty attempting to assert themselves in the face of competin’of,

from high-caste groups.

Among both the I)i!l and plains people, the upper castes Predominate

in representation over tlie lower-caste and tribal people. Tfjjj

'=Tlic dinortiom c.in be idcniificd in mblc •} of di. 1, wl.crc ^

dau nre compared.

154 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

be illustrated by using caste data not included in the tables.'^ As

already mentioned, the untouchable castes among the plains people

have been able to find some representation in the village panchayats,

although they seldom reach a higher rung on the pancliayat ladder.

For example, in Kapilabaslu district, Chamars, an untouchable

caste found throughout India and the tarai, were 8 percent of the

village sample and in 1967, they were able to obtain 1 percent of the

village-panchayat seats in the district.’'\* However, no Chamar has

reached a district-level body in Kapilabaslu, and this has been the

pattern experienced by most other low-caste groups. There are some

exceptions, particularly evident in Mahottari-Dhanusha, where

Sudis, Telis, and Dhanuks, all untouchables, have been elected to

the district panchayat. Some of the untouchables, particularly the

Sudis and Telis, have turned from their traditional caste occupations

and have become wealthy businessmen. The Sudis are a remarkable

example of successful upward mobility. Although they constituted

only 2 percent of the village sample in Mahottari-Dhanusha, 3 of the

23 distric^panchayat members in 1967 were Sudis. Nevertheless,

even in this district, among the plains people. Brahmins and Rajput\*

continued to win election to panchayat bodies out of all proportion

to their numbers in the population.

The hill Brahmins, Chetris, and Newars continue to prevail over

the lower-caste and tribal people of hill origin. Among the hill people

w 0 were elected to the district panchayats of the five selected tarai

distncK in 1962 and 1967, only two, a wealthy Thakali merchant

Tom the town of Taulihawa in Kapilabaslu district in 1962, and a

mern er o the prominent Giri family of Mahottari-Dhanusha in

u/, were not members of these three groups. The Giris belong to

sma upper-caste group of Sanyasis among the hill people. Despite

sv!tl"7 ' theThakali, politics within the panchayat

^ o ows closely the pattern of traditional political behavior,

anrl rl!« tegion as in the tarai. A 1967 surt'ey of village

Panctia leadership in the eastern hills published by the

Panchayat Mmtstry admits this. Authors of the sunJy state:

anv panchayat system] does not seem to have made

lcadershm!'''^na«er™-\*^7“"‘'"‘ composition of the tradirional

j c atter, in fact, reflects strongly the socioeconomic

wtre too wtensive'Irbe^IncSd hcr?^^"^

One Chamar was even elected chairman ofa milage panchayat in 1962 .

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

155

realities of our rural setting and is basically geared to the traditional

power-structure and relationship of production. This is manifested

in greater magnitude in the case of village Panchayat Chairmen. In a

country where the per capita income is Rs. 419, the fact that a pre-

dominantly large section of our respondents registered their annual

income to be falling within the brackets of Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,999 and

Rs. 5,000 and above, amply illustrated this point. Besides, most of

them happened to be the descendants or relatives of old mukhiyas,

talukadars and jimmawals, Le., the traditional offices of local power.

An additional observation about the data in the tables needs to

be made here. Despite the disproportionate representation of hill

people at each panchayat level in both 1962 and 1967, except in

Mahottari-Dhanusha, their representation was less in 1967 than it

was in 1962. In Kapilabastu, for example, the percentage of hill

people in the district panchayat dropped from 46 percent in 1962

to 25 percent in 1967. In Bara it dropped from 27 percent to 18 percent

over the same period. This can be explained at least in part by the

reaction among politically active plains people to tlie royal coup of

I960. A great many of these people had committed themselves to

the Nepali Congress or other political parties during the 1950s. They

tended to be confused and alienated by the abrupt termination of

the party system and refused to participate in the first panchayat

elections in 1962. This afforded many hill people who had not invested

so heavily in the party system an opportunity to participate in local

politics.

Some leaders among the plains people were still refusing to become

involved in the panchayat system in 1967. However, it appears from

the data that many had set their suspicions aside by then and were

taking their places in the system, in the process crowding out of office

some of the less influential hill people. Comparable data from a later

election would be needed for verification. If this is a continuing trend,

it would indicate that the new political system is finding acceptance

in the tarai, and this would be an important step in the integration

process, drawing more of the plains people into the nationa pohtica

sphere. On the other hand, it would become more d.fficu t for lull

people to maintain their hold on elective offices m the villages and

districts of the tarai, and this w'ould impede the Nepalization process.

-Pashupali sham.licr. nnd Mohammad Alohsin, .1 Report - ihe Pa, Urn of

Emerging Lderrhip in Panehayats (Kathmandu, 196/). p. 32.

156

regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

POLITICS AT THE ZONAL LEVEL

We have seen how the percentage of elected officials among hill people

increases rom the village to the district level of the panchayat system,

ins trend continues at the national level. In 1967, eight National

anc ayat representatives were elected from the five tarai districts

elected from the densely populated

xatottan-Dhannsha district, and one from each of the other four,

one ^ x'sppescntatives, five were hill people : three hill Brahmins,

neooi Sanyasi (Giri). The other three were plains

iltlio ' Brahmin, one Rajput, and one Marwari. Thus,

I account for not more than 10 percent of the

ofNatin°"l P ^ ‘^onxBiucd, in 1967 they held 63 percent

of Na lonal Panchayat scats from these districts.

a maiorrM!" ^r support for candidates of hill origin,

to the Natin°") p"" ^ f in the percentage of hill people elected

ats ril her percentage in the dLct pancha-

system at the zZl level^'

examine the^ wav of the zonal units, it is necessary to

of those who estabhsh'Id'th

appointed a committee^ to Mahendra

^'so appointed a committee Panchayat Constitution, he

units, to make tLo • ^’^oorganize the country’s administrative

the panchayat

report, emDhasi 7 Pri ^ ConsDtution. The committee, in its final

the hill region could '"'egration. It stressed the fact that

of the tarai, and poimed resources

eommunicaiion systcm,s to f oasic need for transportation and

also touched on the n hl^ together. The committee

develop a sense of unitvTm^™ of political integration, the need to

The Demarcation Comm^f regions.

creating zonal units M. • successful for the most part in

■'In 19G2 M . tarai districts. Of

>n S62, Mahottari wa. d;„-j , .

distri'cT '\*• "\* to compare 'c'” '""j ‘‘'''"'"'■Vrative units (Mahottari and

fata obtaineTlbrThe ore “'i\* ^“gle pre-1962 Mahottari

’’NeparM\*\*-'' ""'t' districts since then, the two new di.stricl5

ProjcciT" ’"'""'"‘"'t (Kathmandr^Sn Dmlopmtnl Districts anil

’ h pp. 4-5. (Trans, by Regmi Research

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

157

the fourteen zones created, the two far-western zones and the four

easternmost zones actually run from the Tibetan border to the Indian

border. Four zones, although not stretching the full width of the

country, include both tarai and hill districts. In only four zones was

the committee unable to follow through with its plan for regional

integration.

The Demarcation Committee envisaged the creation of zonal

panchayats with extensive administrative powers over the district

units within the zones. However, the 1962 Constitution did not specify

the functions to be invested in the panchayats at the zonal, district,

or village levels. Although the 1963 Zonal Panchayat Act delegated

numerous functions to zonal bodies, by the time the Act was amended

in 1964, the concept of the zonal panchayat s functions had undergone

radical change. The amended Act assigned only two basic functions

to the zonal bodies. The first is a publicity function, to create national

unity by encouraging the use of the Nepali language and by encourag-

ing the adoption of the national “culture and character The

second function is political, to elect representatives to the National

Panchayat, and is accomplished in zonal assemblies that include the

district-panchayat members from each of the districts in the zone.

These bodies elect one or, in some cases, two members from each

district panchayat to the National Panchayat.

Whatever the intent, the effect of the elective function of the zonal

assemblies is to put the election of National Panchayat representatives

from tarai districts into the hands of hill people, because hill people

represent the majority of assembly members in all but one zone. In

six of the nine zones that include tarai districts one or two tarai districts

are grouped with three or four hill districts. Because there is an equal

number of district-panchayat members for each district the repre-

sentatives from hill districts form a majority ^ ^ ^ zones.

In two other zones, the tarai districts are grouped together with equal

numbers of hill districts but, as pointed out ,n the last section of this

chapter, some hill people are also elected to the tarai district panchayats

and! therefore, hill people also "iblies of

these two zones. In only one Bara

district, is the number of tarai districts grea an the number of

ee Zonal Panchayat Ac.

lAJan. 16. >963. and Zonal Janch y J Gazelle,

»flV, Extraordinary Issue No.

158 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

hill districts, and the people of plains origin are therefore probably

a majority of the Narayani Zonal Assembly.

Seventy-five percent of the Kapilabastu District Panchayat members

were plains people in 1967, but they were a minority in the Lumbini

Zonal Assembly. This explains at least in part the election of a hill

Brahmin, a very large landowner with Palace connections, as the

Kapilabastu representative to the National Panchayat in that year.

In Mahottari-Dhanusha, 65 percent of the panchayat members-"

were plains people, and yet they represented a minority in the Janakpur

Zonal Assembly, In 1967, two of the four National Panchayat re-

presentadves from Mahottari-Dhanusha elected by this zonal assembly

were hill people. In 1965, a Marwari, a member of the important

■ usiness caste among the plains people, was elected from the Narayani

Zonal Assembly to represent Bara district. This is the one zone in

w ic the plains people appear to represent a majority of the zonal-

assembly membership, and this is likely to be a key factor in the

election of this Marwari,

r ^hat zonal organizations are fulfilling their

I unctioris, so that the zones arc left with their elective function

vnWo iiauguration of the panchayat system, a number of

L raised in criticism of this function. Suggestions have

assemKii ^ ^ assemblies be abolished and that the district

renre-(> elect their own National Panchayat

ele^ctinr ^ method of a more direct way of

bv the "void the disadvantage experienced

assemhltr”^ ^,°"®\*’®“embly elections. Because the zonal

could ahni;!l!Tt! of several years, the government

to the political process. The

prefers the m \*'=«nis to indicate that the government

?ep e«roV I ‘he checks it maintains on the

presentatron of plar„s people at the national level.

^ ^ POLITICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

at the national level

'•WhMC i. ' Other levels. Although control of land is

hethcr the plains people are In r r

people elected from the three j • ”’ '"aj°rity depends upon the number of

™rie. The ihner-tarat distriere riisuicts and the two inner-tarai districts of

■ Actually there are separate populated by Tharus.

reasons explained in footnLifiJfi"-!^®'® Mahottari and Dhanusha, but for

single unit, ^ this chapter, the two districts are being studied as a

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

159

generally the more important of the two, high-caste status has always

been a prerequisite for leadership in traditional Hindu society and,

despite the challenge of modernization to such traditional Hindu

axioms, it remains an important advantage. Two additional deter-

minants of success in national politics have gained importance since

the 1951 revolution. The first is identification with the hill culture.

Since 1951, groups that lack the cultural characteristics of the hill

people have been introduced into national politics through the party

system. With the arrival in Kathmandu of plains people seeking

political influence, the distinction between the national hill culture

and the regional plains culture took on a significance it had not had

before.

The other determinant that became important after 1951 is

education. Although the Brahmins have pursued their Sanskrit

education in Kathmandu for countless generations, only the termina-

tion of Rana rule, with its opposition to modern education, opened

the educational floodgates. Since then, there has been a rapid growth

in the number of schools and colleges in Nepal and in the number of

Nepalis who have received B.A.’s and other advanced degrees.

Education is becoming an increasingly important qualification for

leadership. It provides an aspiring Nepalese politician with ability

to deal more adequately with the complex problems faced by his

village and his nation in the modern world. Caste is a traditional

status symbol, and education has become a modern one. B.A. and

M.A. designations are in frequent use as suffixes to names. Occasional

ly, as a gesture of repudiating the traditional social structure,

individuals will substitute these degree suffixes for last names that

disclose caste identification. Thus, education not only enables many

young Nepalis to compete in economic and political spheres, even in

the absence of more traditional qualifications, but it also signifies the

the declining importance of caste, at least among the urbanized elite.

The changing importance of these two factors makes it necessary to

prefaee observations about the dynamics of national politics with a

word of caution. The following observations are tentative and

allowances need to be made for exceptions and for corrections based

on further investigation. nr r

Only group., the hill Bnrhmin. and Cl.o.™, po„«. all four o

the prereouSte. for .ucce..ful pardepaoon ,n Nepale.e n.nonal

... " , r rm.v resources high-castc status, identification

pohticsicontro of economic resources, us-

. , . ulcrh level of educational attainment,

with the hill culture, and a high levei o

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION ' 161

of town panchayats in the tarai. In 1967, 11 Neware represented hill

districts in the National Panchayat and 2 represented tarai districts,

i e\vars share wdth Brahmins a keen awareness of the benefits education

can provide. Of the 5,500 Nepalis who registered as voters in the 1967

graduate constituency election,®^ 36 percent were hill Brahmins and

28 percent Newars. Only 12 percent were Chetris.®'\*

The historical events that have shaped Nepalese society since

Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the Valley from Newar kings have

created considerable rivalry between the hill Brahmins and Newars.

Gradually since the late eighteenth century the Shah kings and later

the Rana prime ministers, all Chetris, began appointing Newars to

positions previously held by Brahmins, hrst chiefly clerical positions

but later more senior administrative positions. Although the Chetris

have continued to rule, to dominate the officer corps of the army, and

to hold many of the highest administrative positions, the Brahmins

and Newars have competed for other positions. The result has been

the emergence of an occasionally intense rivalry between Newar and

Brahmin factions in the Central Secretariat, with the Chetris holding

the balance. Since the revolution, Tribhuvan University and the

various colleges associated with it have become foci for factionalism,

because education has become a critical factor in upward mobility

for both Brahmins and Newars. The majority of faculty members

and students are drawn from these two groups. In academic polidcs,

although Brahmin-Newar coalitions form occasionally, the competi-

tion for important administrative and departmental posts and even

for student-government offices is often shaped by this rivalry'.

Some Newars feel that Brahmins have used the caste system to

limit upward mobility among non-Brahmins. On the other hand,

some Brahmins vieiv the upward movement of Newars as evidence

that the traditional social order is declining. Indeed, it appears that

modernization has adversely affected the position of some of the more

traditional Brahmins who live in urban settings. For example, the Raj

\*^OnIy those with B.A.’s, tlic traditional Shastri degree equivalents, or more ad-

vanced degrees qualify as graduates.

"’This caste breakdown was made from Nepal, Election Commission. Snalak

Pralinidhilxi'a-Rashlrira Panthaya! h Xiniachm ko Maladala A'amnrnU [Voten List for the

iS’ational Panchayat Election: The Graduate Constituencyl. (Kathmandu, 1967.)

Informed observers estimate that approximately IO.O(X) Nepalis were eligible to vote

in this election, but only about h.alfof them registered. There were 868 caste Hindus

of plains origin and Muslims registered. .Another 329 voters could not be identified

by caste, although many of them appear to be of plains origin.

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION ' 161

of town panchayats in the tarai. In 1967, 11 Newars represented hill

districts in the National Panchayat and 2 represented tarai districts.

Newars share with Brahmins a keen awareness of the benefits education

can provide. Of the 5,500 Nepalis who registered as voters in the 1967

graduate constituency election,®^ 36 percent were hill Brahmins and

28 percent Newars. Only 12 percent were Chetris.^^

The historical events that have shaped Nepalese society since

Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered the Valley from Newar kings have

created considerable rivalry between the hill Brahmins and Newars.

Gradually since the late eighteenth century the Shah kings and later

the Rana prime ministers, all Ghetris, began appointing Newars to

positions previously held by Brahmins, first chiefly clerical positions

but later more senior administrative positions. Although the Ghetris

have continued to rule, to dominate the officer corps of the army, and

to hold many of the highest administrative positions, the Brahmins

and Newars have competed for other positions. The result has been

the emergence of an occasionally intense rivalry between Newar and

Brahmin factions in the Central Secretariat, with the Ghetris holding

the balance. Since the revolution, Tribhuvan University and the

various colleges associated with it have become foci for factionalism,

because education has become a critical factor in upward mobility

for both Brahmins and Newars. The majority of faculty members

and students are drawn from these two groups. In academic politics,

although Brahmin-Newar coalitions form occasionally, the competi-

tion for important administrative and departmental posts and even

for student-government offices is often shaped by this rivalry.

Some Newars feel that Brahmins have used the caste system to

lirnit upward mobility among non-Brahmins. On the other hand,

some Brahmins view the upward movement of Newars as evidence

that the traditional social order is declining. Indeed, it appears that

toodernization has adversely affected the position of some of the more

traditional Brahmins who live in urban settings. For c.vample, the Raj

“Only those with B.A.’s, the traditional Shastri degree equivalcnl.s, or more ad-

vaticcd degrees qualify as graduates.

='This caste breakdown was made from Nepal, Election Commission, Snalak

^'rXinidhilwa.Rasktriya Panrhayat ko Nirumchm ko Mtttndata Xmmati [Voters List lor the

National Panchaya't Election; The Graduate Consliuiency]. (Kathmandu, 1967.)

"formed observers estimate that approximately 10,000 Nepalis "fm c igi i c to \ oic

■n this election, but only about half of them registered. There wen- 868 caste I im us

of plains origin and Muslims registered. Another 329 voters coidtl not be identified

fty caste, although many of them appear to be of plains origin.

160 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

Ever since Prithvi Narayan Shah defeated the Newar kings of

Kathmandu Valley in 1769) the Ghetris have held the reins of power

in the Palace and the army. Prithvi Narayan Shah brought Brahmin

clerks, advisors, and priests with him to Kathmandu. Together, the

Ghetris and the Brahmins have controlled the most important govern-

ment positions since then.

Only one group, the Newars, falls into the next category, those

who possess three of the four prerequisites mentioned above: control

of economic resources, identification with the hill culture, and educa-

tion. The Newars have evolved their own unique social system, a

complex, dual-caste system with one set of castes for the Hindu half

of the Newar population and another set for the Buddhist half.®\*

The Newars who stand high within their own caste system are by no

means regarded as outcastes by orthodox Hindus. However, in pre-

revolution Nepalese society, individuals’ relationships were deter-

mined more completely by the ascriptivc characteristics of the caste

system than is true today, and the Newars found their cultural dilferen-

ces a handicap in competing with the Brahmins and Ghetris.

Kathmandu Valley has been the center of the rich Newar culture

from time immemorial. The Newars’ proximity to the seat of power is

an important reason why, despite their cultural differences, they

have gradually become the third group in the ruling coalition. Yet,

despite their proximity to the Chetri rulers and Brahmin advisors,

tiic Newars would not be as important today if it were not for the

Combination of characteristics they exhibit as a group: cultural

adaptability, artistic and technical skills, commercial acumen, and

a igi of education. These characteristics have made it possible

1 1 C i evars to seize more readily than other groups the opportu-

1 ^ modernization. For centuries, the Newars have

p ayed key roles m the commercial and artistic life of Tibet as well as

man u alley. Over the past several hundred years, they have

Kathmandu Valley into the hills," where they

1 ■ ^ ^y^\*^\*\*\*? centers and have become the most important

Inve"^ immunity throughout the hill region. More recently, they

Oivners 'r where they are now businessmen, land-

nets, and political leaders. Newars have been elected to a number

‘■Stida'i ' v'"’ (Bombay, 1965), ch. 6, and Colin RossoO

cd bvc\ I- in and ICirt in jXtpal, Mm nnd

d ... cd, b) C, voj Iuw.Ha,mcndorf (New York, 1966), pp. 68 IT.

•Dor Bahadur Biua, The Veopk afK,'p,d

(Kathmandu, 1967), pp. 16-11

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION ’ 161

of town panchayats in the tarai. In 1967, 11 Newars represented hill

istricts in the National Panchayat and 2 represented tarai districts,

i ewars share with Brahmins a keen awareness of the benefits education

can provide. Of the 5,500 Nepalis who registered as voters in the 1967

gra uate constituency election,^^ 36 percent were hill Brahmins and

28 percent Newars. Only 12 percent were Chetris.2->

The historical events that have shaped Nepalese society since

rithvi Narayan Shah conquered the Valley from Newar kings have

^eated considerable rivalry between the hill Brahmins and Newars.

tadually since the late eighteenth century the Shah kings and later

1 e Rana prime ministers, all Chetris, began appointing Newars to

positions previously held by Brahmins, first chiefly clerical positions

ut later more senior administrative positions. Although the Chetris

ave continued to rule, to dominate the officer corps of the army, and

to hold many of the highest administrative positions, the Brahmins

and Newars have competed for other positions. The result has been

t e emergence of an occasionally intense rivalry between Newar and

tahmin factions in the Central Secretariat, with the Chetris holding

tie balance. Since the revolution, Tribhuvan University and the

various colleges associated with it have become foci for factionalism,

ecause education has become a critical factor in upward mobility

nt both Brahmins and Newars. The majority of faculty members

and students are drawn from these two groups. In academic politics,

a though Brahmin-Newar coalitions form occasionally, the competi-

|>on for important administrative and departmental posts and even

oc student-government offices is often shaped by this rivalry.

