

Society : outline

Parbatiya (40%)

Hindu castes of the hills

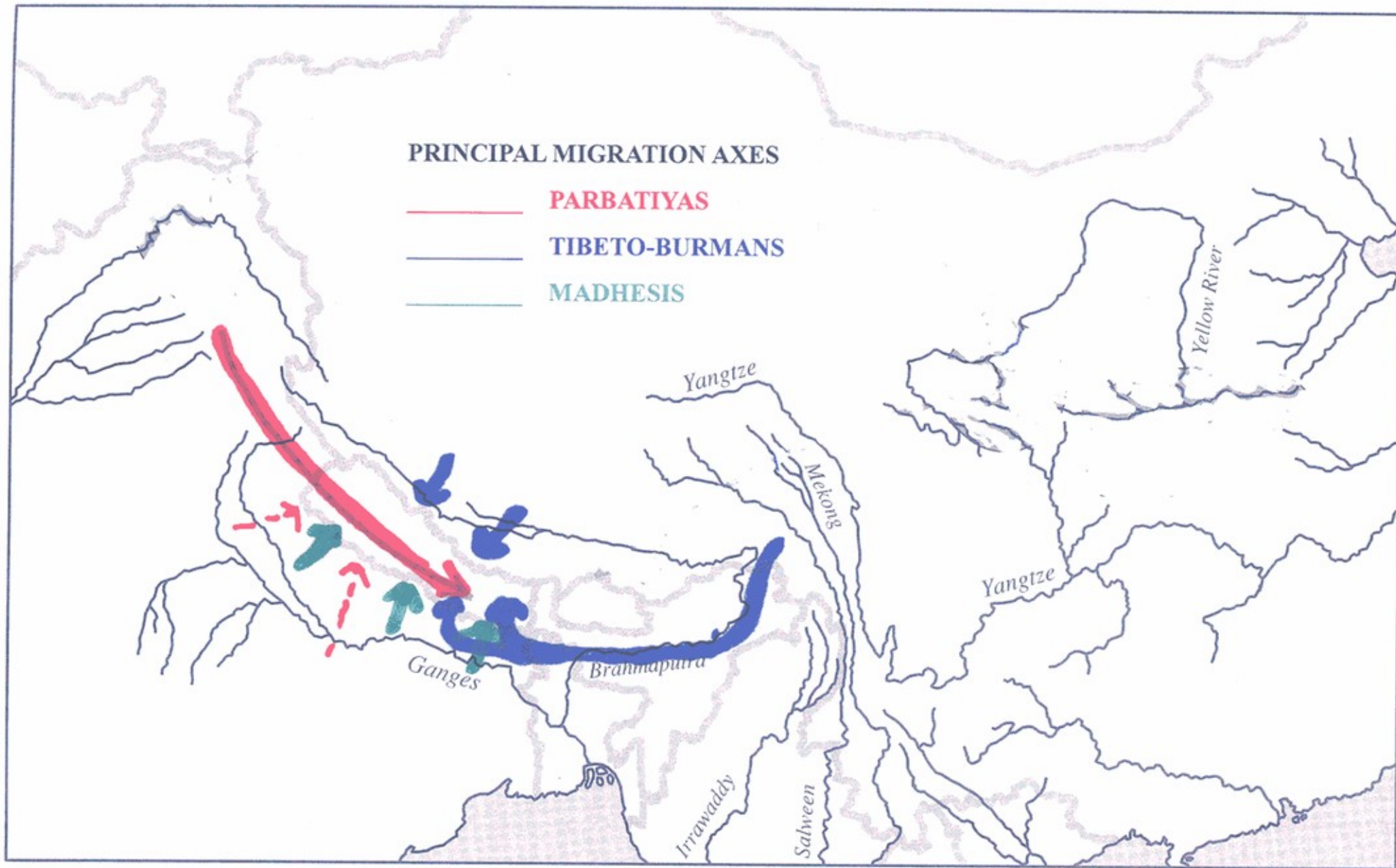
Pahariya (30%)

ethnic groups of the hills

Madhesi (30%)

castes and ethnic groups of the lowlands

Society : probable migration routes



Parbatiya

“Twice born” castes

Bahun (Brahmans) (11.3%)

