

Methods: Short descriptions

The ESRC funded Caste, Class, and Culture: Changing Bahun and Dalit Identities in Nepal (3C) study aimed to understand the lived relations between successful and least successful caste groups in Nepal, which is why the study focused on Bahuns and Dalits.

The study combined ethnography with quantitative surveys. A set of six neighbouring villages in west central Nepal were selected purposively and all major caste groups, namely Bahun, Chhetri, Gurung and Dalit, were included.

The study attempted to understand each group in both historical and present contexts, and in so doing it studied them in terms of their education, occupation, and physical as well as social mobility. Moreover, it attempted to understand the culture of the groups concerned individually as well in relation to each other, capturing cultural traits, predispositions, consumption, sociality and everyday manners, and inter-caste relations, including identity formation and social changes.

Initially, details on genealogy and direction of movements were collected along with some family demographic information. Capturing the flow of migration helped in mapping movements, and thereby locating and following some people in their migration destinations. Initially, exploratory information was collected from six villages in a census styled enquiry of 634 households.

Subsequently, a detailed questionnaire was prepared for an individual survey that incorporated the following themes:

- Education: level, aspiration, support, source of inspiration, and discriminations
- Training courses: Participation in various skilled based training and professional bodies.
- Skills learned outside school: Various transferable occupational or non-occupational skills learned outside school and generational changes in these skills.
- International labour migration: Push and pull factors; experiences at various stages of migrations; skills, remittances and inter-caste relations.
- Cultural consumption: Participation in various cultural fields/ spaces of lifestyles and tastes (preference). The following major themes were covered:
 - Mobile phone
 - Radio
 - TV
 - Reading: papers, magazines, books
 - Social media and online activities
 - Film
 - Music
 - Leisure and sports
 - Internet
- Some everyday personal ritual conduct/behaviours
- Caste relations and sociality

The cultural consumption section of the questionnaire was adapted from the British sociologists' (Bennett et al. 2009)¹ study in Britain on the *Culture, Class, Distinction*, which

¹ Bennett, T., Savage, M. and Silva E.B. et. al (2009). *Culture, Class, Distinction* London : Routledge

itself attempted to replicate Pierre Bourdieu's famous study of France, *Distinction*. One of the principle researchers of the *Culture, Class, Distinction* was consulted to inform this research.

Table 1. Comparing cultural fields/products covered in the study with Bennett et. al. (2009)

General (Bennett et al. on UK)	Nepali adaptation
Television	Television
	Radio
Films	Films
Reading	Reading
Music	Music
Visual art	
Eating out, Leisure, Skills	Leisure , skills and learning
Sports	Sports
	Religion and customs
	Mobile phones

In terms of adaption to local context, further consultations were made with subject specialists. We also attended live music to understand some unfamiliar genres, such as particularly Hip-hop, Nep-hop, and heavy metal. The questionnaire was piloted several times and in different settings. One of the most important exercises was to organise a workshop participated in by social scientists and academicians at Lake City College, Pokhara. A presentation was made on the concept and design of the study, and the draft questionnaire was piloted with over 30 participants. This helped to test as well contextualise the questionnaire to the local culture. This was also piloted among 25 enumerators. The questionnaire was initially developed in English but it was substantially modified and expanded in its Nepali language version. The questionnaire was piloted with 35 people with a various levels of literacy, age, and caste and class status.

The households were stratified by caste and class, and initially 40 (equal) households were taken from each village, to administer the detailed survey questionnaires. In each selected household, everyone aged 13 or above, and willing and available to participate, were selected for the survey.

Enumerators were selected from each community under study and were trained theoretically as well practically for several days until they were comfortable and competent to do the job. Their work was monitored and checked for the quality in the field as well as in a series of interactive workshops. Thus, the process of data collection also involved local empowerment and capacity building in its own right.

The proportion of households sampled varied: due to their small numbers, all the Mijar households available were included in the study while for other castes it was between 50 and 58. Final sample differed to some extent due to (a) size of household members eligible and available to the study, and (b) size of people in the migration destination (reflecting in the huge differences in the size of migrants by castes). Eligible members of the selected households who have migrated to nearby towns of Pokhara and Kathmandu were followed and interviewed in their migration destinations. Small numbers of those who returned home from their temporary migration destinations within Nepal, India and other foreign countries were also interviewed. In order to capture urban differences on various phenomena being studied, some purposively selected households who have migrated semi-permanently or

permanently Pokhara and Kathmandu were interviewed. A small number of respondents who migrated to Chitwan some decades ago were interviewed. The final figure for responses was as follows (table 1).