Some Newars feel that Brahmins have used the caste system to

’tuit upward mobility among non-Brahmins. On the other hand,

some Brahmins view the upward movement of Newars as evidence

t ut the traditional social order is declining. Indeed, it appears that

uiodernization has adversely affected the position of some of the more

traditional Brahmins who live in urban settings. For example, the Raj

"Ul' B.A.’s, the traditional Shastri degree equivalents, or more ad-

2 )^, .^^^rees qualify as graduates,

p . . caste breakdown was made from Nepal, Election Commission, Snalak

Nat\*”\* Panchayat ko Kirwacban ko Matadala J'famavali [Voters List for the

tonal Panchayat Election: The Graduate Constituency]. (Kathmandu, 1967.)

in “b^ervers estimate that approximately 10,000 Nepalis were eligible to vote

of ^ only about half of them registered. There were 868 caste Hindus

by and Muslims registered. Another 329 voters could not be identified

C3stc, although many of them appear to be of plains origin.

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION

fication with the hill culture. This category includes the plains Brah-

mins, Bhumihars, Rajputs, Kayasthas, and some of the business-

oriented groups such as the Marvvaris. A few Muslims would also

find their place in this category. An occasional individual from groups

in this category attains prominence and is appointed to a judgeship

or a ministerial post. Lack ofidentification with the hill culture never-

theless remains a formidable barrier to their successful participation

in national politics and, in proportion to their numbers in the total

population, they are poorly represented in Kathmandu.

The last category includes the low-caste Hindus of plains origin,

most Muslim groups, and the plains tribals such as the Tharus,

Rajbanshis, Tajpurias, Mechis, and Gangais. These groups lac a

four of the prerequisites for participation in national politics an

frequently find themselves excluded even from local politics. A few

individuals from the Tharu, Rajbanshi, and Tajpuria tribes have been

able to retain control of large ancestral land holdings and have

become key figures in local politics. Indeed, several Tharus attaine

national recognition during the period of party politics. Nevert e ess,

these groups carry with them the largest economic and cultural

deficits as they attempt to move into the sphere of national politics.

The foregoing observations about advantaged and disadvantage

groups in national politics can be substantiated by reference to ata

available on communal representation in politically important

national bodies. A comparison of membership in two elecUve bodies,

the 1959 Parliament and the 1967 National Panchayat, is instructive

As table 18 indicates, there was an increase in the representaUon o

hill people from 82 percent in the Parliament to 90 percent in the

National Panchayat and a corresponding decrease for plains people

from 18 to 10 percent.

Among the hill people, the Ghetris and Newars game most in

representation from the change in governments. The Chetns increase

their numbers by 10 percent and the Newars by over 7 per«nt, or

the Newars this meant an increase of almost three o . e i

Brahmin group was the one group in the ruling coalition to su

a decline in representation. It is axiomatic that one o t e t

groups will experience a decline in influence when the other two

increase their strength. This is particularly the case with regard

to the Brahmin-Newar equation. Until recently, most Chetns have

put less emphasis on education than have the Brahmins. It appears

now, however, that the Chetns are less dependent on the Brahmins,

!64 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

TABLE 18

Regional and Communal Groups within the 1959 Parliament

and the 1967 National Panchayat''

Regional and commmal

groupings of represenialiaes

1959 Parliament

J{o. of reps. Percent of

total

1969 .iVat. Panckajat

M. of reps. Percent of

total

Hill Brahmins

31

28.4

30

24.0

Chetris

30

27.5

47

37.6

Newars

5

4.6

15

12.0

Low-caste hill people

1

.9

1

.8

Hill tribals

00

20.2

19

15.2

Hill people, subtotal

89

81.7

112

89,6

Caste Hindus and Muslims

from the plains

13

11.9

n

8.8

Plains tribals

7

6,4

0

1.6

Plains people, subtotal

20

18.4

13

10.4

Total of all representatives

109

100.0

125

100.0

Caste identifications made from lists of members of 1959 Parliament and 19^7

National Panchayat.

their traditional advisors. The Ghetris are beginning to send their

sons for advanced education, and these young men are taking a more

active role in politics at all levels.

tn

Low-caste hill people were represented by only a single individual

both the Parliament and the 1967 National Panchayat. The hill-

tribal people suffered a 5-percent decline in representation, the largest

0 any category under discussion. The caste Hindus of plains origin

^loslims experienced a 2-percent decline in representation,

trib 1 \* tribals declined in the same proportions as the hill

esptte the government s current administrative-decentralization

e orts, po ittca leaders at the village and district levels have been

una e to exert as much influence in Kathmandu since the intro-

uc ion 0 t le current indirect-election system as they were able

to exert dunng the brief direct-election period, The current Palace-

oriented system has returned the poUtical advantage to those who

POLITICS IN' THE NEPALESE TRADITION

live closest to the source of power in Kathmandu. Although

data in the table substantiate the fact that nonestablishment groups

now have more difficulty entering the national politica

the change in the political system is only one of the factors t at m i i

more proportional representation. Another is the head start vv

might be called political momentum— that Nepalese history as

given to the groups in the ruling coalition, providing t em w

advantages in any polidcal system that might evolve.

Since the National Panchayat is in reality no more t an a co

tative body, it is perhaps more profitable to look at '

of various groups in national institutions that are ^ ^ ^

of power in the present system: the Palace, the Centra ecre ,

and the army. In 1960 the primary center of power shi ^

Parliament to the Palace. In the Palace, the Chetns an ^ '

are the two key groups. The King is a Chetri, ^ .

King Mahendra’s press secretary, who was a ra . m

secretaries, including nine “personal” secretaries, i ree P

secretaries, four “private” secretaries, and his chie pnva ^

were Newars. There is evidence that King Biren ra, as e

own Palace Secretariat, may change its composition anc V |

group of younger and less traditional advisors 5°”^ ' ^ly

bacCouL, For h.«

Hi les vulncrabla to conspiracy increased

than Brahmin secretaries. During the ’ r . adminis-

importance of the Palace Secretanat as King inevitably

trative and policy-making body, his Newar

acquired increased influence. Because the mg ' • (igtermined to

source ofpower in Nepal today, the influence o

a large extent by their ability to gam acce

Support. King Mahendra’s secretaries were TLpvrontrolled

he viewed much of the world beyond the Palace wa Is. Y

much of the information that reached him f ;^7;"^inerr in

cases who obtained access to him. If politica - e

Nepal follow those of other countries, it is logical to as

members, friends, and associates the

access to the King easier than have many ^ role in the

position of the Newars as a group has been en

Palace administration. . resoonsible

The Central Secretariat is a secondary center o

for the implementation of governmental decisi

166 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

of the crucial decision-making takes place in the Palace, a great

many less important decisions are made in the Central Secretariat,

t IS a much larger, more loosely organized and diverse body than

e a ace Secretariat and, among the administrators working there,

at east a ew are representatives of groups traditionally unrepresented

centers of power. In table 19, data from

M and 1950 are compared with data for 1965. It is impossible to

judge how closely the individuals included in the 1854 and 1950

ata are comparable in their administrative functions to the Central

^ecretanat administrators. For this reason, any conclusion drawn

f t t, ^ ^^Rtative, A further limitation of these data results from the

P“^'61e to obtain a caste breakdown that included

nffii ^ ^tween hill and plains Brahmins or between members

called (Ghetris) and plains origin (generally

biiitv Nevertheless, there is some compara-

y, nd the historical perspective provided by the table is interest-

T.mElQ

Regional and communal

groupings

M.

1854“

Percent

M.

1950\*

Percent

1965'

No.

percent

Hill and plains Brahmins

31

22

40.3

28.6

19

5

38.0

10.0

40.0

30.6

Ghetris and Rajputs

Newars

68

52

Hill tribals

22

28.6

26

52.0

34

20.0

Low-caste

9

5.3

hill people

.6

Caste Hindus (except

1

Rajputs and Brahmins),

Muslims from plains

p

2.6

2.9

,6

Plains tribals

5

1

Total

77

100.0

50

100.0

170

100.0

law Book Committee, Sineha Darha^ \*^54. Reprinted by the

"Lisr of signatories to the 195^^1

India. See K. B. Devkota JYei>aI &a King Tribhuvan’s escape to

'The no individnnls >»9), pp. 29^33.

from the following services- Adminttr ^ b and Glass II gazetted officers

Engineering, Forestry, General Hethr^ c'’ Agriculture. Education,

nerai, Health, Panchayat. and Land Reform.

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 1

Aside from the first three groups listed in the table, almost no

others were represented in the national administration before the

revolution. A few individuals from other groups were brought into

lower administrative positions during the 1950s and 1960s. Althoug

1967 data are not included in the table, these data indicate a signi

ficant increase of nonestablishment groups over 1965. n ,

there were ten hill trihals and eight middle- and low-caste in us

of plains origin serving as land-reform officers in the upper ran

the administration.'\* The significant increase in the hiring o t ese

groups occurred with the expansion of the land-reform program

This may have been the result of the need for better communicatmn

between the government and these groups during the perio m w

the complex land-reform program was being implemente .

Although the Brahmin and Chetri categories are not broken own

by region of origin in table 19, it is unlikely that more than one o

Brahmins of plains origin were among the Brahmins inc u e

1854 and 1950 columns, and it is highly unlikely that any Rajpu

were present. By 1965, however, a few plains Brahmins an ajp

were present among administrators at the upper leve s,

likely that the number has increased since then. /

TABLE 20

Caste Breakdown of Senior Army Officers, 1967

Caste

jSumber

Percent of total

Chetri

137

74.0

6 5

Hill Brahmin

12

6 5

Newar

Gurung

12

12

6.5

1.1

Sanyasi (Giri)

2

1.1

Rai

2

1.1

.5

Tamang

2

Magar

1

.5

Rayastha

1

2.2

Unknown

4

Total

185

lOO.O

Administrative Class 11 or higher.

168 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

The third center of power in Kathmandu is the army. Traditionally,

high-ranking officers in the Nepalese Army have been Chetris. This

IS understandable, as Chetris are soldiers by caste and the history of

Nepal, at least in the modern period, has been dominated by Chetri

generals, and courtiers. Since the revolution, however, the

caste distribution of array officers has changed somewhat, with hill

Brahmins and Newars beginning to obtain a few higher-ranking

positions, although usually in such noncombat commands as the

medical and signal corps. Table 20 provides a caste breakdown of all

officers with a rank of captain or higher who were stationed in Kath-

mandu Valley in 1967. All the generals posted in Kathmandu Valley

in 1967 were Chetris.^® Given the martial tradition of the hill tribes.

It is surprising that they are not better represented; only the Gurungs

appear to be successful in the competition for higher ranks. Only one

individual of plains origin appears in these data, a Kayastha captain

m the field-ambulance corps.^’

Royal power rests to a large extent upon the loyalty of the army-

0 . insure its loyalty, King Mahendra retired a number of the

etn generals of the rival Rana clan and has promoted Chetris of his

own Thakuri clan and other Chetri clans such as the Mallas, Thapas,

Among King Mahendra’s key generals in the late

R n Thakuris, Commander-in-Chief General Surendra

ahadur Shah and Lt. General Ranga Bikram Shah, officer in charge

e oyal Guard. Although most public attention is focused on

p within the Palace and Central Secretariats, political activity

wi hin the army could determine Nepal’s future. Thus far, army

I T political inclinations. So long as they remain

polmcally passive and loyal to King Birendra, he will be provided with

a secure base of support.

hilffiraLmi\*^ ^hree centers of power, the ruling coalition of Chetris,

tion. In rei"p' T" continues much as it did before the revolu-

n years, representatives of groups that constitute the

"were available for nFfir#» j

whether any generals may have Valley, and it is not known

“Names of four officen could not biwentifir |7^"' “ .

Similar to those of Chetris and hill tribals caste, but their caste names appear

\*®Therc has been a great deal of inter

between the royal branch of the Thakiir? among Chetri clans, particularly

clan. The young King Birendra, his fath ^ Shamshcr branch of the Rana

Shamshcr Rana women. Therefore it l S^^J^tlfather were all married to

Rana family ties. ’ \* ^ ^ of the Thakuri generals have

POLITICS IN THE NEPALESE TRADITION 169

m^onty of the nation’s population, plains people and low-caste and

n a people of hill origin, have begun to make their presence felt in

e entral Secretariat. By 1967, representatives of these groups were

percent of senior administrators in the Central Secretariat. In that

they also accounted for 13 percent of ranking army officers,

owever, members of these groups had not yet been appointed to key

positions in the Palace Secretariat. The plains people,

a "en separately from other underrepresented categories, had obtained

Sw cant representation only in the Central Secretariat, where they

accounted for 7 percent of its senior administrators by 1967.

n elective politics, where one’s success is determined by support

rom below rather than appointment from above, non-Chetri-hill-

ra min-Newar groups have fared better, gaining 26 percent of the

of^h National Panchayat. Plains people held 10 percent

ose seats. However, with the shift in power from Parliament to

^ c Palace in 1960, membership in legislative bodies since then has

signified little in terms of real political influence. Among most low-

caste and tribal people of both the hill and plains regions, there is

ittle political consciousness and little demand for admission into

f e centers of power. But the more affluent and better-educated upper-

caste people of the tarai are aware of the extent to which they remain

cxc uded from Kathmandu’s inner sanctum and from the administra-

tion of government in the districts of their own region. The result is a

Sense of alienation from those who control the government in Kathman-

u and from the hill-culture-oriented nationalism that they espouse,

s has been documented in this chapter, the introduction of the

Panchayat system, with its indirect-election procedure, has increased

0 problems encountered by plains people in their effbrts to gain

representation in Kathmandu. This has reinforced their sense of

alienation.

K is perhaps true that all innovative political systems, in order to be

^ccepted, must incorporate elements of more traditional politics.

le key question about the panchayat system is whether it has brought

n out the type of change in traditional Kathmandu-oriented politics

needed to move the nation ahead more rapidly toward political

integration than did the political-party system. Because the panchayat

system has failed to bring about the participation of those groups that

lave composed the traditionally underrepresented majority, tlie

pnestion must be answered in the negative. Perhaps during the 1970s,

nndcr the new leadership of King Birendra, the panchayat system can

0 modified to include broader national participation.

170 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

Undoubtedly, King Mahendra hoped that the panchayat system

would somehow operate to broaden the national political base,

because he must have realized that he needed to mobilize the support of

diverse groups in order to push ahead with the nation-building process.

Nevertheless, his desire to establish the new system was motivated

chiefly by a more immediate concern, to maintain royal power.

Because the panchayat system has been designed primarily to preserve

the source of traditional power at the national level, i t is understandable

that it can not challenge traditional politics at other levels.

Chapter IX

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE

TARAI

Among the tarai inhabitants who resent Nepalese government policies

are villagers with little or no land. They form a large segment of the

tarai population, and their resentment stems mainly from the govern-

ment’s economic policies. A much smaller but more influential

element of alienated people are the relatively affluent and belter

educated who live in the tarai towns. For the most part, their resent-

ment is a reaction to the government’s policies that discriminate

against plains people. The few landowners who fall into this category

are most often discontented because local-government officials have

taken sides against them in conflicts involving other landowner

factions.

THE LAND-REFORM PROGRAM AND DISCONTENT IN THE RURAL ARE,\S

Discontent among the economically disadvantaged rural population

results primarily from economic problems, hence it is useful to evaluate

briefly the land-reform program upon which the government bases

much of Its agricultural-development program. As might be exDecteH

a government founded on a traditionalist solution to conflict bkvcen

modernizing and traditional elites would find it difficult m Cnrr! 7

and implement economic reforms that undercut the nn / f

traditional elite. What, then, was the morati^

reform program? It is clear that King Mahendra lik

monarchs, wished to appear to be a modernizer even^th ^f'ng

prepared for only the most cautioussteos in i-

were couched in the modem ilTbu?^

shastnc in its fundamentals.”^ It also appears LT"',

ential government officials entertained Ln .

program could be used as a vehicle foe trt?

'Leo E. Rose, “Secularization of a TraHT the

171 ^

1 /- regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

landholdings of plains people. Inasmuch as more than 50 percent of the

rich tarai lands are held by large landowners of plains origin, such a

mansfer would have reaped handsome benefits for the hill people with

influence in Kathmandu. Whatever the original intentions of some

officials, during the 1963-64 period when the land-reform legislation

was being drawn up, the Indian government made it clear that it would

not tolerate the dispossession of the tarai plains people in this manner.

Tlie pressure for reforms applied by aid-giving nations was another

actor. Among the development agencies that have used the most

pressure are the U.S. Agency for International Development and the

ord Foundadon. In 1962, WolfLadejinsky, Consultant for the Ford

Foundation, wrote a report to King iVIahendra in which he inferred

t rat foreign aid was a futile gesture if not accompanied by land reform."

In an article two years later, Ladejinsky stated his message more

emphatically; “Important though the other ingredients [technical

assistance,^ cooperatives, credit, etc.] are, unless those who work the

n own it, or are at least secure on the land as tenants, all the rest is

1 e y to e writ in water. This message was not lost on the Nepalese

government. It needed to attract foreign aid and, therefore, it went

roug t e motions of enacting land-reform legislation. The result

ch^^ 6^^° of expediency rather than a commitment to fundamental

nf reform and the long-range educational value

^r I\*\*\*^'^^ Ladejinsky are beyond question, but the ex-

from the Nepalese

kinds nf r f ^ bring to Nepal preconceived ideas about the

r, ol.Tr v" "f"™- ■» >«■»". i'""'

NepaliKpoU,ics, ,L™oo'X

making in Kathmandu inffie iS T'"

transfer land resources th^ r. ^ ™P'oment reforms that would

agrarian society, from f;milymc^5f'''"f'!

traditional alUcs to those segments oHl' ?

landed elite has ruled. ^ population over whom this

“Letter addressed lo H. M Kinir M,h j

mimeograplied for public distribuiiou Feb, 15. 1962, Kathmandu,

’WolfLadejinsky, "Agrarian Reform in Asia” rr, ■ jpr ■ .

«6. .d/airi, .XLII (April 1964),

OPPOSmON'AL POLITICS IN THE TAR.^1 173

As might be expected under the circumstances, the 19641and'reform

laws did little to alter the status quo. In fact, the laws simply formalized

much of the existing landholding system. Few large landholdings

exist in the hill region. Large landholdings and extensive use of tenant

labor and daily-wage labor have prevailed only in the tarai. Therefore,

the land-reform program has been focused primarily on the tarai,

but control of land in the tarai and elsewhere in the country has

generally remained in the same hands. Land-reform law's permit a

landowner in the tarai to retain 25 bighas (approximately 40 acres)

of land and to transfer the same amount to each son over sixteen years

of age and each unmarried daughter over thirty-five years of age.

The 40-acre ceiling is a high one in view' of the high man-land ratio in

Nepal. Perhaps no more than 7 or 8 percent of the cultivable land in

the tarai exceeded this ceiling when the Lands Act came into force in

1964^ and, in the hills, landholdings that exceeded the ceiling were

few. In addition, the right to transfer land to family members represent-

ed a convenient loophole in the law. Furthermore, some land-reform

officials proved unable to implement the law, permitting landowners

to transfer land titles to individuals not eligible under the law, relatives

and family friends who hold titles for the original owners. In some

cases, records have been falsified and officials paid to overlook ir-

regularities. As a result, by mid-1968, only 146,000 acres of e.xcess

land had been acquired by the government.\* And of the land acquired

by mid-1972, only 56,000 acres had been redistributed.® Nor did the

reforms abolish the widespread institution of the absentee landlord If

and had been transferred to the hands of those who actually worked

the land, the high landholding ceiling notwithstanding the\eform

would have represented a step in a more progressive dirLion

I he essential conservatism of the land-reform

scored by the governmenfs willingness to sancdorhlHerc T"

With regard to

1964 Lands Act “has given formal recognition to .•

over a large part of the country, and might possiblv P’^^valent

situation for tenants, particularly those on ^ ^SS’^^tvate the

The general practice is to share only the main "" \ 'ands.

the landowner to claim half of each crop and suIsiSiarv?','"

P. Shrestha, “Current Land Reform P grown

II, No. 45 (1966), 14. Programme in Nepal ” W/, / r.