Thakuri (1.7%)

Chhetri (16.5%)

Sannyasi and Yogi (1%)

Untouchables casts (Dalits)

Kami (blacksmiths) (5.0%) [Bishwokarma]

Damai (tailors) (1.9%) [Pariyar]

Sarki (cobblers) (1.6%) [Mijar]

Raja, Badi, Gaine (1%)

Pahariya

Newar (4.6%) [Newa]

Brahman (0.1%), Bajracharya/Shakya (0.5%)
Shrestha (1%), Uray (0.3%)

Maharjan (Jyapu) (2.3%), others (0.5%)

Untouchable Newar castes (0.3%)

Other ethnic groups

Magar (6.9%)

Tamang (5.6%)

Rai (2.2%)

Gurung (1.9%)

Limbu (1.4%), Sherpa (0.5%), Sunuwar, Chepang (0.3% each),
Bhotiya, Thami, Thakali (0.1% each), others (3.3%)

Tarai population

Hindu castes (16.1%)

- Twice born castes (Brahman/Kshatriya) (2.4%)

- Other pure castes, among them **Yadav** (4.2%)

- Impure, but touchable castes (3.1%)

- Untouchable Tarai castes (2.8%)

Ethnic groups (inner/outer Tarai) (10.7%)

- Tharu** (6.2%)

- Dhanuk, Rajbanshi, Kumhal, Danuwar**, a.o. (4.1%)

Others (5.1%)

- among them Muslims (4.9%)

[Anthropologists call the Hindu and Muslim castes of the Tarai collectively as Madheshi. The Nepali state also includes ethnic groups of the Tarai under this term]

Today's names of the main population groups

Janajati (35%)

ethnic groups

Khas Arya (31%)

so-called high Hindu castes of the highlands

Madheshi (15%)

"pure" Hindu- and Muslim-castes of the lowlands

Dalits (14%)

so-called untouchable caste of the highlands and lowlands

Muslims (5%)

Muslim castes of the highlands and lowlands

Castes and ethnic groups (simplified)

% Total population	GSEA / NLSS II (10 groups)	2001 Census (103 groups)
Hindu caste groups (57.5%)	1. BC (Hill)	Brahman, Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi,
	2. BC (Tarai)	Kayashta, Rajput, Baniya, Marwadi, Jain, Nurang, Bengali
	3. Tarai Middle Castes	Yadav, Teli, Kalwar, Sudi, Sonar, Lohar, Koiri, Kurmi, Kanu, Haluwai, Hajam/Thakur, Badhe, Rajbhar, Kewat Mallah, Numhar, Kahar, Lodha, Bing/Banda, Bhediyar, Mali, Kamar Dhunia
	4. Dalits (Hill)	Kami, Damai, Sarki, Gaine, Badi
	5. Dalits (Tarai)	Chamar, Musahar, Tatma, Bantar, Dhusadadh/Paswan, Khatway, Dom, Chidimar, Dhobi, Halkhor, Unidentified Dalit
Janajatis (37.2%)	6. Newar	All Newari Castes
	7. Janajatis (Hill)	Magar, Tamang, Rai, Gurung, Limbu, Sherpa, Bhote, Walung, Buansi, Hyolmo, Gharti/Bhujel, Kumal, Sunuwar, Baramu, Pahari, Adivasi Janajati, Yakkha, Shantal, Jirel, Darai, Dura, Majhi, Dunuwar, Thami, Lepcha, Chepang, Bote, Raji, Hayu, Raut, Kasunda
	8. Janajatis (Tarai)	Tharu, Dhanuk, Rajbanshi, Tajpuriya, Gangai, Dhimal, Meche, Kisan, Munda, Santhal/Satar/Dhangad/Jhangad, Koche, Pattarkatta/Kusbadiya
Muslims (4.3%)	9. Muslims	Muslim, Churute
Others (1%)	10. Others	