Table 1: number of households and individuals included in the main survey

Caste	Households	Individuals (<13yrs)
	No.	No.
Bahun (Priestly)	50	318
Bahun (Non-priestly)	49	636
Chhetri	55	439
Dalit- Bishwakarma	48	674
Dalit- Pariyar	50	453
Dalit- Nepali	37	197
Gurung	58	413
Total	347	1203

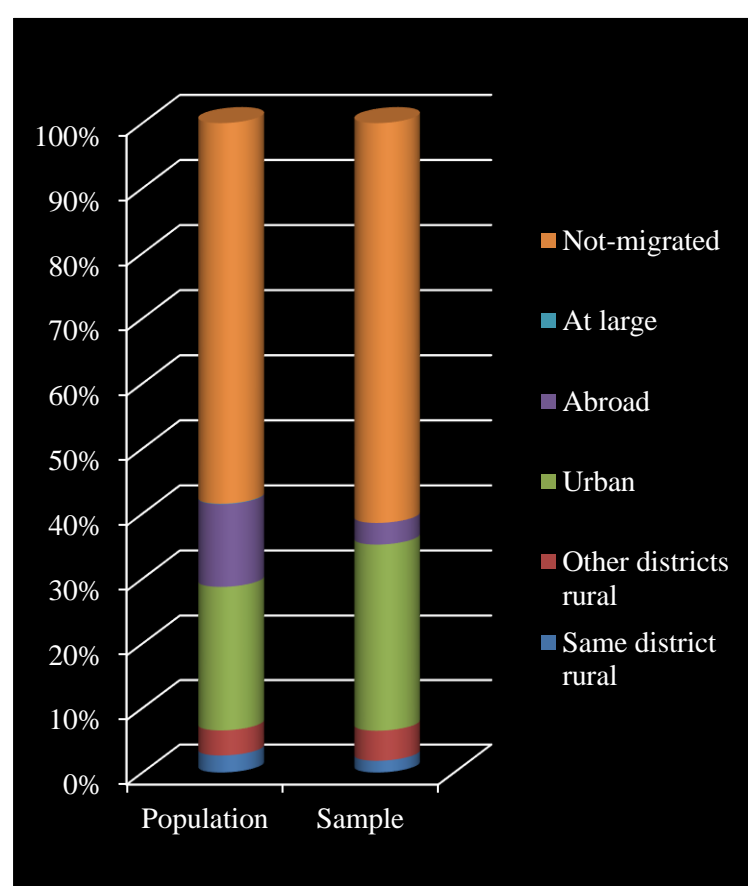


Figure 1: Distribution of initial population and final sample by locations

Most of the surveys were carried out at the respondent' home, and individually in order to prevent influence from other people in the family or community. Each filled questionnaire was checked by supervisors and verified with the enumerators, who rechecked them with the

respondents concerned if they felt it necessary. The distribution of the population and sample by their locations is given in the following chart.

Each respondent was assigned a numerical code as the quantitative data was entered in SPSS by a group of university graduates, who were trained in a three-day workshop, and through subsequent practices. They were trained to spot outliers or any other errors. All the files were rechecked by supervisors and data were merged. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were run to find out odd entries and outliers, and any duplicate entries were removed.

Frequency of participation in various cultural fields, such as watching TV, were captured as:

1. Always (*almost daily*)
2. Mostly (*most days a week*)
3. Sometimes (*3,4 times a month*)
4. Rarely (*3,4 times in 2, 3 months or more*)
5. Never in the last 3 months

This is then reverse-coded in the SPSS file in order to give higher weighting to higher frequency of activities. Hence, code 5 was assigned for Always and 1 for never. Missing numbers are generally coded as 99, but cases that are not applicable or missing for other reasons, have been given specific codes for each variable, as included in the separate code book.

Variables that would directly or indirectly identify respondents such as name, surname, origin, residence, income, expenditure, wealth status, and even respondents remarks to explain their responses have been removed. A class scale of the respondents at origin was computed by considering annual income, expenditure, surplus and wealth. Total annual surplus was added to the estimated asset portfolio, and class score was identified. The scale data has been collapsed into three relative—high, medium and low—classes in order to prevent identification of family members, who share the same class. The same level of detailed information for some respondents at the urban area was not available, and a rough and comparatively estimated class, graded into three categories were obtained. Age also has been categorised into three groups. Education has been collapsed into five groups. Details about job positions have been removed to minimise the chances of identification.

If you need more information please contact us.