Apr. 30, 1968. ' ^

'Kd; May 31, 1972.

1 74 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

throughout the year.”’ Thus, in some instances, this aspect of the

reforms meant only further burdens to tenants, and landowners found

no reason to complain. In 1970 , the government revised its rent-ceiling

pohey, returning to the prereform rate of 50 percent of the main crop

on y. If officials are able to enforce the revised policy, this will ease the

tenants' burdens.

One of the most unfortunate consequences of the land-reform

program has been the eviction of many tenant families from land they

had been cultivating. At the time the reforms were enacted, there was a

rash of land-title transfers. Some of these resulted in the replacement of

tenants by owner-cultivators. This type of transfer is illustrated by the

village, where Tharu tenants were replaced by

iJi-JJrahmm owner-cultivators.\* Many transfers resulted in the

replacement of tenants by laborers paid on a daily basis, individuals

't'inimum security that tradition has provided for

rnr • I transfer occurred frequently in the mid-western

Ukharl" I ''^tttmented upon in chapter V in connection with the

Ukhada land reforms and citizenship problems.

threafenprl \*”ttiated by landowners and government officials

cpnfpr m 11 ^''°und the district’s administrative

threatened A crowd estimated at 4,000 rioted and

reports 9 ner! °^Sovernmenl officials. According to official

firings ’tha^esuTter\*^hfp'uwfcl'' '°‘"t

mem’s Nepali-languaBe da-r\*'"\*''''”'’ SO''er‘''

misguided the pea^nts on 'th’ “certain elements had

not be left unpunished ”>»

Organization expressed the ' S°'"^''n'nent-sponsored Peasants

pmdy she rf Sa,;\*. !” m “ ''''

the Ukhada land-tenure s arising from the abolition of

Rupandelri districts. 'i m Nawal Parasi and

^ '.Mahesh C. Rcgmi,

Gorkhapalra, Sept, 19, 1966, ^ Oct. 14, 1966.

^'Jana Awa^ IV/eklj, Oct. 1, 15, 1965^

OPPOSITIONAL POUTICS IN TUP. TAKAl 17';

'I’lic compulsory-s;ivin:4'> sclurmc, mhblrtl in t'. s< ( .itioili- !

aspect oftlie luncl-rcfonn pne^rain UuH caused vsidc.ptc.td trscutiiK »t

in the large rural segment nl' the tarai populatiun. I'sogie uvr m

concept tlie scheme svxs designed tti generate capital rea-ru ', tur

investment in agricultural iinprovcJnenLs and in small-scale indn-.oy,

and would stimulate economic development if it could be implemen-

ted. But it was unrealistic to assume that IVJ.UhB compuhory-savings

village ward committees could be creaieil, each committee wldi

3 members, and that these 96,000 villagers woukl .somelnnv giasp

novel ledger, account, and invcsimeiu concepts and at the same time

foresake local politics and self-interest in order to promote soinetliing

called “the well-being of the community.”

According to the blueprints of the sciieme, every farmer was retpiired

to deposit a small percentage of his crops willi tlie government eacli

year, and the capital acquired in this way would be loaned back to

villagers who needed it for investment purposes. Most farmers looked

upon the scheme as simply another form of taxation, despite the

government’s promise to return their deposits with interest at the etui

of five years. Many farmers made liie required deposits during the

first several ycare of the sclicmc’s operation, hut many others, particu-

larly landowners willi the power n» resist, avoided making dcpcesils.

During 1967 and 1968, the Nepalese press reported frequently that

ward committees were not keeping adequate records of savings collect-

ed, that committee members and other locally induealial people were

misappropriating the savings, and that resistance to ptiymenl was

growing. Finally, in April 1969, protests against the scheme turned to

violence.

The trouble reportedly began in Taulihawa, the tidminisiraiive

center of Kapilabastu district, wdien a crowd of village W'omen .sur-

rounded and attacked officials attempting to roUrri ((Jiiipulsorv

savings.!- Violence quickly spread across KapHidjastii dislriei and

into Rupandehi district. Looting and police litiogs occurred in ^

thirty-village area over a three-week period, Dnritig lliis period -u

least twenty-three persons lost tlieir lives, lM(i(dtcd-,'vv,.,e woumled

and many others arrested. Compiih.oj v)/n/s dc(,o|s and

homes were looted and l^urned,\*'\* ' \*

During this second major /ndbo/d f,( yiokhrr if, d,,. .q,-,,

government again suppresse<) i„lo, (),r,e|w enco “

>2WLApr.3, ’ ' '‘"Allllg (he

^^Gorkhapalra^ May 0, |%'i.

1 7 ^^

regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

problems invL'eTm'r irresponsible analyses of ihc

abS t One problem L the government’s

--P“'-^y-vings schcL properly

''illagc context s;. "r^re too complex for the Nepabc

tion from villaeersT®^ reportedly being collected by imimida-

For some villagers subsistence or near-subsistence level,

and for others , P^^tnents were apparently difficult to make,

appropriated the Z]\T7

The ’ ' were intolerable

government was mt..r,n

agitators ra^h/»r- anxious to prove that outside

p"'r ri-A. ti.

April 14 thirtv-K; \* among (he sixty-four persons arrested by

at the time that ^ocal-govcrnmcni officials claimed

\*P\*1 a,,<l "2“ "'“S

clisturbances.”“TtiM<! ti . are responsible for tbe-se

it is not clear whether P‘'°tilem was citizenship-

nrganizers, or simply villaLrets"^,/ nh'”

to obtain citixensbin r^nm ^ "’i’° \*'ttd not been able

that bandits or political o^TT] rlisnaissing the possibility

assume that most of die “Itffr"’''^»\* involved, it is reasonable to

pr-rhaps some of them uti-.u tenants and landless laboren,

e‘d earlier by land-reform ‘'''’ai> Perhap.s some alieliat\*

Prom tenancy holdin-s Mam-T^r '‘'^^alied in tbeir evictions

tuni this was used as evid • ^

they were Indiaits 's dnr,h"'^,i ‘^ir-^rTvers in Kathmandu that

"•■nsiblc iliing to do, men, ,h, i'-'ve been the

org.iniz.itioii, TJu' K ith,,,- i ^ ‘‘ntigovermneni poliiieal

■nni Coi,ij,|,„;i,t or''ai)ixrr' ^ <^iaimed that Xepali CVmgre'.s

ear, no, b,:'’di,re..W ■i'\*"'

!'■>'>>• nrganixad,,,, "''■'‘‘■'"C'- '‘ftmdergroui.d

prmeu, !::d 'i^ti-. Ti.-

'■’’i'-' t' "i odrer ^rieva„res 1 ^, ' " '’"’'''•■'"P 'i''”'- >'r- '1'-

■- .he -ao'C' . J " ”i‘Kiu.Mu,dlm tendon

K„i, interrclaud proidnn.

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 177

ly directed some of their frustrations against each other, and one

ultranationalist Kathmandu newspaper charged that exiled Nepali

Congress workers were facilitating the “infiltration of a large number of

Indian Muslims and other Indians into this region of Nepal to create

disturbances.”^® Although the validity of this charge is doubtful, it is

evidence of the “specter of migration” fear.

The violence forced the government to suspend collection of savings

throughout the country. Suspension of the scheme left the government

with a welter of problems: organization and, in some cases, reconstruc-

tion of ward-committee records, retrieval of misappropriated savings,

and repayment of savings along with the interest originally promised.

Because some of the savings were never invested, they have not been

generating interest, and it will be difficult for the government to make

good its promise to repay the farmers. On the other hand, the govern-

ment’s credibility would be seriously undermined if it defaulted on

payments, hence government spokesmen have continued to insist that

payments are forthcoming. By 1972, three years after the scheme was

suspended, the government reported that most of the accounts had

been audited, that misappropriations were not as widespread as

supposed, and that the scheme may be tried again, this time exempting

small farmers and tenants from collections.”

The villagers’ resentment of the government’s land-reform program

is compounded by economic and administrative problems over which

the government has little or no control. Economic problems result to

a large extent from the limited resources available for development

purposes, resources without which it is difficult to push ahead vigorous-

ly with programs to relieve poverty. Inadequate local administrative

talent is another handicap. Regardless of the form of government or

its ideological orientation, it would be difficult to supply rural areas

across the country with a large number of administrators who under-

stand how to guide the complex process of economic development

and who are willing to put the nation’s goals ahead of self-interest. To

create a corps of enlightened administrators at both the national and

local levels is one of the keys to modernization.

In 1967 the government inaugurated the “Back to the Village

Campaign” in an attempt to mobilize support for its programs and

to neutralize the influence of the underground political parties in the

rural areas. In a speech to the National Panchayat in May 1967,

^^Dainik Xirnayay Apr. 8, 1969,

^’^Gorkkapatra, Mar. 13, 1972.

i /o REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

King Mahendra introduced the campaign as follows :

The majority of the people of the country live in the villages.

Accordingly, we must go back to the villages to achieve the fundamental

objectives of the [panchayat] system. The apathy persistent in our

rural society for hundreds of years has not yet disappeared, and

consciousness of rights and duties has not yet been aroused among our

village people to the extent desired. Ignorance, disease and poverty

are sdll deep-rooted in the villages. Although we have made progress

toward the infusion of consciousness and dynamism among the rural

people as a result of development programs launched under the present

system, and also as a result of the land reform program introduced as

an integral part of the system, yet we have to accelerate the pace of

our progress.'\*

He went on to say:

he problem is complicated because educated people who provide leader-

ip lave i e tendency to leave the villages. This tendency i.s unfortunntc.

ow everyone should concentrate his entire attention upon village

Thell objectives of the system as soon as possible,

through dilficuh to fulfill, and they can be achieved only

discinline ^ ‘In^l'ties of nationalism, patriotism, honesty,

nation's it has become imperative that the

national orp,nizcd and mobilized in a single powerful

make the nccp«^^" to attain these objectives, and everyone should

this campaign contribute their strength to implement

tlte “Back to the VillageTJational C '"f ' d

wrefullygnidcd manned’ >n a disciplined and

the village Kverthrough'''"i \*\*’\*^'"\*’r implemented at

intercsiin® bccaLl'^f; ' They are

I presented his interests and his aspirations,

^l.^^Consol,dauon and expansion of thespirit of nationalism and national

2. Dissemination of iht ra,,, ,i,.„ ,,

p.anchayat den.ucracv, the fact ,1 'be partyles,s

and the fact that “panvlcssfccli

X CuUivation of l-haS^;'",^

foreign policy. cordance with Nepal’s nonaligiicd

‘UotV., Oct, I, I9d7

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 179

4. latroduction of a campaign to eliminate corruption, injustice,

oppression, and unnecessary administrative inefficiency.

5. Infusion of consciousness and dynamism in the village society.

6. Further strengthening the implementation of the land-reform

program, the new legal code, social welfare programs, and nationwide

reconstruction activities.

7. Propagation and extension of cooperative programs and feelings.

8. Imparting of knowledge about the significance of forest and wild-life

protection and afforestation.

9. Emphasis on agricultural production.

10. Arousing of consciousness regarding the need for cottage

industries.-”

As part of the campaign, all educated people were to spend some

time in the villages to do the following: teach villagers about the

history and heroes of Nepal; encourage the use of the Nepali language

and literature ; distribute replicas of the national flag and other national

emblems; stress the fact that the existence of political parties causes

national disintegration and that the current partyless system is more

appropriate to the spirit and traditions of the Nepalese people, etc.

Mandatory periods of time to be spent in the villages were set for

government officials and those elected to various levels of the pancha-

yat system; others were encouraged to follow their example.

It may not have been coincidental that the campaign was conceived

about the time the Nepalese government was experiencing some con-

frontations with Chinese officials in Nepal. The cultural revolution

was still in full swing in China, and Chinese officials seemed particularly

belligerent. The “Back to the Village Campaign” has certain undeni-

able similarities to the cultural revolution. The outline of campaign

plans sounded less like a public-works program than a religious

crusade. There were no quotas of wells to be dug, trees to be planted, or

roads to be built. Instead, there were admonitions about eschewing

pomp and luxury, corruption, and class consciousness. There were

also directions for all citizens to study and discuss together liturgies

such as the following:

1. My Nepali nation is lofty and sacred. My prime objective is to

achieve the all-around development of tlie country and the people.

I am performing these duties inspired by the desire to serve tlie nation.

I live and protect my nation as a staunch nationalist.

"Hbid.

180

REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

2. Faith in the Crown and its leadership are providing me with constant

enthusiasm and support. Accordingly, I am undaunted and determined,

and am never dred of performing any work which benefits Nepal and

the Nepal] people. To no one at any dme do I express feelings of despair

with respect to the panchayat system. I make myself always responsible

to the panchayat system.

3. After finishing my work in the evenings, I shall pass my leisure hours

participating only in national music and art programs and in the cultural

programs appropriate to the system.-'

Early in 1967, buttons with Mao’s profile began to circulate in

Nepal and were worn by some students. By mid- 1967, two or three

Kinds of buttons with King Mahendra’s picture were circulated and

consi era le pressure to wear them was applied to government officials

nd e!ected\_ panchayat members. The little red books of Man’s

thoughts printed in both Nepali and English, were available in the

^°"°"'"!^,'"2uguration of the “Back to the Village

The ^ 1 °'^ Mahendra’s thoughts was also published,

was folllr, , December 15, 1967

ciiavat m 'm(/^ ^ a enthusiastic speeches by officials and pan-

dXv^ " , to .sound stale,

irfo V lh!?T There were no concrete

SeX directives for village

elite did not take nl‘ ’‘’dasm faded, mobilization of the urban

d.e d;-d.agers remained as isolated fiom

Aliliouiji) ilic rTmn-i' { ^ prtjviously.

beet, heard about it ffi.cc’rgeranri “‘"f

not achieved its objectives ’ ^ ‘ ra'npaJgn bas

limited atfililf m'csTmi-f “PP'”’''’"’\* -groups have also sliotvri only

the poMihiliiy of more efrecd"'"’'"’'''^-" i''''

villages raises a poiend-lK. "PP^ttnnal organizations in the

Perhaps for this reason fin ' . for the government,

there has been some i.dk in 'u'-V assumption ofpower,

campaign, "f revising and resilalizing the

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 181

OPPOSITION PARTIES

Altliough the two major political parties, the Nepali Congress and

the Communist Party of Nepal, make their presence felt in both

Kathmandu Valley and the tarai, they tend to operate more openly

in the tarai. This is due partly to the faet that the government is

better organized to detect and suppress antigovernment activity

in the Valley and partly to its ability to siphon off through the offer

of government employment many of the potentially disaffected in the

Valley. In addition, party activists in the tarai have Indian territory

to use as sanctuary, if needed. Both parties also have a larger number of

alienated people to draw upon for support in the tarai, people who

feel not only physical but cultural distance from those who govern in

Kathmandu; these are the plains people who feel threatened by the

government's efforts to Nepalize the region.

There is little open opposition to the government in the tarai.

Nevertheless, considerable effort is being made by Nepali Congress and

Communist Party workers to organize support in the towns and

villages of the region. Competition between the two parties for support

has become particularly keen since Nepali Congress leaders were

released from jail in the fall of 1968 and others were allowed to return

from exile in India. Let us look at the activities of the two parties and

the competition between them.

The Communist Party of Nepal was established in 1949. During

the 1950s, as the party grew, revolutionary and moderate factions

emerged, the former led by Pushpa Lai Shrestha, and the latter by

Keshar Jang Rayamajhi. Pushpa Lai’s was the minority faction,

drawing its strength primarily from Kathmandu Valley and the

eastern tarai. In the parliamentary elections of 1959, the Communist

Party ran candidates in 46 of the 109 constituencies and won 4 seats,

2 in Rautahat district of the eastern tarai, 1 in Palpa district of the

western hills, and 1 in Kathmandu Valley. It also recer. ed strong

support in other eastern-tarai constituencies, notably in Saptari

district, and in other constituencies of Kathmandu Valley.^ Compared

with the Nepali Congress victory in 74 constituencies, however, the

Communist Party looked weak.

“Leo E. Rose, “Communism Under High Atmospheric Conditions; The Party

in .Nepal,” in The Communist Revolution in Asia, ed. by R. A. Scalapino, 2d ed. (Envie

wood CUfis, .N. J., 1969), pp. 365, 369, 373. 383. The party was established in Calcutta

because political organization in Nepal at the time was suppres.scd by tbg

regime in power.

182 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

The royal coup precipitated a split between the Pushpa La! and

tlie Rayamajhi factions. Pushpa Lai fled to India to organize opposi-

tion to King Mahendra’s government, whereas Rayamajhi remained

in Kathmandu to support tlie King. Pushpa Lai’s revolutionary efforts

foundered in 1962 as a result of the Sino-Indian conflict and the

Nepali Congress decision to terminate its rebel activities. Members

of the Rayamajhi faction, on the other hand, were having some success

in panchayat elections. It was in a position to elect eighteen party

members to the National Panchayat in the 1963 elections, a consider-

able improvement, compared with the d members elected to the

Parliament four years earlien^-\*

Immediately after the coup, the King attempted to suppress tlie

lepali Congress, which he viewed as the party most threatening to

us position. The Rayamajhi facdon claimed at the same time that it

la ^isbanded the Communist Party in order to comply with the

Rings ban on all political parties. With all national and local Nepali

ongress leaders either in jail or in exile, the moderate communists

were able to organize without competition, not only where they had

ecn strong m 1959, but also in some regions where they had previously

■n wea •. ayamajhi himself was appointed to the Council of State,

y honorary body, and Communist Party members or

'"eluded in a number of ministries since

late i’gst ‘"r "bserver of Nepal’s political scene commented in the

smL 7ro m g'^'^ed tangible benefits for his ■

vTth a®Za "h """ " "^-ability for his Party

iSicum ‘^‘^^ieved at L cost of the

among studenll.”^»"[nSrL?r Pai-tieolarly

for il,e party’s aniimonarchical ftTo

lady among student groups i„ the uZn

ortediy\einforccd"o‘'p^^^^^^^ ',‘=P'

in the eastern larai and the Ta'raiT-h"^^

larai. In 1967, when the exircmisr^.'^^T ""’^wesieni

."'"'S nf the Communist Party in

India gained leinporary control of

»Ki7..pp,3p-377.J73-.3W,3!H.Ca„.lid,^^^^

parly labels. Ncvcrihclc$s, in ihc rather im' wiilioui

ul Kathmandu, ibc informal party politira) aimasphcrf

uiujUy known. ' iinpnrmnt people arc

pp. ‘i7i-'SV6, W).

'Vhl. pp.

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 183

region of Darjeeling district of West Bengal, bordering the far-eastern

tarai, the Indian press claimed that the extremists, later termed

Naxalites, were using the tarai as a base of operations and a sanctuary.

Fears were expressed in Bhadrapur, the administrative center of

Jhapa district, that the terrorist tactics of the Naxalites would be used

in the district.-’ Although this has not occurred as yet, there have

been occasional claims in both the Indian and Nepalese press that the

Naxalites are involved in organizational activities in the tarai.

Information about the Tarai Liberation Front is less speculative.

At the time that the Nepali Congress rebels were operating along the

India-Nepal border in 1961-62, the Tarai Liberation Front was

established to press the demands of the plains people living in Nepal.

According to the Nepalese government, one of the Front leaders,

Ramji Mishra, was killed by Nepalese police in June 1963.^\* Although

the government claimed that Mishra was a “notorious dacoit,” The

Hindustan Times^^ called him the leader of a movement for the libera-

tion of Indian settlers living in the western tarai. It was reported that

the Nepalese Army had also killed the head of the Front, Raghu Nath

Rai, about the same time. According to The Statesman , Rai had been

kidnapped from Nautanwa, an Indian border town opposite Bhairawa

in Rupandehi district, and then killed in Nepalese territory.

Some time in early August 1967, one of the Indian newspapers

carried an ardcle by Raghu Nath Thakur, who called himself a leader

of the Tarai Liberation Front. He claimed that “thousands of persons

in the tarai had fallen victim to oppression,” and were being driven

off the land so that it could be resettled by hill people. The substance

of Thakur’s article appeared in a letter to the Gorkhapatra,^^ by three

panchayat members form Jhapa district who denied Thakur s charges.