Muslim castes of Tarai

Kastengruppe	Unterkaste	Erläuterung
Ashraf und konvertierte Tagadhari	Sayyid	Nachkommen des Propheten
	Shaikh	Nachkommen anderer arabischer Stämme
	Mughal	mongolischer Herkunft
	Pathan	afghanischer Herkunft
	Thakurai	konvertierte Thakuri
reine konvertierte Shudra-Kasten	Jat	Ackerbauern
	Gaddi	Rinderhirten
	Sabzi-farosh	Gemüsegärtner
	Dhuniya	Baumwollarbeiter
	Julaha	Weber
	Curihar	Bangle Maker
	Rangrez	Färber
	Darzi	Schneider
	Bhat	Genealogen, Lobredner
	Faqir	Fakire
	Hajjam	Barbiere, Chirurgen
berührbare unreine konvertierte Shudra-Kasten	Cik / Qassab	Fleischer
	Dhobi	Wäscher
	Teli	Ölpresser
	Pasi / Araqi	Destillierer
unberührbare unreine konvertierte Shudra-Kasten	Mochi	Gerber, Schuster
	Dafali	Trommler, Barden, Priester
	Nat / Natuva	Musiker, Tänzerinnen
	Dharkar	Korbmacher
	Patharkat	Steinhauer
	Halal-khor	Straßenkehrer

Hindu caste system (traditional)

The traditional classes ([varna](#))

[brahmana](#) (priests)

[kshatriya](#) (rulers, warriors)

[vaishya](#) (traders, merchants, free peasants)

[shudra](#) (craftsmen, artists, workers, servants)

[dalit](#) (untouchables: barbers, washers, sweepers, blacksmiths, cobblers, tailors, butchers etc.)

Caste hierarchy according to the *muluki ain* (1854)

tagadhari (wearers of the holy thread)