At the end of August, the Nepalese government reported that the

“self-styled President” of the Front, Satyadeo Mani Tripathi, had

been killed and two companions injured in a clash between Tnpathi’s

group and a “rival” group in Nautanwa.\*- Observers in Kathmandu

surmised that the “rival” group in this case consisted of hirelings of

local Nepalese-government officials.

^^Swatantra Samcchar. June 27, 1967; Mpat Samac^.r, June 28, 1967;

27, 1967.

-^Corkhapatra, June 19, 1963.

^^Hindustan Times (New Delhi), June 18, 1963, p. 1.

^’‘Statesman, Aug. 28, 1967, p. 5.

^'Gorkhapalra, Aug. 13, 1967.

^^Rising Pfepat, .Aug. 30, 1967.

, ,,mtTV in NEPAL

184 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UN ^ Com™®'®'

During 1967, there were reports of tension V j,t

and Nepali Congress factions in the large Nepa ese

at Banaras Hindu University. Congress i ^ Lai, whose

of the Nepalese student organization in Banaras. ^ partihanga.

main support came from students, was [^Pced to mov

200 miles northeast of Banaras. In early 196 d, jsjablishod

that an armed antigovernment camp had ^ een

Darbhanga,^^ adding support for the possibility t Wbethe''

group might be associated with the Tarai Liberation ^^ailable.

such a camp existed is impossible to prove from informa ^

If it did exist, it never became effective as a center o

armed attacks upon Nepalese border posts. -md

In April 1969, violence erupted in the mid-western

the jYew Herald reported; “The Pushpa Lai group o^

Nepal Communist Party is reported to be very active m

in India. Tlie group has also extended its activities to t e

Recruitment Depot in Kunraghat. It is being given unre

freedom to make propaganda against the panchayat system

engage in other subversive activities against Nepal from GoraK p

In May, after the violence had subsided, the newly

Prime Minister, Kirtinidhi Bista, toured tlie riot-torn

according to' the Motherland:

His Majesty’s Governmcnl has conveyed Nepal’s concern to

India over

• •/ loowiav i(U.a - I'afl

the presence of armed gangs of polilically active persons on the In

side of the Nepal-lndia border. These gangs have been active lor ■ ^

months now and the Indian authorities have been unable to bring

them under control. These gangs are working under various

names,

but all oftlicm claim allegiance lo the revolutionary views of the extreme

leftists. One of them is led by a person called Vishwa Nath riwaru

1 1 consists of 'iO or 50 armed men, who operate mostly in the Lakhimpur

Klicri area.^^

Man Mohan .Adhikari, one of the most important leaders of the

left wing of tlie Communist Party of Nepal and one of the fe"'

Communist leaders jailed at the time of tlie royal coup, was released

from jail in February 1969, only ihrce montlis after the release of

,1 Iff, l9h‘J. Belli Gorakhpur .ami NautiUlwa arc sinwn'd 111 GiimWi-

ir dUtiicihi Utl.ir I’raiJoh, juii 'ouihofRupamichidiurici in .Ncp.il.

^'iilA/to/aaA -M.iy O, 1969. l-ikhiinpur-Khcri liistrici of Uttar I’nicioh in Imh.i

Umico on K.ii’uli dl>«ic< 'f ibcfar.»cittrn Nepal tarai.

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 185

Nepali Congress leaders. Soon afterward, he became the main spokes-

man for the left-communists in Nepal, issuing frequent statements

criticizing the Prime Minister and his associates, but at the same time

carefully avoiding any direct criticism of the King. In August 1972,

Adhikari even ventured to call upon his countrymen to unite for the

purpose of bringing about the downfall of the Council of Ministers.^®

Two months later, he was reported to have reached an agreement

with Pushpa Lai to cooperate in organizing the left wing of the party.

According to the report, Adhikari would be responsible for political

organizing inside Nepal and Pushpa Lai outside, but they agreed to

refrain from launching guerrilla-type activities from Indian

territory^'

The Nepalese press is able to provide only limited coverage of

events occurring outside Kathmandu Valley, because newspapers

do not assign reporters to rural areas and the government restricts

information about political unrest. Therefore, it is difficult to assess

the strength of extremist communist groups such as the Naxalities, the

Tarai Liberation Front, or the Pushpa Lai faction of the Communist

Party of Nepal, and it is also difficult to know what relationship, if

any, exists among these groups or between these groups and the

Chinese embassies in Kathmandu and New Delhi.

The Nepalese government has seldom reacted publicly to the

activities of these groups, but Nepali Congress leaders have repeatedly

stated their concern. On May 15, 1968, when Subarna Shamsher,

acting President of the Nepali Congress government-in-exile, offered

reconciliation with King Mahendra, he cited the threat of the

“forces of subversion” as one of the reasons the Nepali Congress had

decided to cooperate with the King. When asked to elaborate, he

named the Nepalese Communists as these “forces of subversion”

that “were threatening the basic fabric and values of the Nepalese

national life.”^“

Soon after B.P. Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, and other Nepali

Congress leaders were released from jail in late October 1968, Ganesh

Man, ill blunt statements reminiscent of his political style of a decade

earlier, emphasized Subarna’s concern about the headway tlie com-

munists were making in Nepal. In the course of several speeches deliv-

ered at Birganj in Bara district in December, he contended that “The

Auy. 30, 1972.

‘LV.n.i SunJ/sh mdlj, Oct. 0, 1972.

{CaiculU/, May Itj, 1968, p. 7.

186 RKGIONAI.ISM AND NATUINAl, L'Nll'V IN NKI’.Vl.

release of B.l\*. Koirala anil the pardon ijratiU'cl lo Subarna SliaiiKlier

and bis associaies were liie residl of foreign pressure and the realization

of tlie growini' communist danger faced by Nepal,

In the Ibllow'ing months, Koirala liimseffsoundetl an aniicoinnmnist

note, but in less alanniirg tones, lie e.xpressetl the view that tbtfc

e,Nist only two political systems, democratic and undemocratic, and

that it is impossible for ilie panebayat .system to become a third

political system compromising between the two, between parliamen-

tary democracy and coinimmism."’

By such statements, Nepali Congress lettders furni.sh evidence of

the competition which they feel tlie communisu represent in dn^

struggle to dominate oppositional politics in Nepal. There is no doubt

that the communists gained popular support in Nepali Congress

strongholds during the yean since King .Maliendra imprisoned most

of the Nepali Congress leaders and particularly ttfter the Indian

government called a halt to the armed activities of Nepali Congress

rebels in late 1962. Since then, party workers liave maintained a

senes of poses in Indian border towns and have distributed party

propaganda in the tarai, but the panv Inis lost its organizational

momentum.

When Nepali Congress leaders and workers were released and

pardoned m late 1968, Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Tiiapa, who

p ye a cy role in attempting to bring about a rapprochement

e ween t ic mg and Nepali Congress leaders, stated repeatedly

that only two altcrnattvcs w-ould be open to these leaders. They could

t ter work within the panchayat system, which \va5 Ills hope, or

ht tnr" Neither has occurred. B.P. Koirala,

makinir and several other leaders have been

theirs narf i attract the following that was previously

IrsuLde '‘’‘-y attempted to

pemuade some of the lesser-known party workers to return to party-

organizing activities m their local areas.”

^’Samiksha IVttkly,j3n. 6, 1969,

Nepal at present!’ '‘democran” 'if “\* »'

Nepalese parlance for supporters of iheNen'rJ^'^

sives” for Communis! Party supportcra and “.Marxists" or “progres-

"Some leaders, such as Sury.i Prasad I 7 n ii

Subarna Shamshcr, wish to accommodate it » P^l'^P\* “ some extent

to workforchange from within. Forareoortr.r.h'\*'''” panchayat system and

tion in 1968-69, see two articles by ^

Liberalization," Amn Sumj, IX (February |9mi qS f,'" ‘^“"’Proo’iso and

foraNational Consensus, •■dr.baW^,X(Februai;w!).’m^^^

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 187

Both Communist and Nepali Congress workers have been active in

distributing antigovernment leaflets throughout the tarai, particularly

in 1972 during the months immediately following King Birendra’s

assumption of power. In August 1972, there was a night raid on a

police station in a border village of Saptari district; in the exchange of

fire, one policeman was killed. Observers tended to believe that the

raid was organized by the Nepali Congress, reminiscent of armed

Nepali Congress raids on police stations in the tarai during the 1961-62

period.!' The day after the raid, Swaran Singh, India’s Minister of

External Affairs, declared that the Indian government would not

allow Indian territory to be used for hostile activities against Nepal.

He also disclosed that Nepalese opposition leaders in India had been

warned not to attempt to undermine the Indian position.!^

The most obvious manifestations of competition between the Nepali

Congress and Communist parties, but probably the least threatening

to the government, occur at Tribhuvan University (on the outskirts

of Kathmandu) and in the various university-affiliated colleges in

Kathmandu Valley and the tarai. The left-communist or Maoist

students tend to dominate politics in the colleges of Patan (in the

Valley) and Dharan (in the eastern tarai), but in the university and

roostoftheothercolleges, pro-Congress and pro-Maoiststudent activists

seem fairly equally matched, with the control of student unions seesaw-

ing from one group to the other. In 1968 and 1970, Maoists controlled

the university union and, in 1969 and 1971, the Congressites held the

upper hand. When progovernment students have run slates of candi-

dates in university elections, the percentage of votes they have received

has been negligible.

Almost every year, there are student disturbances at the university,

at Morang College in Biratnagar, and at several other colleges in the

tarai. These disturbances often arise out of conflict between rival

student groups, but they also involve overt expressions of antigovgj.jj\_

ment sentiment and, therefore, particularly those in Kathmandu

embarrass the government, because they receive considerable domestic

and international press coverage.

The most widespread student disturbances in recent years took place

in August and September 1972. Agitation began at Morang College

in Biratnagar and at Tribhuvan University in opposition tg

of the provisions of the government’s new education plan. The plag

“Gorkhapatra, Aug. 28, 1972.

Aug. 30, 1972.

188 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

designed to make the educational system more responsive to th

manpower needs of a modernizing nation, but many students regar

the plan as a threat to their chances to earn college and university

degrees.''^ The agitation spread rapidly to most of the colleges an

many of the high schools in Kathmandu Valley and the tarai, fanne

mid-August by mass arrests of opposition politicians and the suspension

of twelve National Panchayat members’\*" who were reported to e

Nepali Congress sympathizers. At this point, student leaders esca ale

their demands to include dismissal of the government heade >

Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bista.\*® The interesting difference between

this disturbance and others of the previous few years was the coopera

tion exhibited among usually competitive student factions, A nine

member action committee composed of equal numbers ofrepresenta

tives from the pro-Nepali Congress and from Maoist and pro-Russian

student groups organized the strike within the university.\*^

Political leadership is almost always drawn from the educated upper

and middle classes of the urbanized population, and Nepal is no

exception in this regard. The university and the colleges are locate

in urban settings, and within the broader urban context exists the

spawning ground for leaders of opposidonal parties and much of the

financial and logistical support for these parties. Whether from homes

in the towns or the villages, those who are educated in the towns

usually remain to seek jobs and often to swell the population of un-

employed graduates. Some find jobs as school teachers or junior-level

government employees, but some remain unemployed for long periods,

becoming progressively restless and disaffected. Many, hut by no

means all, of the opposition-party activists are drawn from among the

unemployed. Some are alienated simply because they have time on

their hands and their needs have not been recognized by the govern-

ment. For others, the alienation is reinforced by strong ideological

commitments. -Among the plains people of the tarai, resentment is

compounded by government policies that discriminate against them.

.■\s yet, the tarai s urban centers are few in number and relatively

small, and the concentration of police and army units stationed in

or near these centers is suflicient to bring rapidly under control all

overt expressions of opposition. Then, too, many of the alienated young

ItVip. .Aus. 11, 1972.

Aug. Ill, 1972.

"Stpcl Tin/!, .Aus- 29, 1972.

o.VuiJ .W/el. .tus. II. 1972.

opposrrio.vAL politics in the tarai 189

banitts of plains origin arc drifting into the cities of India to seek

ortunes, siphoning off potential support for party organizations,

i evert icless, the tarai towns arc growing, and with tliein the number

peop c responsive to the political parties. The potential for increased

oppositjon is very real in such towns as Bhadrapur, Dharan, Biratnagar,

\*^^ji J‘inakpur, Birganj, Bliairawa, and Ncpalganj as lower-

tca'\*i°” '^^‘^^’^ucrats, small-scale businessmen, industrial laborers,

icrs, students, and unemployed graduates become increasingly

rustrated by their political impotence in Kathmandu and even in the

3rai, During the short period of parliamentary rule, these groups

were able to exert influence on the national decision-making process

rough participation in the political parties. The longer they are

^enied this opportunity in tlie present system, the more frustrated and

the Communist parties are also competing

of the tarai. Because of poor press coverage

^ud government censorship, it is difficult to assess the impact of party

organizing efforts on this traditionally apathetic segment of the popu-

stion. It appears that village polidcs remain centered around economic

2nd caste factions, although there is an occasional report of this

|2ctionalism taking on the dimensions of party politics. For example,

in 1969, candidates with party affiliations were reported contesting

'be chairmanship of the Bhagwanpur Village Panchayat in Bara

ri'strict. In this case, and undoubtedly in many others over the past

few years, Nepali Congress workers canvassed votes for Nepali Congress

candidates.rs Friction between the hill minority in this large and

prosperous village and the plains majority crept into the campaign.

appears that the Nepali Congress workers and their candidate

were hill people, and the Communists played upon the consciousness

of Cultural differences between the minority and majority in order to

neutralize Nepali Congress influence. Although both parties receive

support from hill as well as plains people, it is evident that local workers

from both parties are willing to take advantage of the economic and

Cultural factions already existing in order to further their causes.

There is evidence that pro-Congress and pro-Communist forces

are also beginning to vie for control of district panchayats. Unlike

the student politics, this competition, where it exists, is three-sided,

with progovernment forces also involved. At the district and national

'‘Matribhumi Weekly, June 24, 1969. Bhagwanpur is a center for rice stockists in

eastern Bara.

“ut-iiaced they will become.

The Nepali Congress and

uf Support in the rural area;

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 191

segments of the population share common

•ion between the of oommunica-

Primarilv bv l \*”'■ government, represented

iret hi'J origin, does not have As yet,

parties ha ^ either the government or the political

the villager m tapping this source of support, but

orth ^ ’o\*‘^^heytothedominanccofeiilierthegovernment

ot^ the parties in the tarai.

SUPPORT m INDIA

FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES

iv ^ 1950-51 revolution and again during the period immediate-

sun^ coup, the Nepali Congress received indirect

port rom the Indian government, if in no other form than Indian

a Tv™\* refusal to prevent staging and supplying operations of

hi epaii Congress raids from Indian border tou'ns upon Nepalese

^vernment posts in the tarai. The Sino-Indian confrontation in

h 0 ^ er 1962 forced the Indian government to accept a hard truth,

'31 Its security in the Nepalese sector of the Himalayas was more

'h'portant than the establishment of parliamentary government

'hre. The Nepali Congress had to acquiesce to Indian pressure and

” off its raids. Since then, the Indian government lias attempted

•o curb tv’hat die Nepalese government calls “antinational” activity

0 " the Indian side of the border.

Indian government is faced witii several problems in its attempt

control this activity. First, the nation has a free press. A number of

Indian newspapers have been sympathetic to the Nepali Congress

Cause because of the party’s socialist orientation and its dedication to

'I'h principles of parliamentary government. These newspapers 1 , 3 ^.^

Pcovidcd tile Nepali Congress a hearing among educated Nep^j;^

‘'■h tarai and Kathmandu. The papers remained cntical of il,e

‘■"le and the panchayat system throughout the I9b0s and, alihoyg^^

"'deism has been mild by the standards oi a Irec press, i;

buierly resented in Nepalese-govenimcni circles.

•second, India’s federal system Pf'Hcr j,

Elates, including the power to pohcc state «ni fr>. j

J’,.. .1 Rilutr. and Lttar Pt.nlr,), \

h'<Acriimems of West lictigal, Bihar, anu etui. . •

\*>"ders with Nepal. .Mthough .he central gusern uem y,,..

lias .1 ...vermnciits «’ exetctsc

rged those state got a mm.. - . .i,,. v '•'cv jn .l.,.,

J'-'ndling of cusiotns anti police pu.bknw .non. the

192 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

advice has not always been followed carefully. The Nepali Congress

won considerable sympathy among government officials m t

slates, particularly in Bihar. Nepalese officials and businessmen cros

into Bihar have been shown little courtesy on a number of occaMons-

West Bengal is also a problem in this respect. Although t e o ^

munist Party of India has led coalition governments in t ic s a

several times, Communist leaders have shown considerable wi mgne

to cooperate with Indian Congress leaders in New Delhi, because

the financial constraints held by the center over the state governrnen

Because of their ideological bonds with Nepalese Communists, ow

ever, it would not be difficult for them to overlook activities organize

by Nepalese Communists in the border areas of the state. Whether t e

Government of West Bengal is Communist or Congress-led or un er

President’s rule, the chronic state of unrest often threatens to ave

its repercussions across the border in the tarai, as was the case urmg

the Naxalbari disturbances. . .

Third, the Indian government can not prevent Indian po ’^ica

parties and pressure groups from supporting the Nepali Congress an

the Communist Party of Nepal. Over the past two decades, sympat i

zers in India have provided encouragement and financial aid to bo i

the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal. For examp C)

Indian socialists have been supportive of the Nepali Congress since t ic

party was founded.^" The threat of communism articulated in t e

speeches of Nepali Congress leaders since 1968 may have been part y

designed to attract support from anticommunist parties in India or,

indeed, from the Indian government itself. Despite the impressive

victories of Mrs. Gandhi’s Congress Party, India is so splintered point

tally that it is reasonable to assume that Nepalese opposition parties

could find moral support, if not substantial financial support, some-

where in India.

Nevertheless, as long a.s the Indian government believes that support

of the montircliy is the best way to insure stability in the central Hi-

malaya."!, it is not likely to revert to a policy of indirect support to die

Nepali Congress, the type of support the party needed in 1950-51

and 1961-62 in order to mount an effective military and political

campaign against the government in Kathmandu. Altliough the

tarai is a natural base oi operations for the Nepali Congress or ilu\*

-Ctmimunist Party, given the exploitable discontent of the tarai popula-

‘•Sec lihob Ciianciii, .1 SuJj 0 / fltia) ,Vtp<iU]t Pulitici (Calcuna, 1957).

OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS IN THE TARAI 193

lion and its location along the Indian border/' it is unlikely that with-

out the blessings of the Indian government, opposition parties will

be able to mount another serious campaign against the government.

Despite resentment against the Nepalese government’s economic

policies in the rural areas of the tarai and resentment against the

pvernment’s efforts at Nepalization in the urban centers, the tarai

•s not a sea of discontent, ready to drown the government in a high

t'de of revolution. The government is able to suppress quickly overt

opposition, but it appears unable to provide the leadership at local

levels that can compete with the opposition parties for support among

"'any segments of the tarai population. Until the government can

find a way to counteract the sense of resentment among many tarai

people, sporadic agitation is likely to continue, and integration of the

eegion into the national framework is likely to remain an unfulfilled

goal.

• .. • . , ..'.W.-fiir tiic Ncmlrsc .\iiiiy ta ir.ip .

' tor «4mplc, ii would l)= virtually impt' p ,j„;r at li.imi an

; -ooy u„:u ill the tarai rrbch ...crniii

I'r t^irdrr. 1 iic liii-atui-fuii tacitit. ol ' ia-r 1 'h.V. wlini i(,c Im!

In j)ic t.irji were bcci>n»\*ns ^

itcppctl in to ^\*^\*\*'\*^\*^ \*^\*^

tr.ip .uu}

irisl

:uti

CllAl'IKK X

THE PROBLEM OF NA'i’IONAL

INTEGRATION

In .1 lUimlnT Dl'c.mi, ivies, ihe pidf.lrm oi n.nit.n.il iiilfijr.uii.n Iws been

firv iiiiueiiied 1 )^ llu? elimiiialiiiii ol miinirily (“Hnijis llial .ire diliictill

lo mici,r.iii . 1 111- tjloody tdsiorii's dI .siirii .u’lioiis ,irc well kmi'vii-

leoniu.dly, die plains mimirity in Xepnl cinild be eliminaied by

d'-'nple (It i>ui>raie ut India. De.ipiie cvidenee

• epa .s and-vdonn pr(i,»[am could have been used lo iransfer lari'c

pm linns o agrieidinral land fidin plains people lo bill ijcnple. elleciive-

sienifir'T^^'!'^ ibis has noi been clone in any

Mvernm\*. \*\* '«> imlicaiioi) dial ibc Nepalese

ils people" atiempi nia,ss dislocaiioii and re.seiileineni of

"" ‘“'"''''biialive dillicuJiits inliereiil in siicb an

Perlroi' laciins would prcveni ils implememaiimi.

Indl i • .'’’‘'J”'" ‘"'c' b die presence of Xcpal's .smiiberi) neiijlibor,

In IoL" power in cimiparison wiib .Nepal.

of the R ” of refin'ees because

kindofee"'. V ' 1 “

The Indi'"\*'"' '''°i'bl prccipitaie anoihcr refugee problem.

muditlsi-sT ) lending support lo die .Nepali Congres.s, in

lending suDD""t"^^ ' 'n ' ibe Pakistani governmeni by

lo force liiinT ‘^"Sails’ Mukti Baliini. ]i cindd also ihreaien

Indt t . r in nordieastcrn

and therchv™ ‘^P‘‘ ‘ simply close the border to trade

oflhefeat N^'Pal. Any

and this prosneerr^ ^ A'cpalcse governmeni,

“I 'he tarai hm 1 T °P‘“”’\* °ily "'lib regard lo iiitcgralion

nauonal issues " ' ‘'egard to various other domestic and inter-

most develooinff plains people is a second factor. In

ping nations, political and economic power arc controlled

194

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 295

by the same elite groups. Although the existence of separate politically

and economically powerful groups is not peculiar to Nepal, it compli-

cates the process of national integration. The hill majority controls

political power in both the hills and the plains through the King, the

army, and the administrative service. Of course, the governing elite

among the hill people also control many economic resources, but the

plains minority controls a large share of Nepal’s wealth; much of the

best agricultural land in the country, much of the small-scale industry

^significant share of the large-scale industry, and trade between

1 cpal and the outside world. This economic power gives them

•^be capacity to resist the governing elite, whenever they feel

threatened by it. To finance increased oppositional activities by

the Nepali Congress and the Communist parties is one obvious

way to resist.

Integration of the tarai into the national framework by force i.s

not a viable option for the Nepalese government. A more realistic

alternative would be to draw the plains people Into the national

structure through participation in the nation s political life, throng),

encouragement of the voluntary acceptance of national political and

cultural values. This kind of participation would provide tfie

plains people with an investment in the nation s survival

rosperity.

During the past few centuries, the national culture of

olved through the participation of caste and tribal gro^p.^

ablishment of various kingdoms in the hdl region, the la.stan^j m,,-,.

\_r 0^1. 1 \_• IrJnrrHnm established in Kathrn^... t

tablishment of various kingdoms in the ^^gio , uie la.stan^j m,,-,.

iportant of these being the kingdom established m Kathrnar„j„

'69. As has been emphasized throughout this s udy, the ,

.uAui ...Itiire of Nepal, the culture dor./.

ional culture is the hill culture of Nepal, he u ^omican/d

the ruling hill-Brahmin-Chetii-Newar coa i ‘

^de the most outstanding contribution k

they migrated into Nepal, they 'tmitJ ofT^^/ N

gdoms and. although a '^‘""“^fj ^ghonUhe region.

, they have emerged as rulers thr ^ g c j ,

tality that gained them ^^"‘^J^teTlem'Imtsofthetrd^^^^^ a

tbiluy that allowed them to ^ was modified

luse of their fle.xibility,ti conscious tribal

less ritualized, less hierarch > if,, f ,j

e been willii^, for ^ ..itl, ,,

!tri caste children from m i> -..jf,

196 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

but also with tribal womcn^ and, therefore, they have determined to a

arge extent the amalgamation ofplains-Hindu and hill-tribal cultural

mponents that today compose the Nepalese national culture,

he Newars have been assimilated into the Chetri-dominated hill

ure ess completely than the tribal people because the Newar

for than that of the Chetris, and it is difficult

a Ip ® h R highly complex culture to accept assimilation into

culture. They have been partially assimilated because

Grarinali\*^ ^ve allowed them to participate in the governing of Nepal,

been P J' ^ ^ generations, the participation of Newars has

haveim j u government. As a result, the Newars

have mvested heavily in the development of the nation.

ofPrithui ^ various lineages of hill kings before the time

ministers bim, his successors and Rana prime

Newars cooperative arrangement with the

and adminisrr\*!- ‘ people. The Chetris needed the business

of the tribal ^ '^ents of the Newars and the martial strengths

learned Brahmin^ course, they depended on their

I^espite the er \* visors as the touchstones of orthodox Hinduism,

these grouns poiidcal rivalries that have existed among

'■esulted in the p, i" interdependence lias prevailed and has

ThS n" ' r “"‘9ue hill culture.

‘arai, partly becLTofthe’^^"'^" '’j'’

isolated from the hill \* gcngcaphy. The tarai people were

separated ri malarial forest that

of defense against attacks h‘ The forest represented a line

of the tarai, Thereforp u. °\*'PC'vers on the plains south

forest, and this prcventerl^pi ' discouraged cutting down of the

people of thp ni ■ contact between the hill people and

people might result ffi the Ln^'’?^

uniqueness of the bill i assimilation that would destroy the

cultural as well as no! ‘be fear of Indian domination,

‘benanoften-reoeaS b ’ bas become since

IfNepallt o beT debate.

‘be plains people mi!!th ^ niore complete sense than it is now,

‘C''ri«oph von p- fcamework. During

Wew V ' V f\*‘versity in the Chelri Caste of

(New York, 1966).pp.65\_gg C-trte, ed, by C, von Furer-Haimendorf

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 197

the brief period of party politics in Nepal, the parties served to draw

P ams people and other minority groups into the political mainstream.

0 itical parties have proven to be effective instruments of national

integration in other developing nations. They function as “melting

P0I.S, not only for regionally and culturally diverse groups but also

or t le urban modernizing elite, the traditional rural elite and, indeed,

t e large number of nonelite groups as well.\* Usually they are

nonascriptive organizations that encourage participation

fro^m^ barriers that have previously separated minority groups

om each other. They may not create new cultural amalgamations,

ry contribute to the breaking down of insularity and suspicion,

ill the nation-building process.

Qugh the traditional ruling elite tends to assert its leadership

iin a party system as within other governing systems, universal

a ^ ' ^tanchise forces this elite to reach accommodation with groups

^^t gain power because of the votes they control. Thus, the Nepali

j "Sress and Communist parties, and several other parties as well,

t support from groups that had never participated in the govern-

bifl ^ during the Shah and Rana periods, the

N Chetris, and Newars dominated party leadership.

^ nunsber of high-caste plains people

fo ^ rank, and a few low-caste and tribal people also

jjj ^ '''^y into positions of political prominence. Elimination of

in System since 1960 has returned Nepal to a political system

Alth ^I'^ditional elite can assert its influence more exclusively,

det has become an increasingly important factor in

^ ertnining political influence, in the absence of direct elections and

hisl P^i'bes to compete in those elections, landownership and

mor factors monopolized by the traditional elite, remain

ecisive in the political process.

optical parties and ruling monarclis have generally coexisted

thr! " ^“"^'derable tension.\* When King Mahendra ascended the

foil !j^i\*^ ® Nepal’s political system was in a state offlux. The n^S

the most powerful person in the country, but at east

^\*^^rnitted to working with an array of political parties,

tonl- ^ when the first and only elected government

' ^ in 1959, his relationship with the various parties nas an

“Samud'p h"’ ‘S’(Neif Na'vJn, 1968],

PP' 180-185 ' Poliikal Order tn Changing Societies {

198 REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL

uneasy one. Tension increased during eighteen ^^tg^sup-

Nepali Congress government and, in December 1960,

ported by the army, overthrew the government and took th

power into his own hands.

Never openly discussed, butcertainlyoncof the nwsuital cons' ’ ^

leading to the abrogation of parliamentary ''

Mahendra’s dissadsfaction with the relegation ol the Orov

parativelyminorroleinthegovcrnnicntalstruclureaftertiem <

of the Nepal Congress government. Another factor may ,,t p^,);

King Mahendra’s suspicion that the "sociahst-oricntec

Congress leaders were plotting the eventual abolition o l le m

Certain indiscreet remarb by Nepali Congress leaders a ^n-Q^Qppsti-

allegedly obstructionist role played by the King and tlie 3 ^

tution seemed to add substance to the King s appreliensions.

The control of the traditional elite over the rural areas o - r

has not yet been challenged. Most of the army officers and many o

bureaucrats are draivn from this elite. Therefore, any

no matter how progressive the ideology of its leaders, must mo\ e

slowly and cautiously with reforms.

A large majority of die landowning and commercial interests in i

for instance, were unalterably opposed to the Nepali Congiess gov

ment’s land and taxation policy. The moderate character o ^

economic legislation enacted by the Koirala Cabinet did not

their apprehensions, since these measures were considered to be

the first in a series of gradually more drastic changes in the Ian

taxation system. These vested interest groups, with their close tiM ^

various cliques in the palace, had long since concluded that the

was the last effeedve barrier to the imposition of fundamental econo

reforms, and this attitude was crucial in determining their response

the December coup.^

The critical dilemma faced by the few remaining ruling monarchs

in the world today is whether to opt Cor political development or o

political survival.® King Mahendra chose the latter alternative,

he had used his centralized authority to push ahead vigorously wit

•Bhuwan Lai Joshi and Leo E. Rose, Dimocratic Inmtalions h Xepal (Berkeley,

1966), p. 386.

^Ibid., p. 383.

'Huntington, Dp. oV.,p, 177.

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 199

various fundamental reforms, he might have been successful in moving

i epal more quickly in the direction of a modern nation-state, but he

"ould also have created a stronger and more politically conscious

middle class. The middle class would not only demand a share of his

power, but it might also work actively to undermine his position.

0 ideology and outlook of twentieth-century intellectuals and

middle-class groups, however, tends to describe even the most benevo-

f^nt despotism as a feudal anachronism. Monarchy is simply out of

^lylein middle-class circles.”’ The King was undoubtedly even more

mmdful of the fact that effective reforms would undermine the position

t e traditional elite and would thus alienate those upon whom he

upended for support. Such reforms are likely to bring an army-backed

from the right more rapidly than lack of reforms would bring a

levolution organized by political parties on the left and, therefore,

c King must have calculated that his family line could remain in

power longer with little or no reform.

luring the Rana period, Nepal’s rulers put off the day when they

l^ould be forced to face the dilemma of development or survival by

0 ating the country from the outside world, preventing the penetra-

"^oolernization with its reformist pressures. But during the

tfr. ^940 s, the Ranas could no longer maintain this policy

■ ’■^^\*''oly and, gradually, modernizing ideologies found their way

into Nepal,

1950s and 1960s, as pressure for modernization continued

grow and find e.vpression in political organizations antithetical to

‘ c.\istcnce of a ruling monarchy. King Mahendra turned for support

^ I only (Q ibg traditional elite but also to a number of aid-giving

^1'\*^ policy of isolation having become inefleciivc b> the

■ ^ reverse policy, based on the presence in Nepal ofrcpreseiita-

hves of

th

•nany foreign governments, seemed best designed to

insure

;|. '"‘J>'arcliy’s survi\’al. King Mahendra began implementing

policy in the second half of the 1950s and, throughout the rest of

' "as most adroit at balancing the influences of foreign

the nation’s independence and his own po"er. e

. . ''^1 nations to assist in Nepal’s economic de\ elopnn t'l- te

■^■‘’'•“'ceofat least four of these, India, the United .States, tlie Soviet

h; ii Uliina, was motivated primarily by political tondd<.r.iti<)n>.

iM struggle among them an<i by their cleit nihmiitwn

’“•‘in tin- inonarchv in order to prevent .Nepal from )alim,„ into

■■■\* • P- lol

200 KiCGUINAl.ISM AND SAllONAI. I’NU V IN NKl’Al.

Oic luiiuls ()l ^ovcriiiiu iu Oi.ii In\* iiiili iciully to out: or .iliollicr

of ihfiii.'’

I Ilf financial .support of tin- four iii.ijor aid-t'ivini; n.itioii'v lias been

accompaniotl by tin; tin-ioric of rli,iiii;c. Huncvcr. their aid Iws

a,ssistcd the monarchy Inith directly and indirectly to create a better-

ecpiipped ami belter-trained aiiny and to put a larije number nl

potentially re.stivc, educated yonn^ nieii on the bureaiicialie payrolls.

It i.s true that aid-nivinj; ai'cncies of several nations have pre.sscd

tin Kini' for lelornis, but aid prmtratit.v have been inainiained despite

the continued ab.sence ot .significant lefiirtns bccali'o, for lin-'C nations,

change hatl a loner priority than inaiuieiiaiue of the stains <|no,

nhieh they tdl found to their adv.iniage for diHetent reasons, ■rtuis.

m the slum run at any rate, foreign assistance has enhain ed the monar-

c n s chances of survival and lues inhibited tlie gross tli of pressures lor

untamcntal cliaiige.^ lit tin; long run, hovsever, foreign a\si.sianee

a so creatw increa.sing dcuiamls for graids tind set vice.s iliai the gosei n-

ment ssill find dilficuk to satisfy on its own, atid it ereates eliaiuiel.' by

« nci idea.s ami idcologic.s inimic.d to iraditionali.sni are iniimluced

into tie country. In ific long mn, therefore, lineign .ivsisiaiicc may

encourage change, Imt perhaps on a time sehetlule more acceptable

to tne aid-giving naiion,s.

Along witli support irum the traditional elite and foreign govern-

ments, mg .Malieudra souglit capacity to survive tlmmgli mitioiiaiisi

ervor ased on .strong anti-Indian sentiment among the cduealed

i epa IS of hill origin. Although the middle class is the segment of

• cpal s population that tends to have the greatest iuherenl antipathy

im, 'm 'V® most narrowly naiionalisiic. IJy capiudiz-

'’‘\*\*'tmali.sm, King Maliemira wa.s able to neutralize

don pardw support that the middle rlas.s gave to opposi-

ncccssarv'\*T\*^^"^i mui-ImUan feeling in Nepal, it is

educamrk-"

throughoutlt Mudv^'r^'r’''''' tlie emphasis

tarai and India n ^ between the

“Political c • ' • economic and cultural ties

nations as wellr PakistW\* ‘lominaictl the involvement nl' most oilier aiil-giviii.g

nations by tension in ihe \fVt? Indiii, the aitl rroiu Israel and the Arab

ment of Gurkha tr<^n • i f assistance hv its interest in recruit-

B. Mihaly, ForV ■ ’

PP- 122-124 and ch, Xllt ^'ofi/ics m jVrpa/ (London, IP65); sre especially

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 201

hill region and India. In fact, many Nepalis feci that the

the are T assimilated nuo

lo'e 't ^ \*7 cultural, and political sphere and miglit

their identity. In order to forestall this possibility, from

miKt Indian influence in all aspects of .Xcpalese life

must be reduced.

made'\*^ i950s and i960s, efforts to define Nepal’s identit) were

flies nf the differences between Nepalese and Indian culture,

her 1960\*” ' manifest in the dramatic events of Dcceni-

ofn ■ ' ^7 Mahendra gave increased emphasis to the tlieme

meat \*°'h \* assuming direct responsibility for the gu\ern-

Con ’ K the middle class for support against tlie .Nepali

“aiif 7 ^ ^^^^§ttig that the Congress government had encouraged

cliarr7\*7^^ elements.”'\* He produced no evidence to support this

"asim' ^’^Sgested that the party was not nationalistic, and that it

dence h'-'^ some way prejudicial to Nepal’s indepen-

/■' ^PPealed for support of the panchayat system by claiming

tailed 7^ ^ protect and promote Nepalese nationalism. He

that ‘‘Tr I\*^'^\*'‘^‘^t;ntary system alien to Nepalese life, and declared

\Vn. I [p‘"'chayat] system bears the stamp of the genius of the

•''-paicsc race.”'-

Pl^iik^" ? strong nationalist platform incorporated as a major

period ^ nonalignment in foreign alfairs. During the

hidi- titisii dominance in India, Nepal teas aligned with Britisli

di ritc independent India recognized Nepal's indepen-

I'Olj/ \l \*^\*^pal remained aligned with India during the early

I'toch ■ -Mahcndra ascended the throne, nonalignment was

j .'\*'\* -^'e-pal’s foreign policy, and tiiis was essentially ,in

\*'' '‘trd'l ^■'^'^’'try’s independence from India. Belligerence

’h'ifi' \*"h‘\* is sometimes provoked by rather heavy-h.inded Indian

'7,77’ '">■ l»‘lhin fca« of China and of Ciiinrw--

/ ‘ ''fc wilnerdon in Nepal, 'fiie .Nepalis react strongly aeain-'i iho

202 regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

Anti-Indian-oriented nationalism mobilizes support for

ment among middle-class hill people, but it uy ^ak-

of national integration, because many hill people have i jti^ens

ing the distinction between plains people who are Nepale

and those who are Indian citizens, and some and- "

is automatically transferred to the tarai population. em o ’

problems of national integration and national identity ca or e

dictory solutions. Although Nepal’s leaders earnestly desire to

all regions of Nepal into a closer relationship in order to strengt

nation, these leaders tend to view one of the most important o

regions, the tarai, as an extension of the Indian economy an

Indian culture. Many regard the plains people of the tarai as n

citizens in disguise, more loyal to India than to Nepal. This suspi

has been reinforced by the businessmen and students of plains or g ^

who have held dual citizenship, and by the extensive fami y an^

business ties between people living on the two sides of the or e ^

Because of the identity problem and the resulting distrust o p

people, many members of the Kathmandu elite hesitate to

the participation of the plains people in national life.. They ear

will enhance Indian influence in Nepal.

The plains people of the tarai have their own identity pro^ em ,

similar to those of people who have emerged from colonial experiences.

Neither Nepal’s history nor Nepal’s hill culture satisfy their identi^

needs, because they have not been associated with cither. Na i ^

symbols with which the tarai people could easily identify are missing

The Nepali language, perhaps even more than the Crown itse , is

a powerful and pervasive symbol of Nepalese nationalism in the '

region. Despite the fact that the language is now being inuoduce

into the secondary schools and colleges of the tarai, Nepali is spo en

by relatively few tarai people, even as a second language. Hindi, t e

lingua franca of the region and a significant symbol for many tarai

people, has been rejected as a second national language or even one

that is recognized for government use at the regional level.

Through the “Back to the Village Campaign,’’ the government

sought to make the symbols and values of Nepalese nationalism

familiar to villagers in the tarai and elsewhere in the country. The

campaign foundered not only because it was complex and difficult

to implement but also because villagers remained merely passive

recipients of novel concepts. An informational program, even when

put into the context of a quasi-religious movement, is no substitute for

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 203

active participation in the governmental process as a means of en-

couraging identification with the nation.

The Nepalese government has drawn up no comprehensive plan

Of national integration. Even if such a plan existed, it would still be

difficult for the government to place national integration above

national identity as a priority because, in the minds of the Kathmandu

elite, the plains people of the tarai are so closely associated with the

major power on Nepal’s southern border. Nor, as already mentioned,

can the government adopt massive dislocation of plains people as a

solution to the tarai problem, because of the certainty of India’s

ol^jection. Some government officials hope that mass migration of hill

people into the tarai will make the formulation of a specific plan for

national integration unnecessary. But as the data presented in chapter

indicate, migration will provide a partial solution at best. There

acc more people migrating into tlie tarai from India than from the

n Is of Nepal, Therefore, despite assistance that the government

gives to the hill settlers in the tarai and despite the growing economic

an political importance of these settlers in the region, migration as a

Jciicle for Nepalization has its limitations. Nepalization resulting

corn interaction among settlers from the hills and plains will occur

n tarai subregions vvliere migrants from the hills are settling in large

numbers, but even in these subregions, the process will take place

cin y slowly over the next several generations. In other sub-regions

a ccady settled largely by plains people, bill migrants will have little

mpact on the predominant plains culture.

the government relies on migration and on the several other

P° 'cics discussed in this study, the tarai problem is likely to remain

“"solved and a constant irritant for a long time to come. On the other

liiiiicl

so long as the Indian government continues to suppot

1 die

onarcliy and to discourage the operation of antimonarchica! foiccs

from

that the Nepalese

across the border, the irritant will be one

can tolerate.