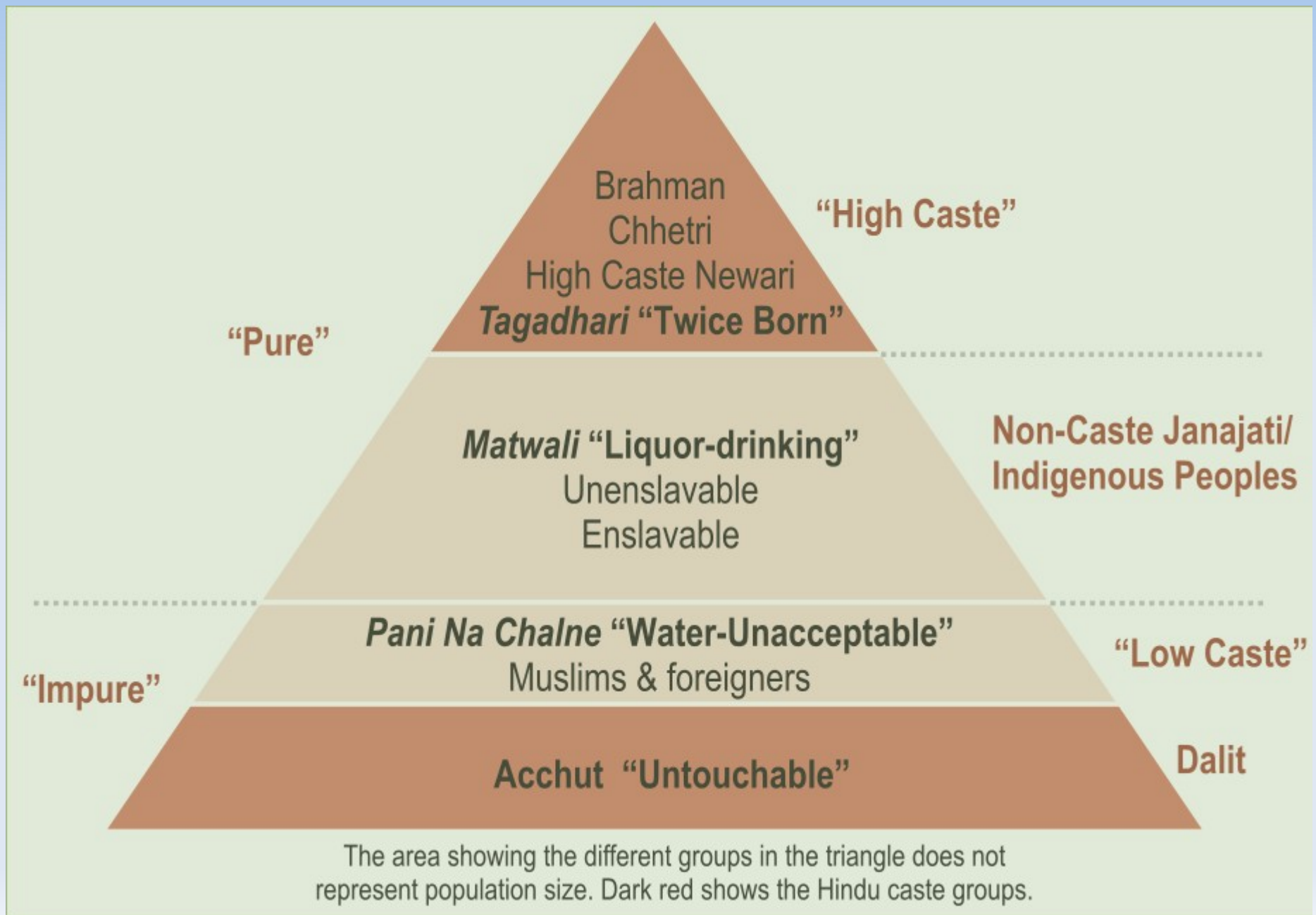
namasinya matvali (non-enslavable, alcohol drinking castes)

masinya matvali (enslavable, alcohol drinking castes)

pani nachhalne chhoichhito halnu naparne (castes, from whom higher castes are not allowed to accept water, but the contact of whom does not cause ritual pollution)

pani nachhalne chhoichhito halnu parne (untouchable castes)

Caste hierarchy (simplified)



Tagadhari (Khas Arya)

Upadhyaya Bahun

Jaisi Bahun (Joshi, Jyotishi)

(descendants from marriages between Upadhyaya men and Bahun widows or divorced Bahun women)

Thakuri

(among them the Hamal, descendants of Bahun men and Thakuri women)

Chhetri

jharra chhetri (marriage with *kanyadan biha*)

thimbu chhetri (marriage without *kanyadan biha*)

ascetic sects (Sannyasi, Giri)

some Newar castes

Matwali (Janajati)

namasinya matwali

not enslavable, alcohol drinking castes

matwali chhetri

ethnic groups that were close to Hindu culture in 1854 (Gurung, Magar, some Newar castes, Sunuwar)

masinya matwali

enslavable, alcohol drinking castes

other ethnic groups (Chepang, Danuwar, Dimal, Hayu, Jirel, Kumhal, Limbu, Manangpa, Panchgaunle, Rai, Rajbansi, Raute, Satar, Sherpa, Tamang, Thakali, Tharu, etc.

released slaves (Gharti)

pani nachalne chhoichhito halnu naparne

some Newar castes (Kasai, Kusle, Dhobi; Kulu)

Muslims

whites (mlechha)