^•atvever, if the government formulates a comprehensive plan lor

“•'iioiul integration, not only modifying and coordinadng currciu

Ivies, hot iinplemeniing a few additional ones, a sn n|ion

‘•irai problem miglu not seem so disiaui. Some polity i

ivvsen liusiilit; among the plains people -for e.x.miple, -iu'

. r .1 . ' . . ‘ . . . »r vii\* .I'Ml

rtiiujv

f'olllt

of clauses in ciiizcnsliip laws that discrimiuait a.vnn J

'’iinplification of procedures for ai ijuisitiou ol vi'i ■

“’ll ales, ami eihuring that ccrtifieates leacii die Inuu s o a

-0^ regionalism and national unity in NEPAL

inhabitants ivho qualify for them. Tiie government could also make

ure t lat tarai inhabitants arc not denied their source of livelihood

x-rausc of the citizenship provisions in the land-reform laws. These

langes would cause little anxiety, even among ultranationalistic

lem crs o the Kathmandu elite. Provision for direct elections from

istnct panchayats or district assemblies to the National Panchayat

er to 0 tain better representation of plains people would probably

P > uce on y limited opposition. The recognition of Hindi as an

■ ciate national language would cause increased identity problems

P'-’op e in Kathmandu, but this gesture of good will toward

would reap compensatory rewards for the govern-

larrriT ' ‘^Sovernment were willing to implement a policy of hiring

anri ^ People as government administrators, police,

in cirli ^ ° quotas of 10 or 20 percent of the employees

for mtirn - 1 -it would be creating a viable instrument

.sucli a hirin ^ Substitute for political parties. Through

in the gain significant representation

pohe 12/! Undoubtedly, this type of radical

but if the hir''°^ bireatening to many people in Kathmandu,

bavTsomechlncc^oTllXncl^^^^^^^^^

miemtion nri\* institution could be a key force in the national-

ensuring ihe^incluLn of

did not clitKKi. I r -r S^nups in the polity. King Mahendra

of other men’s n^Vr- Period, he tended to be suspicious

Ue lived in n'uS ;'!? '“"'P “‘'P“«'-'^ closely guarded,

^chitcei of i for ‘'legated little of his authority, .>Vs the

Pe-ndlmcet; fe" f? i''."':' measure'of inde-

oditrhand desoiie r ^'\* 1 .'' °‘“^'nn'J‘ng contribution. On the

■eadcnlnp i,, fonnul iiirm ■. 1 the traditional order, lus

nciihcr forceful nor progrLi!^^ ""Plemcnting domestic policies was

die opixiniinhv'i ^ifendra lues

•> -oS;: groups

•'nd prtv.tudity differ erciiiv i^'ng Birtndra’s upbringing

r-uicd iji . n ‘ ' \*\*\*osc of hi.-; father. Birendra wa-i

when inanv ‘‘“""S » pi^rticuh.rly in .ho

- being openly deba.ed in Nepal.

PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION 205

Unlike his father, he was not educated in the Palace under religiously

onented Brahmin teachers but at Eton and later, for shorter periods,

in the United States, Japan, and Israel. He is outgoing by nature and

more comfortable than his father with members of the modernizing

the more highly educated men of the Central Secretariat and the

university who, like himself, have had substantial contact with the

world beyond Nepal. Although, at least for the present, he needs to

tetain the support of the traditional elite upon which his father

upended, he is better prepared to extend himself to other, segments

the nation’s population. If he is willing to do this, he may be able

to move Nepal toward the goal of more complete national unity.

APPENDIX

methodology of the field

SURVEY CONDUCTED IN THE TARAI,

NOVEMBER 1967-MARCH 1968

to ^ S^fher district- and village-level data for this study, it was necessary

era ^ survey. Tribhuvan University generously awarded me a

assistant, who could speak the major tarai languages, Hindi,

■ ‘ ^11, and Bhojpuri, as well as Nepali.

bv 6,258 villages in the tarai, according to village lists compiled

Pos 'hi ^\*\*^\*^®^ Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal. Because it was

sam\'^ only a few of these villages, it was necessary to follow a

P ttig technique that would make possible generalizations about the

a whole. The' first step was to select districts that could be considered

"’heth'''\*^'"'^\* subregions of the tarai. Four factors were used to determine

po I districts were similar to each other: language, religion,

fart f^fttsity, and the extent of forest cover. Maps were prepared for

othe TK factors, to show which of the tarai districts were similar to each

Oth\*^ ^^nguage and religion factors reflect important cultural differences,

j Actors might have been used to indicate economic differences, such

ypf ofland use, size of land holdings or urbanization. However, statistics

facton

M;

were either nonexistent or unreliable,

^ P ^ shows that there are four linguistically distinct subregions. Only

'be far-,

one '6e tarai, in Biratnagar and Jhapa districts, is no

Satistii

'‘S'lage spoken by the majority of the population.

“ 'be percentage of Muslims in the various tarai districts. Muslims

2 Map 8 presents

istricts. Muslims

the tarai popula-

^ndHind "T onv

btion '’f'ng the only two important religious groups m

VVhat' ^ statistics indicate the religious composition of the istnets.

four f'-T is not Muslim is almost entirely Hindu. There are

less tn ^ distinct subregions, regions in which contiguous districts vary

3-5 percent in terms of the number of Muslims living in the districts.

'See

'Th,

■iheTP'''" P- 208 .

1 for'U^ ‘■f'ffcd

to in the appendix are census

districts. Sec m.ap 1 and map 2

’•fusus of census districts and overlapping

approximately the same territory as Morang devriopmeu

''"'“P Son p. 209.

207

APPENDIX 211

1 ap 9\* shows that there are four groups of tarai districts with similar

population density. Map 6 in chapter IV shows the amount of forest remaining

in the tarai. Unfortunately, the data are given by regions delineated by

t e Forestry Department rather than by census or development districts;

nevertheless, from map 6, we can obtain a fairly good idea of the amount

0 orest cover that still exists in each tarai census district. There are five

airly distinct subregions, The four far-western tarai districts are still heavily

ntested. In the mid-western tarai, all districts except Palhi have about

one-third or less of their area covered by forest. In the central tarai region,

oonrly half of Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, and Sarlahi districts is still forest-

covered. Just to the east of Sarlahi, Mahottari, Siraha and Saptari are almost

complctdy deforested. In the two districts farthest to the east, more forest

coTCr exists than in any of the tarai districts except those of the far west.

omparison of the four maps indicates that there are four groups of conti-

guous districts that share common characteristics and can be described as

^ regions of the tarai. The far-eastern tarai subregion includes Kanchanpur,

3-dali, and Bardia. The second subregion consists of the four census districts

;n the mid-western tarai: Shivaraj, Khajahani, Majkhanda, and Palhi,

'e third distinguishable subregion includes Parsa, Bara, and Rautahat,

P fourth comprises Sarlahi, xMahottari, Siraha, and Saptari. ^

these four subregions, the census districts of Kailali, Kapilabastu-

tvaraj, Bara, and Mahottari were selected for study.^ The two districts

rt est to the east, Biratnagar and Jhapa, do not have enough cliaracter-

ttticsin common to form a subregion. Nevertheless, because these two districts

fflclude various little-known tribal groups, because there is large-scale

""gration into these districts, rapid deforestation, and also government-

POnsored economic development on a scale more intensive than in other

parts of the tarai, these districts are interesting from both the anthropologica

fif.k 'f^fclopment point of view. Therefore, Jhapa was selected as a

tfistrict to study.

'ras the objective to select twenty villages in each distnet, although it

1 necessary to include twenty-four villages in Mahottari Dhanus '

'f'^aded to use a cluster sample method rather than a purely random selec-

\*Seen,ap9o„p 2 ]q^

of Kapilabastu and Shivaraj xvere consolidated into 0 “ eve-

Kapilabastu. The census distrlc. of MahoUar. was divided

ihe (.g ^^velopnaent districts named Mahottari and Dhanusha. In Kaila

development district units cover the same territory,

develnn which the panchayals were randomly selected were j- ^

t4 ct"\* of MaLttari and Dhanusha. In order to obtain a

census district, three Led

— j

‘0 surv'^ of each development district, six panchayals in all. Because it P ^ j.

When villages in each panchayat, twenty-four villages were selected

«ri-Dhanusha.

212 APPENDIX

tion. The latter would have resulted in a wide scattering of villages, some

of which would have been difficult to reach because of the lack of roads.

he first step of the cluster-selection process was a random selection of five

panchayats’ in each district. An official of the Central Bureau of Statistics,

selection, using the Bureau’s lists of panchayats for each district

and lippett s random tables.

Once the panchayats were selected, they were located on maps. Letters

I\* district-level officials were obtained from relevant national-

eve 0 cia s. When the headquartere of each district was reached, these

ers were presented to the chief district officer with requests for letters

mtro uction from him to the chairman of each panchayat randomly

e ected. Several days were spent at each district headq uarters going through

; 1 made a caste breakdown of membership

“nd district panchayat for 1962 and 1967, a caste

^c j- ^ .^'^|’^'‘^‘■level gazetted officers and police officials, and a

in tin\* ° industry by date established, type of industry, location

leaders owner. Whenever possible, I met local political

about notables, in order to learn as mucli as possible

about he economy and history of the district.

panchavats" 1 ^^\* n'n '''\*lage-selcction process was taken upon reaching the

villages in th " ^ \*^^\*^\*.’ Panchayat was named after one of the

that vill^icrp T included that village in the survey. Wliile in

included th'rw villages in the surrounding area and

(cluster! asDect° f t"' '"i This was the purposive or nonrandom

selection The r° ' ® process. Several criteria were used for the

possible the castp°^'^J\* '“Sether had to represent as closely as

if there were som'”^ surrounding village population. For example,

least one of the fourvffiag'rha^tfb Panchayat area, at

effort was made to select bmh l/ predominantly Muslim village. An

ly less differentiated in ee \* villages, the latter being general-

cases where nanchav e.g., no shops or rice mills. In the few

an effort was made tn^ ocated near urbanized district headquarters,

order to account for different distances from that center in

an mterview was hdd wii ,h ■a'’’ “"aanhedule per village. In each village,

“T group of elders as well as a 1'^ headman, which usually also included

as a translator and m of curious onlookers. My assistant acted

I^-impossib; ,0

ram arrived in Kailali d' t ' of the cluster sample villages, Unseasonal

remote of the five distr''^! ffiesame time we did. Kailali was the most

, . '0 , t e sample panchayats were many miles apart,

A panchayat is an aUiv,\* ■

population of ^PProximately"j,()00 InliaMtams""'^ “

APPENDIX 213

and the jungle trails between them turned to mud. Only 8 villages were

surveyed. Nevertheless, because the vast majority of the population in

ailali is Tharu and the villages surveyed were mainly Tharu, the results are

probably fairly accurate descriptions of conditions in the district as a whole,

n apilabastu district, only 19 villages were surveyed. Taulihawa was one of

the panchayats randomly selected. However, the village of Taulihawa is the

district headquarters, with a population of considerably more than 5,000

3nd a great deal of commercial activity. It was impossible for the panchayat

airman, his secretary, and the other village leaders to provide detailed

^formation about their village, and the survey of Taulihawa had to be limited

to only some general information about education and industry. Because of

Personal illness in Jhapa, the last district surveyed, the sample had to be

united to 10 villages, only 2 in each randomly selected panchayat. Although

the sample is smaller, it is probably still fairly accurate for the district as a

ole. All 20 of the sample villages in Bara and all 24 in Mahottari-Dhanusha

"'ere surveyed.

Along with the eighty-one cluster-sample villages in the five districts,

«ghteen recently settled villages of hill people in the five districts were also

surveyed. They were studied in order to learn something about the most

'^spid change occurring in the tarai as a result of the destruction of the forest

rapid population increase. There was no attempt to select these recently

osta lished settlements on a random-sample basis. Although information

gained from the study of these villages is used in this work, no attempt has

made to draw from the data statistically supportable generalizations,

"all, 99 tarai villages, including both the 81 sample and the 18 nonsample

" ages, Were surveyed in 1967-68.

GLOSSARY

e terms “hills” or “hill region” used throughout this study include

^ I of Nepal from the Siwaliks foothill range north to the Tibetan

order. This is a somewhat broader definition than the Nepalis use.

he term pahar means hill in Nepali and is defined by Nepalis as

any mountain that does not have snow on it the year around, i.e.,

mountain less chan approximately 17,000 feet in elevation. The

Nepalis generally do not consider Kathmandu Valley or the three

lotv-lying “inner tarai” valleys as part of the hill region but, in proper

Seographical terms, they are integral parts of the hill region and are

^ treated as part of the hill region in this study.

People: This term, as used in the study, can be defined in two ways,

f^trst, linguistically, i.e., the people whose mother tongue or first lan-

Suage is one that predominates in the hill region of Nepal ; Nepali,

-N'etvari, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Sunwar, Thakali, or

Sherpa. Second, the term can be defined sociologically, as including

those people who belong to the Hindu caste groups found in the hills:

itill Brahmin, Chctri, Gharti, Kumhale, Majhi, Kami, Sunar, Damai,

and Sarki, as well as the hill-tribal groups: -Magar, Gurung, Rai,

Limbu, Sunwar, Tamang, Thakali, and Sherpa. The Naiars are

people who do not fit into either the castc-Hindu or triba category.

Many persons in Kathmandu Valley tend to regard PaharM people

as culturally unsophisticated and, therefore, do not call themselves hij

people. There are, in fact, differences m educational attainmen and

technological sophistication between many Kathmandu Valley

a and

Gu jjcupic ui , j j •\_ the more creneral category of mil

dwellei^ have been included m tne moi ^ ;

In:

people. valleys between the Siwaliks (some-

c tarai: There and the Mahabliarat Range: one on

times called the C uri o largest on the Gandak/Narayani

the Rapti River m t le « Trijuga River in eastern

River in central i ep. , > . mainly by Tliarus until recently,

Nepal. These have ee numbers of settlers from the hills,

but now they also contain la 5 ,

91. T

■>16

GLOSSARY

Geograpiiically, economically, and to some extent culturally these

valleys are pare of the hill region and are not part of the tarai region

included in this study.

Mother tongue, riiis is the first language” an individual lcarn.s to speak,

an tie language he uses within his family circle, lit the study, the

terms mother longue (used hy the iVepalese census) and first language

arc used interchangeably.

Outer tarai: This is the region referred to in the .study .simply as the tarai.

t includes all the territory in .N’epal souili ofthe Siwalik.s Range. It is

t le fiat plains region of Nepal, ilm northern fringe of the Gaiigetic plain

that hes within Nepal’s national boundaries. '

P zation. This term lias been coined for use in tin's .study to describe

le process jy which plains pcojile living in Nepal take on

1C c laractcnstics of the Nepalese culture. The major element of the

nf H Pi'oecss is the learning of Nepali. However, the adoption

proems ol the hill people is also part of the

Plains |^"Suagcs: I l.csc arc languages spoken by people who live on the

Tlic maiiVT'' Indian or Nepalese side of the border.

are Hindi, Urdu, Maitlilli, Bhojpuri, and

Rati 1 ' spoken by fewer people includejliangar, Marwari,

. pSrtSss ^

Plains people : Tim term as used in die study, is based on linguistic distinc-

moIrXror firJU'"" ^ " """

the plains or the hills.' horn or live in

Maithili'and^Bhn-'' Phams speak principally dialects of

speak dialects of S' TIic^Rn'r\* r““'

ofBenp-i): Tf - ?'f . \* ^ and fajpunas speak dialects

di\* ’

who sneak if -,r • ' ^ “ n language in its own right; tfiose

a~. n.sp„

languages of their own Dangare appear to have

Plains tribes: These are !.r r ■

into the Hindu cast chiefly on the plains, which do not fit

In the tarai. The ^ ttttnber of these groups are to be found

mentioned above numerous; others are

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 219

^epal. Election Commission. [Results of the First General Election,

Fcbruary-Apri! 1959], Compilation from official lists, by constituency.

’• Pratinidliilwa-RaslUriya Panchayat ko Nirwachan ko Matadata

^mamli [Voters List for the National Pancliayat Election: The

,, Graduate Constituency]. Kathmandu, 1967.

• Hydrological Survey Department. Compilation of Surface Water

Records of Kepal Through December 31, 1965. Katlimandu : His Majesty’s

Government of Nepal in cooperation with U.S. Agency for Interna-

tional Development, 1967.

Industrial Development Corporation. Investing in Nepal: A Resume

of Nepal Laws and Regulations Governing the Establishment and Operation

of an Industrial Enterprise. Kathmandu, 1965.

• Report on Jute Production in the Morang Biratnager District. Kathmandu,

1960.

~ • Statistical Abstract, 1966-. (Irregular.)

®P3 ■ Land Reform Commission. Report on Land Tenure Conditions in the

Western Tarai. Kathmandu, 1953. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project.)

^Pal. Ministry of Economic Planning. Cereal Grain Production, Consumption

oad Marketing Patterns, Nepal 1965. Kathmandu [1966?].

Mobility of Agricultural Labor in Nepal. Kathmandu, 1967.

• Physical Input-Output Characteristics of Cereal Grain Production for

Selected Agricultural Areas in Nepal, Crop Year 1965-66. Kathmandu,

1967.

• Third Plan of Nepal, 1965-1970. Kathmandu, 1965.

t epal. Ministry ofEconomic Planning and Ministry of Panchayat. Guidelines

to the Decentralization of Government Functions. Kathmandu, 1965.

-^epal. Ministry of Finance. Budget Speech. Fiscal Years 1965-66, 1966-67,

1967-68. Delivered by the Honourable Finance Minister, Surya

Bahadur Thapa. Kathmandu, 1965-67.

i epal. Ministry of Forests. “National Forest Policy, 1959.” (Trans, by Regmi

Research Project, No. 505.)

epal. Ministry of Forests, Agriculture and Land Reform. Department of

Agriculture. Resettlement Project: Nawalpur. Kathmandu, 1963.

epal. Ministry of Home and Panchayat. The Panchayat, a Planned Democracy.

Kathmandu, 1967.

epal. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Department of Publicity.

Nc Maps. Kathmandu, 1966.

. Ministry of Irrigation and Power. Meteorological Survey. Unpublished

Ne ^‘■'■“‘'ds on Rainfall, Humidity and Temperature, 1948-1966.

of National Guidance. Department of Publicity and

Broadcasting. Report of the Development Districts and Demarcation

Commiiiet^ Kathmandu, 1961. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project,

Ao. 2426.)

218 SiaECTBD niBBIOGRAl’llY

Mathcma, Pushpa Ram. Report on Tobacco Marketing in Xcpal. Katlimandu.

Dcparimcnt of Agriculture, Ministry of i'orests, Agriculture and

Land Reform, His Majesty’s Government of Nepal, 1966.

Molisin, Moliammcd, and Sliumsliere, Pasliupati, J. B. R. Some Aspects oj

Panchayai System in Nepal. Kathmandu; Mini.siry of Information and

Broadcasting, His Maje.sty’.s Government of Nepal, 1966. (Ntpa

Today Series, No. 5.)

Nepal. Central Bureau of Slati.stics. Directory uj .Mumijaelurinii P.\taiilislimenls.

Kathmandu, 1965.

. Foreign Trade, Fiscal Fear 1962-63. Kathmandu, 1966.

-. National Agricultural Census, 1962. 52 vok. Kathmandu, 1962. [In

Nepali.)

. Rttshtriya Jana-Ganana, 2018 [Naliontil Census, 1961]. In progress.

Kathmandu, 1966-. N.B. Throughout the te-Vt, this publication is

cited as Census of Nepal, 1961.

Nepal. Constitution. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal [1959]. Kath-

mandu; Ministr)’ of Law and Parliamentary Allairs, 1959.

. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal [1962]. English Translation.

Kathmandu: Ministry of Law and Justice, His Majesty’s Government

of Nepal, 1963.

Nepal. Department of Forests. Forest Resources Survey. Forest Statistics

for the Tarai and Adjoining Regions, 1967. Kathmandu [1968?].

Nepal. Department of Industrial and Commercial Intelligence. Brief Report

of the Industrial Survey of Butaul. Kathmandu, 19-!li. (Trans, by Regmi

Research Project, No. C-438.)

. Brief Report of the Industrial Survey of Kailali Kanchanpur. Kathmandu,

1948. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. C-391.)

. Industrial Survey Report: Banke and Bardia. Kathmandu, 1948. (Trans.

by Regmi Research Project, No. C-243.)

. Industrial Survey Report: Bara, I’arsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, and Mahotteiri

Kathmandu, 1949. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project.)

. Industrial Survey Report of Saptari and Biratnagar. Kathmandu, 1948.

(Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. C-140.]

Nepal. Department of Industries. Unpublished records (Registry of Private

.and Public Firms), 1944-67.

Nepal. Department of Land Revenue. Administrative Regulations for Butaul,

1861. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, 1967.)

. Administrative Regulations for Tarai Districts, 1861. 5 vols. (Trans, by

Regmi Research Project, 1967.)

Nepal Department of Statistics. Census of Popululion, Nepal, 1952/54 A.D.

Kathmandu, 1958.

. Nepal ko j\aksa: T/mmIPargannama Bibhajit Janaganana fillaharu

[Map of Nepal; Division of Census Districts into Tbums/Pargannasj.

Kathmandu, 1959.

220

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nepal. Ministry of Pancliayats, Introduction to Bara Development District.

Kathmandu, 1964. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 67/65.)

. An Introduction to Saptari Development District. Kathmandu, 1965—66.

(Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 445/66.)

. An Introduction to Sarlahi Development District. Kathmandu, 1965-66.

(Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 494/66.)

Nepal. Muluki Ain, 1854 [Legal Code]. Kathmandu; reprinted by Law

Book Committee, 1963.

Nepal. National Education Commission. Report of the MationaL Education

Commission, 1961. Bishwa Bandhu Thapa, chairman. Kathmandu,

1961. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 2324.)

Nepal. National Education Planning Commission. Education in Pfepal:

Report of the Jlepal jValional Education Planning Commission. Prepared by

members of the Commission, and edited by Rudra Raj Pandey,

Kaisher Bahadur K.C. and Dr. Hugh B. Wood. Kathmandu : College

of Education, 1956.

Nepal. National Planning Council. Draft Five Year Plan [1957-1962] :

Synopsis. Kathmandu, 1956.

. The Three Year Plan, 1962-65. Kathmandu, 1963.

Nepal Rastra Bank, Report of the Board of Directors to His Majesty’s Government

for the Fiscal Years 1961/62, 1962/63, 1963/64, 1964/65. Kathmandu,

1966.

Pahadi, Badri Prasad. Bardia Jilta ma Bhumi Sudhar [Land Reform in Bardia

District], Kathmandu: Department of Land Reform, His Majesty’s

Government of Nepal, 1967. (Excerpts translated by Regmi Research

Project, No. 2/68.)

Pant, Thakur Nath; Mathema, Ram Bhakta; and Shrestha, Madan Bahadur.

he Ghee Markets of Bulaul and Nepalganj, Katlimandu; Department

of Agriculture, Ministry of Forests, Agriculture, and Land Reform,

His Majesty’s Government ofNepal, 1964. (Trans, by Regmi Research

Project, No. 10/65.)

Pradhan, Sagar Bahadur, and Bhattarai, Basent Prasad. A Study ofjVepal’s

Jute T/arAr/. Kathmandu: Department of Agriculture, Ministry of

Forests, Agriculture and Land Reform, His Majesty’s Government

ofNepal, 1963. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 951/65.)

Pradhan, Sagar Bahadur, and Shrestha, Madan Bahadur. A Report on the

Study of the Potato Market in Patung and the Orange Market in Dharan.

Kathmandu: Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Forests, Agricul-

ture and Land Reform, His Majesty’s Government ofNepal, 1963.

(Trans, by Regmi Research Project, ’No. 951/65.)

Report ofthe Commission on Decentralization of Administrative Au tiiority.”

Gorkhapatra, July 18, 1964. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project,

No. 867/64.)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 221

Shamshere, Pashupati, J. B, R,, and Mohsin, Mohammad. A Studj) Report

on the Pattern of Emerging Leadership in Panckayats; With Special Reference

to District and Village Panchayals of Mechi, Kosi and Sagarmatka Zones

Kathmandu; Research Division, Home Panchayat Ministry, His

Majesty’s Government of Nepal, 1967.

Shrestha, Madan Bahadur. Hlarn Potato Market. Kathmandu; Department

ol Agriculture, Ministry of Forests, Agriculture and Land Reform

His Majesty’s Government of Nepal, 1963.

Shrestha, Madan Bahadur, and Maharjan, Bekha Lai. The Paddy Market

ofjhapa. Kathmandu: Department of Agriculture, Ministry ofForests,

Agriculture and Land Reform, His Majesty’s Government of Nepal

[1967?]. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project, No. 1/67.)

Tliapa, Bekh Bahadur. Planning for Development in Nepal: A Perspective fir

1965-80. Kathmandu: Ministry of Economic Planning, His Majesty’s

Government of Nepal, n.d. (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate

Center, 1966.)

•1. PUBLICATIONS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Cool, John C., and Bista, Dor Bahadur. “Some Observations on Tharu

Peasant Economy in Nepal.” Kathmandu; U.S. Agency for Inter-

national Development, 1966. (Mimeographed.)

Hasel, A.A. “Forest Survey Plan for Nepal.” Kathmandu: U.S. Agency

for International Development. 1962. (Mimeographed.)

Imperial Gazetteer of Mia (Provincial Scries), vol. L Calcutia^Supermtendcm

of Government Printing, 1909. “Nepal, pp- ~ ’

India. Census Commissioner. of Mia, 1901. Calcutta. Super, ntendem

of Government Printing, 1903. .i, ,

India. Foreign Department, d CoUectim of TreaUes f

Matlg to Min and Neighbouring j

C.U. Aitchison. Calcutta: Government of India Central Pubheauon

India SSl^'^Census Commissioner, am. ^ 1961. Delhi;

Israel. Ncpa.-lsrael Cooperation?.

Kathmandu, n.d. (Mimeographt .) „ , ; y | ■.

Ivin it I “A Study of Fluctuations of CNthange tv tie m .Nepal.

J.un, It. L. -t oiuuy 1959. (Mimeographed.]

Kathmandu; I mh an Aid i i r r hkI Seitlemi.r i t;,-i mre

Mell-ortl, J. B. “Planning and Implemcntattou of Land ^ \*

iFKe Year Plan 1965-1970).” Kadtmandu, lAOiOlEX, 19b.).

Ok;Kl..,-FlrSul‘K “HMcric-d Noun on Local Admimura, ion in Nepal-"

Katlun.,min; U-S. Agency lor Intern., uotul Development, L'M.

i.Mimti, graphed.,:

222 SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Robbe, Earnest. Report to the Government of Nepal on Forestry. Rome; Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1954. FAO Report

No. 209-54/3/1712.

United Nations. Legal Dept. Laws Concerning Nationality. New York, 1954.

“Nepal: Citizenship Act of 1952,” pp. 320-21.

U.S. Agency for International Development, Nepal. Economic Data Papers

.-Vepa/, vols. II-IX, 1960-67.

— -. “Ethnic Groups in Nepal.” Kathmandu, 1964. (Mimeographed.)

. Selected Agricultural Statistics, Nepal. Kathmandu, 1967. (Mimeo-

graphed.)

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of International Commerce. “Basic

Data on the Economy of Nepal,” prepared by Cherie Loustauanau.

Overseas Business Reports, September, 1968. OBR 68-86.

III. BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Baral, Ishwar. “The Tharu Community and Their Culture.” Nepal (A

Collection of Articles on the History and Culture of Nepal). Kath-

mandu; Tribhuvan University Cultural Association, 1966. (Trans, by

Regmi Research Project, No. 174/66.)

Berrcman, Gerald D. Hindus of the Himalayas. Berkeley; University of

California Press, 1963.

Bhasin, A. S. Documents on Nepal’s Relations with India and China, 1949-66.

Bombay; Academic Books, 1970.

Boulnois, L. and Millot, H, Bibliographic du Nfpal. Paris: Centre National de

la Recherche Scicnti6que, vol. I-, 1969-.

Cammann, Schuyler. Trade Through the Himalayas: The Early British Attempts

to Open Tibet. Princeton, N.J.; Princeton University Press, 1951.

Caplan, Lionel. Land and Social Change in East Nepal: A Study of Hindu-Tribal

Relations. Berkeley. University of California Press, 1970.

Centre for Economic Development and Administration, Kathmandu.

Occasional Papers, 1969-.

Chatterji, Bhoia. .4 Study of Recent Nepalese Politics. Calcutta: World Press,

1967;

Chaudhuri, K.C. Anglo-Nepalese Relations: From the Earliest Times of the British

Rule in India till the Gurkha War. Calcutta: Modem Book .Agency, 1960.

Clark, Thomas Wclboume. Introduction to Nepali: A First-Fear Language

Course. Cambridge: Heficr, 1963.

Davis, Kingsley. The Population of India aiul Pakistan. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton

University Press, 1931.

Devkota, Krishna Bahadur. Nepal ko Rajnailik Darpan [Political Mirror of

Nepal]. Kathmandu: K. C. Gautam, 1959.

Fisher, Margaret W. Selected Bibliography of Source .Materials for Fepal. 2d cd.

Fisi]

SELECTED mULlOGRAPHY

or Iiucnuuional Siudies, Unive

223

rsily of Californiu,

Josh]!'} \ v ^ .

imman' A., and Das Gupta, Jyotirindra, eds.

Rournoy RirP n,, Xaiions. i\cw York: John Wiley, 196B.

f tf ' ' Hudson, Manley O., eds. A Colkclm of jValionalily

\V.< . V hotlines as Containid in Conslilutions, StaluUs ami Treaties.

•^ontiji forS Hnivcrsiiy Press, 1929.

Fiircr'Hai °''!j ^'illage; Xationd Camlmigii. Kathmandu, 1967.

Q f Christoph von, ed. Caste ami Kin in Xejml, Imlia and

/ '’’‘i Anthropological Studies in Hindu- Buddhist Contact Zones. New

A’ Publishing House, 1966.

Goodall,

Merrill R, “Administrative Change in Nepal,” in Braibanti,

p \* ‘'jujuiiauauvc

P > J.D., ed. .'Irioji Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British

pcrial Tradition. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univcrsiiv Press for Commnn-

Goyal T ?®'"^'“ Center, 1966.

i t arendra. The King and His Constitution. Nesv Delhi: Nepal Trading

Qj.. ‘"O'Poration, 1959.

0, George A., ed. Linguistic Survey of India. 1 1 vols. Calcutta: Superin-

Gupta i . ^°^CovemmentPrindng, 1903-1928.

’ Politics in Xepal: A Study of Post-Rana Political Develop-

Haeen'^T^ Allied Publishers, 1964.

S , Loni; Wahlen, Friedrieh T.; and Cord, Walter R. Xepal: The

Hamil HitHfl/aja. Berne: Kiimmerly Frey, 1961.

1 ton, Francis (formerly Buchanan). An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal

0^ of the Territories Anne.xed to this Dominion by the House of Gorkha.

Hod Archibald Constable and Co., 1819.

S^on, Brian Houghton. Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion

of Xepal and Tibet, Together with Further Papers on the Geography, Ethnology,

and Commerce of those Countries. London: Triibner and Co., 1874.

^^'0, Asad. British India’s Relations with the Kingdom of Xepal, 1857-1947.

Gondon ; Allen and Unwin, 1970.

usain, Mazhar. The Law Relating to Foreigners in India and the Citizenship

Laws of India and Pakistan. 3d cd. Lucknow: Eastern Book Company,

1961.

J^'n, Girilal. India Meets China in Xepal. Bombay : Asia Publishing House,

1959.

Joshi, Bhuwan Lai, and Rose, Leo E. Democratic Innovations in Xepal: A Case

Study of Political Acculturation. Berkeley: University of California

Press, 1966.

^ran, Pradyumna P., and Jenkins, William M., Jr. The Himalayan Kingdoms :

Bhutan, Sikkim, and Xepal. Princeton, N.J.; D. Van Nostrand, 1963.

~ , with the collaboration of Jenkins, William M. Xepal: A Cultural

and Physical Geography. Lexington, Ky.; University of Kentucky Press,

I960.

224 SELECTED DIBLIOGRAPUY

Kilwra, K., cd. Peoples of Nepal Himalaya. Scicniific Results of the Japanese

Expedition to Nepal Himalaya, 1032-53. vol. III. Kyoto: Kyoto

University, 1957.

Kirkpatrick, W'illitnn. An .iccount of ike k'ingdum of Ncpaul. ISeinji Ike Siilulniue

of Observations .Made Durinp a .Mission to that Country in the tear 1937.

London: William Miller, 18H.

Landon, Perceval. jYepal. 2 vols. London: Constable, 1928.

McDougal, Charles. Village and Household Economy in Ear JVestern ptepal.

Kirtipur, Nepal: Tribhuvan University, 1968.

Milialy, Eugene Bramcr. foreign .lid and Politics in Nepal: A Case Study. London :

Oxford University Press, 1965.

Narayan, Sliriman. India and Nepal: An Exercise in Open Diplomacy. Bombay:

Popular Prakashan, 1970.

Nath, Yogi Narahari, ed. A Collection of Treaties in the Illumination on History.

Published on the occasion of the Spiritual Conference convened at

Dang on 2022 B. S. [1966]. (Trans, by Regnii Research Project,

1967.)

Nepal Communist Party. “Chunao Ghoshanapatra” [Election Manifestoj.

Navayug, Nov. 26, 1958.

Nepal Praja Parishad, jVepal Praja Parishad ko Ghoshanapatra [Manifesto of

the Nepal Praja Parishad]. Kathmandu, 1956.

Nepal Prajatantrik Mahasabha. Nepal Prajatantrik .Mahasabha ko Abashyakata

ra Uddeshya [Necessity and Objectives of the Nepal Prajatantrik

Mahasabha]. Kathmandu, 1938.

Nepal Tarai Congress. Nepal Taral Congress ko Ghoshanapatra [Manifesto of

the Nepal Tarai Congress]. Raxaul: Prakash Press, 1957.

Nepali Congress. Chunao Ghoshanapatra [Election Manifesto]. Kathmandu;

Kalpana Press, 1958.

. Kisan Haru ko Nimti Nepali Congressle ke Garyo? [What Did die

Nepali Congress Do for the Peasants?]. Kathmandu, n.d.

. Shastha Rashlriya Adhibeshan Birganj ko Abasar ma Swikril Ghoshanapatra

[Manifesto Adopted on the Occasion of the 6th National Conference

at Birganj]. Patna: Free Press Ltd., 1956.

Nepali, Gopal Singh. The Newars: An Ethno-Sociological Study of a Himalayan

Community. Bombay: United Asia Publications, 1965.

Nepali National Congress. Nepali National Congress ko Gho.shannpatra [Mani-

festo of the Nepali National Congress]. Kathmandu, n.d.

Northey, W. Brook, and Morris, C.J. The Gurkhas: Their Manners, Cnstanis

and Country. London: Bodley Head, 1928.

Ojha, Jagdeesh Chandra, and Rajbahak, Ram Prasad. Banking and .Modern

Currency in Nepal. 2d ed. Kathmandu: Educational Enterprise,

1965.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 225

Pant, Yadav Prasad, and Jain, S. C. Agricultural Development in Nepal. Bombay :

Vora, 1969.

Pemble, John. Invasion of Nepal: John Company at War. New York: Oxford

University Press, 1971.

Pokhrel, Balakrishna. Panck Saya Varslia [Five Hundred Years]. Kathmandu ;

Jagadamba Prakashan, 1963. Excerpts on “A Brief History of the

Nepali Language.” (Trans, by Rcgmi Research Project, No. 121/68.)

Regmi, Dilli Raman. Ancient Nepal. 2d ed. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopa-

dhyay, 1960.

— - — -. Modern Nepal: Rise and Growth in the Eighteenth Century. Calcutta:

Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961.

Regmi, Mahesh Chandra. Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal. 4 vols. Berkeley:

Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1963-68.

Rose, Leo E. “Communism under High Atmospheric Conditions-: The

Party in Nepal,” in Scalapino, Robert A., ed. The Communist Revolution

in Asia. 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice Hall, 1969.

Rose, Leo E. Nepal: Strategy for Survival. Berkeley: University of California

Press, 1971.

Rose, Leo E., and Fisher, Margaret W. The Politics of Nepal: Persistence and

Change in an Asian Monarchy. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970.

Sanwal, B. D. Nepal and the East India Company. Bombay: Asia Publishing

House, 1965.

Satish Kumar. Rana Polity in Nepal: Origin and Growth. New York: Asia

Publishing House, 1967.

Shaha, Rishikesh. Nepal and the World. 2d ed. Kathmandu: Nepali Congress,

1955.

Sharma, Balchandra. Nepal ko Aitihasik Ruprekha [An Historical Outline of

Nepal]. Banaras: Madhav Prasad Sharma, 1951.

Shreshtha, Badri Prasad. The Economy of Nepal. Bombay: Vora, 1967.

. An Introduction to Nepalese Economy. 2d ed. Kathmandu : Ratna Pustak

Bhandar, 1966.

-. Monetary Policy in an Emerging Economy: A Case Study of Nepal. Kath-

mandu : Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1965.

Shreshtha, Sharan Hari. Modem Geography of Nepal; Economic and Regional.

Kathmandu: Educational Enterprise, 1968.

Singh, Lekh Raj. The Tarai Region of U.P. : A Study in Human Geography.

Allahabad: R. N. L. B. Prasad, 1965.

Spate, O.H.K., and Learmonth, A.T.A. India and Pakistan: A General and

Regional Geography. 3d ed. London: Methuen, 1967.

Srivastava, S. K. The Tharus: A Study in Cultural Dynamics. Agra ; Agra Univer-

sity Press, 1958.

Turner, Ralph Lilley. A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali

Language. London : Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1965. (First pub. in 1931.)

226 SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

United Democratic Party. Chunao Ghoshanapatra [Election Manifesto].

Kathmandu, 1958.

Wright, Daniel, ed. History of Hepal. [A Vansalvi] trans. from Nepali by Shew

Shunker Singh and Sri Gunanand. 3d ed. Calcutta: Ranjan Gupta,

1966. (First pub. in 1877.)

IV. UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Bista, Dor Bahadur. “Caste and Ethnic Groups [of Nepal].” Kathmandu,

1966. (Mimeographed.)

. Padipur: A Central Tarai Village of Nepal, Socio-Economic

Survey November-December, 1966.” Kathmandu, 1968. (Mimeo-

graphed.)

Legris, Pierre, “Report to the Government of Nepal on Forestry.”

Kathmandu, 1961. (Mimeographed.)

Pradhan, Bijaya Bahadur. “Dual Currency System in Nepal.” Kathmandu,

n.d. (Mimeographed.)

-. A Scheme for Currency Unification in Nepal.” Kathmandu,

n.d. (Mimeographed.)

Regmi, Mahesh Chandra. “Economic Conditions in Morang District

During the Early 19th Century.” Unpublished manuscript. Kath-

mandu, Dec. 22, 1966.

. “Industrial Potential of Nepal.” Kathmandu, August 1967.

(Mimeographed.)

Shumshere, Pashupati. “Agriculture and Land Utilizadon.” [Kathmandu,

1965?]. (Mimeographed.)

Upreti, Bedh Prakash. “Dhangar Tribe of Janakpur, Dhanukha District.”

Kathmandu, 1966. (Mimeographed.)

Dhimal Tribe of Jhapa District.” Kathmandu, 1966.

(Mimeographed.)

— . Thami Tribe of Dolakha District.” Kathmandu, 1966. (Mimeo-

graphed.)

V. JOURNAL ARTICLES

Allman, T. D. Tripping the Himalayan Tightrope,” Far Eastern Economic

Review, LXXVI (April 1, 1972), 16-18.

Acharya Babu Ram. “A History of Nepali Education,” Havin Siksha, I, No. 4

(July-August 1957), 5-12; No. 5 (August-Seplembcr 1957), 5-15;

and No. 8 (November-December, 1957). 8-12. (Trans, by Regmi

Research Project, No. 214.)

Appadorai, A and Baral, L. S. “The New Constitudon of Nepal.” Inter-

national Studies, I (January I960), 217-247.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

227

“Airakening Nepal: Special Survey of the Emerging Economy of the

Himalayan Kingdom Where India and China Meet,” Far Eastern

Economic Review,XyNm June 2, I960), 1101-1128.

Baral, L.S. “Opposition Groups in Nepal, 1960-70,” India Quarterly, XXVIII

(January-March 1972), 12-45.

Eerreman, Gerald D. “Caste and Economy in the Himalayas,” Economic

Development and Cultural Change, X (July 1962), 386-394.

“Peoples and Cultures of the Himalayas,” Asian Survey, III (June

1963), 289-304.

Consing, Arturo Y. “The Economy of Nepal.” International Monetary Fund

Staff Papers, X (November 1963), 504-530.

Dai, Shen-yu. “Peking, Kathmandu and New Delhi,” China Quarterly, XVI

(October-Decemher 1963), 86-98.

Field, A. R. “Himalayan Salt-A Political Barometer,” Modem Review,

CV (1959), 460-465.

Furer-Haimendorf, Christoph von. “The Inter-Relations of Castes and

Ethnic Groups in Nepal,” Bulletin of tk School of Oriental and African

Studies, XX (1957), 243-253.

■ ■ “Status Differences in a High Hindu Caste of Nepal,” Eastern

Anthropologist, XII (1959), 223-233.

Gaborieau, Marc. “Les Musulmans du Nepal,” Objets el Mondes, VI (Summer

1966), 121-132. , „ .

Gaige. Frederick H. “Nepal; Compromise and Liberalization,” Asm

Survey, IX (February 1969), 94-98. ^

' ■ “Nepal; More Problems with India,” Asian Survey, XI (February

1971), 172-176. . ^

” “Nepal: The Search for a National Consensus, Asian urvey,

(February 1970), 100-106.

' • “The Role of the Tarai in Nepal’s Economic Development,

Vasudha (Kathmandu), 11, No. 7 (1968), 53-61, 71.

Gupta, Anirudha. “A Cridcal Study of Source Material on

, Nepal, 1950-1960,” International Studies, III (April 1962), 6 .

Hitchcock, John T. “Some Effects of Recent Change m Rural Nepa ,

Human Organization, XXII (Spring 1963), 72 82.

Hunt, James B., Jr. “The Effects of Land Reform on .

Production Targets of the Third Plan," Economic Affairs Repor (

mandu), HI, No. 3 (1965), 1-9. .

Currency Receipts and Expenditures," Ecommw Affairs Repor

(Kathmandu), II, No. 2 (1964), 17-19. .

ila, Matrika Prasad. “Morang, Ancient and Modern, ouv

nagar, Nepal), January 1965.

^liaejinsky, Wolf. “Agrarian Reform in Asia

1964), 445-460.

Foreiffi Affairs, XLII (April

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 229

Shrestha, Swayambhu Lai. "The Satars and Some of Their Social Beliefs,”

Ruprekha (April 1966), 189-197. (Trans, by Regmi Research Project,

No. 441/66.)

Sinha, P. K. “Cultural Background of Morang,” Souvenir (Biratnagar,

January 1965.

INDEX

Adhikari, Man Mohan, iai-U!5

Agricultural aciiviiy, 2-1, 2S-31, 31. 51t-60,

63-64, 95. See aim Jute, Rice, Tirnher

Anm,59,61,8l,91, 143, 143, 146, 147

Army, Nepalese, 136, 141, 160, Ibl, 167-169,

>83, 188, 195, 198-200, 204

Assam, 63, 77n, 95

Aw-adhi language, 15-17, 116-118

Back to the Village Campaign,” 177-180,

202-203

fiaiiadi district, 1 17

Bangladesh, migration into Nepal from. 106;

relations \s4th India, 194

Banke district. 14, 16, 78, 83

Bara district, 14, 16, 20-21, 25 , 31-32, 34,

39-40, 43, 53-39, 6 1 , 70-7 1 , 73-74, 76-77,

85, 104, 128, 130, 142, 144, 147, 150, 153,

155, 137-158, 183, 189

Bardia district, 13, 14, 16

Bengali language, 15, 115, 119, 129, 135

Bhadrapur, 51, 61, 133u, 134n, 135, 183, 189

Bhairawa, 35, 49, 183, 189

Bhojpuri language, 15-17, 115-116, 1 18-119,

127, 129

Bhumihars. 147, 162-163

Bhutan, 3, 68, 94; citizenship legislation in, 106

Bihar, 1 , 3, 1 1 - 12, 1 3, 1 7, 23, 24, 37, 48, 51-52,

58, 102, 106, 110, 135, 191-192

Biratnagar. 37,51, 111, 112, 133n, 134n, 187,

189

Birganj, 35, 88, 104, 112, 185, 189

Bista, Kirtinidhi, 134, 188, 201n

Brahmins, 12-13, 19, 22-23, 33, 65-66, 74-75,

80-81,85,91, 103, 104, 114, 131, 135, 139,

142-143, 146-147, 154, 156, 138, 159-169,

174, 195-197, 203

Britain, 205; citizenship legislation in, 103;

Gurkhas in army of, 31, 83-84, 162;

economic aid to Nepal, 41, 200n; relations

with Nepal, 25, 43, 47, 59-60, 68, 105n, 201

Buddhism, 12-14, 160; birthplace of Buddha,

58

Burma, 42; citizenship le.gislation in, 89, 93;

migrauon from, 77

Cilcuita, 37, 50-51. 101, 129. 181n

C.istesvslcm, 13. 17, 19-21, 33, 137, 141, 146,

159-163,195-196,215-216

Ceylon, 42; citizenship legislation in. 89,

103-106

Cliamuria, Ratllia Kissen, 37

Chaman, 19, 78, 134

Chaudhari. Parashu Narayan, 91

Chetris, 19, 22-23, 33, 65-66, 74-75. 80-81,

85. 122, 131, 135, 139, 146-147, 151, 156,

159-169. 195-197

China, border svith Nepal, 1, 5, 35, 46n, 137;

economic aid to Nepal, 50-51, 199-200;

relations with Nepal, 1—2, 84-85, 179-180

Churia Range. Sie Siwalik Range

Citizenship, 87-106, 111, 113, l+I, 174, 176,

202, 203-204

Hass Organizations, 137-139, 140

kimmunication, 24, 118, 126-135, 156

kimmunist Party of Nepal, 49, 101, 111, 121,

146, 176, 181-182, 184-190. 192, 195, 197

Hsmpulsory-savings program, 175-177

Constitution of Nepal (1959), 122, 198

Constitution of Nepal (1962), 91-94. 105-107,

124, 136-137, 156-157

Cooperatives, 130-131, 179 \_

Currency, Nepalese, 43-45; revaluatmn ol.

43-45

Damais, 65-65, 76, 162

Dandcldhura district. 66, 1 17

Dhanuks, 154

Dhanusha district. See Mahottari and

Dhanusha districts

Dharan, 11 1, 187, 189

District panchayats and assemblies, 138-141),

142, 144-138, 189-190, 204

Ecological balance, 5, 10. 63-64. 179. See ala

Forests and deforestation

Economic aid, 199-200; from Australia,

83^84; from Britain, 41, 200n; from China,

50-51, 199-200; from Colombo Plan, 102;

from Ford Fouodation, 172 ; from India, 41,

231

232

INDEX

45, 199-200; from Israel, 83-84, 2Q0n;

from Pakistan, 200n; from Soviet Union, 41,

50, 199-200, from United States, 41,45, 68,

172, 199-200, from W.H.O,, 68

Education, 102, 103, 110, 124, 132-135, 159,

161, policy, 94, 1 08- 1 09, 1 1 1 , 1 12, 1 13- 1 14,

124, 132-133, 187-188 Sii also Language

pohc>

English language. 108, 125, 127, 132-133, 180

Forests and dcfor«Iation,2,4-5, 10, 1 1, 13-14,

20, 25, 59-61 . 63-64, 68-70, 73, 82, 84, 85,

145, 146, 179, 196. i'wfl/jo Timber

Gandak River, 47'48, 52

Gangais. 20, 59, 163

Gangeuc plain, xiii, 4, 5, 10-11, 15, 25, 59,

62-63, 66,68. 118

Gaur, 1 12

General Elections (1959), 90, lOO-lOl, 105,

113, 115, 121

Gharm, 19, 162

Ghosh, Pashupaii Nath, 123

Gin family, 37, 91, 105, 154, 156

Gorkha Panshad, 102

Graduate constiiucncy, 137, 140, 161

Gurkhas in British and Indian armies, 31, 45,

84, 162, 184, 200n; in resettlement projects,

83-84

Gurungs, 20, 63, 76, 162, 167-168; language

of, 15, 88, 115

Halwais, 78

Himalayas, xiii, 1-3, 11, 25, 49, 56, 63, 191,

192

Hindi language, 15, 17, 109-125, 127-129,

131, 132, 133, 135, 202, 204

Hinduism, 2, 12-15, 17, 19-20, 23, 159-160,

196, 207,209

Indo-Nepnl Friendship Treaty !195m,\_9n,98

Inau-NVpnnrndenndWtTrcnty.n^^^^^^^^^^

Industrial activity, 24, .

53-55, 125, 195. ire uto Jute, Rice, Timber

Islam. Sit .Muslims

Janakpur, 37, 49, 58, 51, 91, 112, I34n, 189

Jha,Vcdananda, 109, 115-116, 1-3

Jhapadistric..l3,14,16.20-2I,32-3U9-«.

61, 70-71,73-74. 76-81,84.80. 106. 1-8,

133n, 135, 142, 147-148. 153, 183

jute, 28, 29, 31, 37,51,53

Kailali district, 13, 14, 16, 20-21, (((I

40. 61. 64n, 66. 70, 72, 73, 77-81. 126. 128,

142, 147, 152-153

Kalwars, 143

Kamis, 19, 65-66, 76, 162

Kanchanpur district, 13, 14, 1®>

Kapilabastu district, 20-21. 24 - 25 , 31-32. 34,

39-40, 58, 61. 70-71, 73-75. 77-81. 90

128, 133n, 142, 143, 147, lol, lo3-15s,

158,175-176 , oa 97

Kathmandu, City and Valley, 13,

28,35,41,43,44,87,88,90, 104, 118.

132,160, 168,182,187,188,215

Kathmandu elites, aiv, 2, 38, 42, 5 , . •

82.87,96,99, 107, llO, 117, 120, 26, HO,

142, 146, 158-170, 171, 179, 180, 188, IM,

191, 195-197, 198, 199, 200. 202, 203, -04,

\*^05

Kayasthos. I03n, 114, 122, 147, 16- 163,

167-168

Kohars, 19 -oc

Koirala, Bisbweshwar Prasad, 91. 183 -IBd.

198

Kumaurn language, 117

Kumhalcs, 19

Kumhars, 19

Kurmis. 62, 81, 145

India, ciuzenship legislation in, 89-90, 92;

language controversy in, 116; political

system of, 137, 141, 191-192; border with

Nepal, 1, 2-3, 24, 46-57, 91, 102, 103, 106,

181, 183-187, 191-193, 194, 203 ; cultural

ties with Nepal, xiii-xiv, 2, 11-15, 17,

19-20, 22, 34, 56, 103, 110, 117-118, 127,

129, 133-135, 196, 200-203; economic aid

to Nepal, 41, 45, 199-200; economic ties

with Nepal, xiii-xiv, 22, 24-26, 28, 29-31,

34-35, 37-38, 40-45, 49-56, 61-62, 93, 95,

101, 118, 191-192, 194, 200-202; political

relaUons with Nepal, xiii-xiv, 1, 2, 46-57,

82-83, 89-90, 95, 98, 104-107, 172, 184,

186, 187, 191-193, 194, 196, 200-203;

political relations with China, I, 49, 191,

201

Land reform, 75, 80, 81, 95-98, lOO, 131,

167, 171-177, 178, 179, 194, 204; Ukhada,

75,95-97,123,174

Languagepolicy, 108-1 14, 122-125, \*■ »

202. See also Education

Limbus, 15, 20, 76, 162

Literacy rate, 92, 126

Lohars, 19

Magars, 20, 63-64, 65, 76, 162, 167 ; language

of, 15. 88. 113

Mahabharat Range, 63-64

Mahakali River, 3, 41 i\* ifi

Mahottari and Dhanusha districts 14, i ,

20-21, 25, 31-32, 34, 39-40, 58.61,70-71,

73-78, 102, 126, 128, 135, 142. 144, 147,

149, 153-155, 156, 158

INDEX

233

Maithili language, 15-17, 115-116, 118-119,

127, 129, 135

Malaria, xiii, 2, 59-60, 62, 68, 196; eradica-

tion program, 68. 73, 85, 88

Marwaris. 15, 37, 104, 156, 158, 163

Mechi River, 3, 25, 41

•Mcchis, 20, 59, 163

Migration, 20, 25-26, 58-86, 89, 94, 145,

177, 194-196, 203; from Nepal into India,

63, 64-65. 68, 82-83, 84-85, 95, 98; from

India into tarai, 14, 23, 26. 34, 58-62, 66,

73-78, 92-94, 98, 101, 106, 183, 177, 203;

from hills into tarai, xiii, 11-12, 22, 23,

62-66, 68, 73-78, 80-86, 1 10, 114, 146, 160,

203

Mishra, Ram Narayan, 91

Monarchy, 197-200, 203, 204. also Shah,

Mahendra

Morang district, 5, 25, 68, 76, 82, 85, 133n

Morang Pradesh dialects, 15, 115-116

Muslims. 13-15, 20-23, 32-34, 40, 61-62, 74,

80-81, 106. 118n, 145, 148-152, 161n, 163,

164, 166; tensions with Hindus, 176-177

National (Central) Secretariat, 140-141, 161,

>65-166, 168-169,204,205

Nadonal Educational Planning Commission,

108-111

National Education Commission, 124, 132

National integration, 23, 194-205; de6ned,

xiv; barriers to, xiv, 2, 1 1-12, 38, 42, 43, 44,

^6, 56, 57, 58, 87, 91, 94, 98-99, 103, 108,

111, 117, 129-132, 146, 158-159, 159, 189,

>93, 195, 196, 202; policies to promote, 41,

45, 73-76. 82, 85-86, 112, 126-130, 135,

>55-158, 169-170, 195-197, 203-205

Nationalism, xiv, 44, 87, 92, 99, 101, 107,

108-110, 112, 125, 129, 132, 137, 145, 157,

169, 178-180, 200-202, 204

National Panchayat, 138-141, 144, 156, 157-

158, 161, 163-165, 169, 177, 182, 188, 204

Najvai Parasi district, 24, 47, 95, 97-98, 174

Naxalbari, unrest in, 182-183, 1115, 192

Nepalganj, 189

Nepali Congress Party, 90-91, 101, 10.5, 107.

Ill, 113, 121, 122-123, 125, 136, 146, 155.

176-177, 181-193, 194, 195, 197-198,201

Nepali language, 15, 17, 21n, 22, 63, 88, 92,

94, 108-125, 126-127, 132-133, 180; ami

nationalism, 108-110, 112, 125, 132, 157,

179, 202; in schools, 108-114, 124, 132-135.

202; use in tarai, 109-111, 111-115, 119-

120, 127, 129, 131-135, 143, 202

Nepali National Congress, 113

Nepali Pracharini Sabha, 1 1 1-112

Nepal Prajatantrik Maliasahlia, 11)0-101. 121

Nepal Tarai Congress, 109-110, 111, 115,

121-124

Newars, 22, 33,61,81,85, 104, 125, 131, 135,

141, 146-147, 154, 160-169, 195-197;

language of, 15, 88, 125, 129

Nidhi, Mahendra Narayan, 123

Nonalignmcnl policy, 106, 178, 199, 201, 204

P.ikistan, citizenship legislation in, 89, 92;

migration from, 101; political system in,

137; relations with India, 194

Palace Secretariat, 140-141, 146, 165-lGG,

169

Panchayat system, 130-131, 136-141, 169-

170, 178, 186, 197, 201; at village level,

141-144, 148-155; at district level, 142,

144-158, 189-190; at zonal level, 156-158;

at national level, 158-170

Parliament (1959-60), 90-91, 113, 122-123,

136, 139, 163-164, 181-182, 197-198

Parsa district, 14, 16, 48, 59, 76, 85, 104

Political parties, role of, 49, 101, 113, 115,

121-122, 136, 155, 159, 163, 169, 176, 179,

181-193, 197-198, 199, 201, 204. Sei also

specihe parties

Population problems, 20, 62-63, 66-68, 70,

83,85

Praja Parishad, 111, 113

Public Representation Act (1951), 89-90, 100

Rais, 15, 20, 76, 162, 167

Rajbanshls, 20, 59, 80, 115, 147, 163

Rajbiraj, 112, 133n, 134n, 189

Rajputs, 19, 22, 144, 146, 147, 154, 156,

162-163, 166-167

Rana, Jung Bahadur, 60, 105n

Rana family and regime, 25-26, 37, 43, 45, 60,

89-91, 95, 108, 110, 125n, 130, 136, 145,

146, 159, 161, 168, 181n, 190, 196, 197, 199,

204

Rangeti, 1 1 1

Rapti River, 25

Rauniyars, 104

Rauiahat district, 14, 16, 48, 49, 76, 78, 85,

104, IBl

Rayamajhi, Kesliarjang, 181-182

Kc-scttU’ituMii programs, 82-86, 194. See also

Migrallou

UcvoUitiun (1950-51), 89-91, 1 10, 136, 191,

192

RU‘C,29- 54,104

RupaMtldu ilistiin, 24-25, 95, 174, 175, 176,

Ui;i

Suit'tki'ii and Sairdiild/iiiion, 12, 23, 63, 131,

159

Sanyads, 151, l5ti, Ui/

76, 123. 133n, 146,

mi, liw

234

IXDEX

Sarkis, 19, 65-6G, 7fl, 162

SarUhi tlisirici, I f, 16, 76, H5, IH3n

•‘Save Hindi" Campaign. 1 ll-ir.'. 1 IK I'ii

Sen Kings, 24, 59-60

Shah. Birentira BirBikrant, 165. 16B. 16‘J, lUi),

187. 20J-205

Shah. Mahendra ilir Hiknm, 4i. 98. iUi. 107,

III, 112. in, HI, 122, 121. 125, l.’Jfv-Ki?,

156. 16.5, 168. 170, 171, 172, 178-180, 182,

185. 186. 191. 197-201, 201; Roval Omp

(Dec. 19601,91, 107, 136, 182, 198\*. 201

Shah. Briihvi Naravaii, 24-25. H7-88, 160-

161. 196

Shall, Tnbhuvan Uir Bikratn, 90

Shah faniilv, 25, 37, 50, 60, 1 1 0. 136, M 1- 146,

161, 165, 197

Shamshcr, Bir, 76

Sh.imshcr. Chandra, 25

Shamshcr, Juddha, 25, 37

Shanashcr, Subarna, 91, 105-186

Sherpas, 15, 33, 162

Shrestha, Pushpa Lai, 181-182, 184-185

Shrivasiava, Kashi Pr.i5ad, 122-123

Sikkim, 16, 63, 68, 77, 91; citi/cnship legisla-

tion in, 93, 106

Simraun Garh, Kingdom of, 58-59

Singh, Ganesh .Man, 185-186

Singh, K.I.,49, 111-112, 121-122

Singh, Xageshwar Prasad, 105

Singhania family, 37

Siraha district, 14, 16, 68, 78

Siwalik Range. 3-5, II, 17,22, 59,62,68. 70

Sonars, 19, 78

Soviet Union, economic aid to Nepal, 41, 50,

199-200; relations with Nepal, 1

Student politics, 182, 184, 106-188, 189

Sudis, 76, 154

Sunars, 19

Sunsari district, 5, 85

Susta Forest dispute, 47-48

T.ijpuri.is, 20. 80, 163

Taiiiaiigs, 76, 162, 167; languageof, 15, 115

•r.irji. Inner, 5. 17, 77-711, -Hn. 63n, 78, 8J.

15ilii, 715-716

Tnrji, Onlcr, dcGiiril, 7-3; cciisut disiricis of,

5-7; dcrclopincnl disrricii of, 5, 8-10;

hiiiory of, 7-1-75, 13, 17, 50, 58-63. 87-83

Tar-ri I.ibcr.ilinii From. 187-135

'I'aiilihana, IJiii, 151, 175

'IVlis, 76, 151

Tlialcalu. 15, 33, 151. 167

Tli.iiu, Surva Ikiliadiir, 51. 186

Tiurus. I-k' 20, 59, 61, 75, 78, 80, 81, 91,

I58n, 163, 174;laiiguagcsof. 15-17. 115

Tilwrtan border. Sff China, border v\*ilh Nepal

riinhcr, 5, 25. 26. 27. 29, 37, 38, 39, 60. 76, 82

Tramponation, 11.24,35-37, 41,50, 62, 123,

130, 156; K.ut\*\Vesi higln^ay, 41

Tribhuvan Unbemity. 161, 187.205

United Democratic Front, I I2~i 13

United Democratic Party. 102, 1 1 1. 121\*123

United States, 205; ciiDciidiip Irgidaiiun in,

105; economic aid to Nepal, ll, 43, 68, 172,

199-200; relations with Nepal, 1

Urdu language, 13, ) 18

Uttar Pradesh, 1.3. 11-12, 14-15. 17,23,58.

106, no. 117, 184, 191

Vidch.i, Kingdom of, .58-59

Village panchayais, 133-139, I41-H4, 148-

135

West Bengal, 1,3. 51, 6.1. 77. 95, 106, 135, 183.

I9I-192

Yadav, 5ur)'anath Das, 91

Zonal panchayats and assemblies, 137-139,

156-158