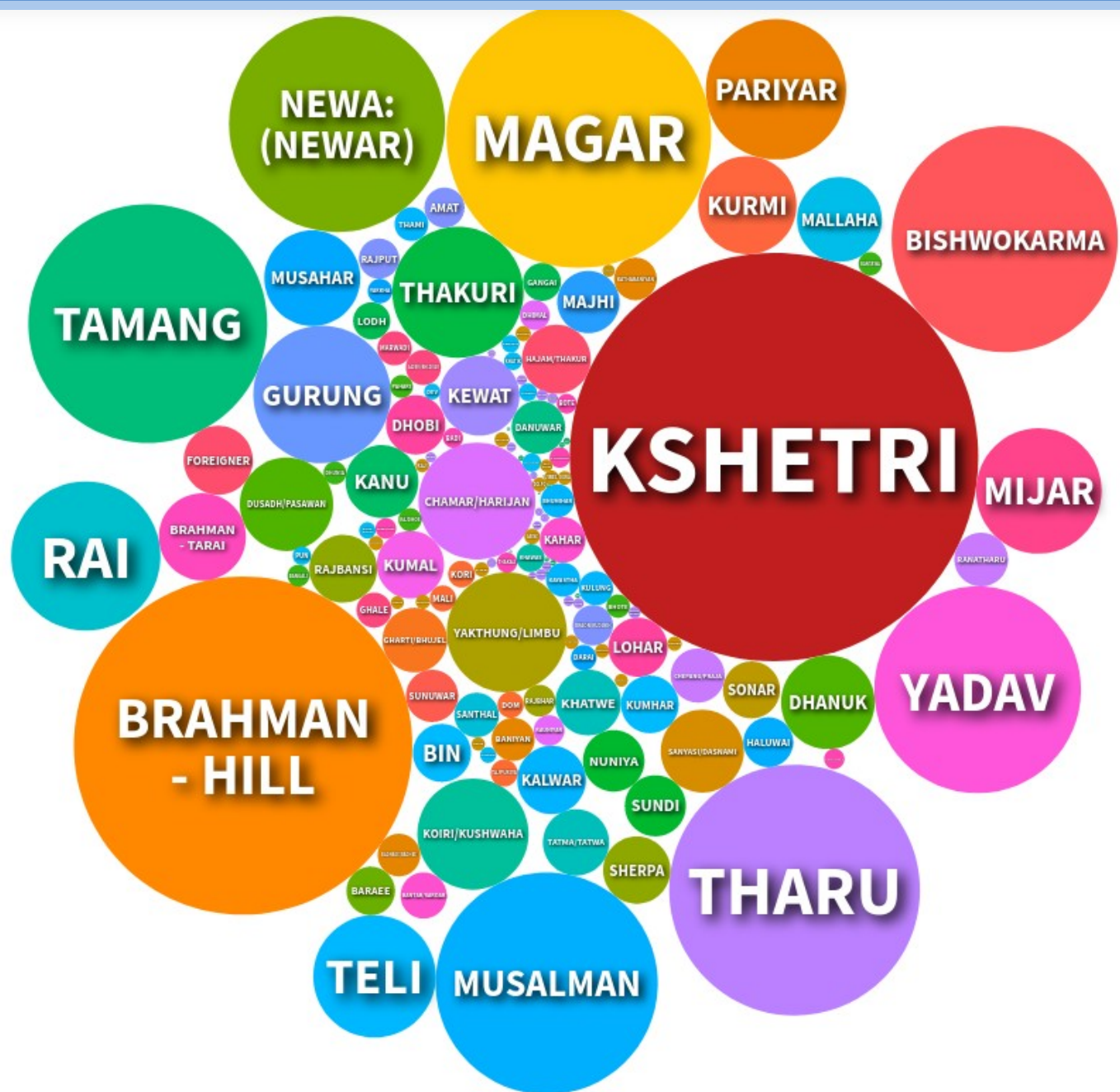
pani nachalne chhoichhito halnu parne

untouchable Parbatiya castes

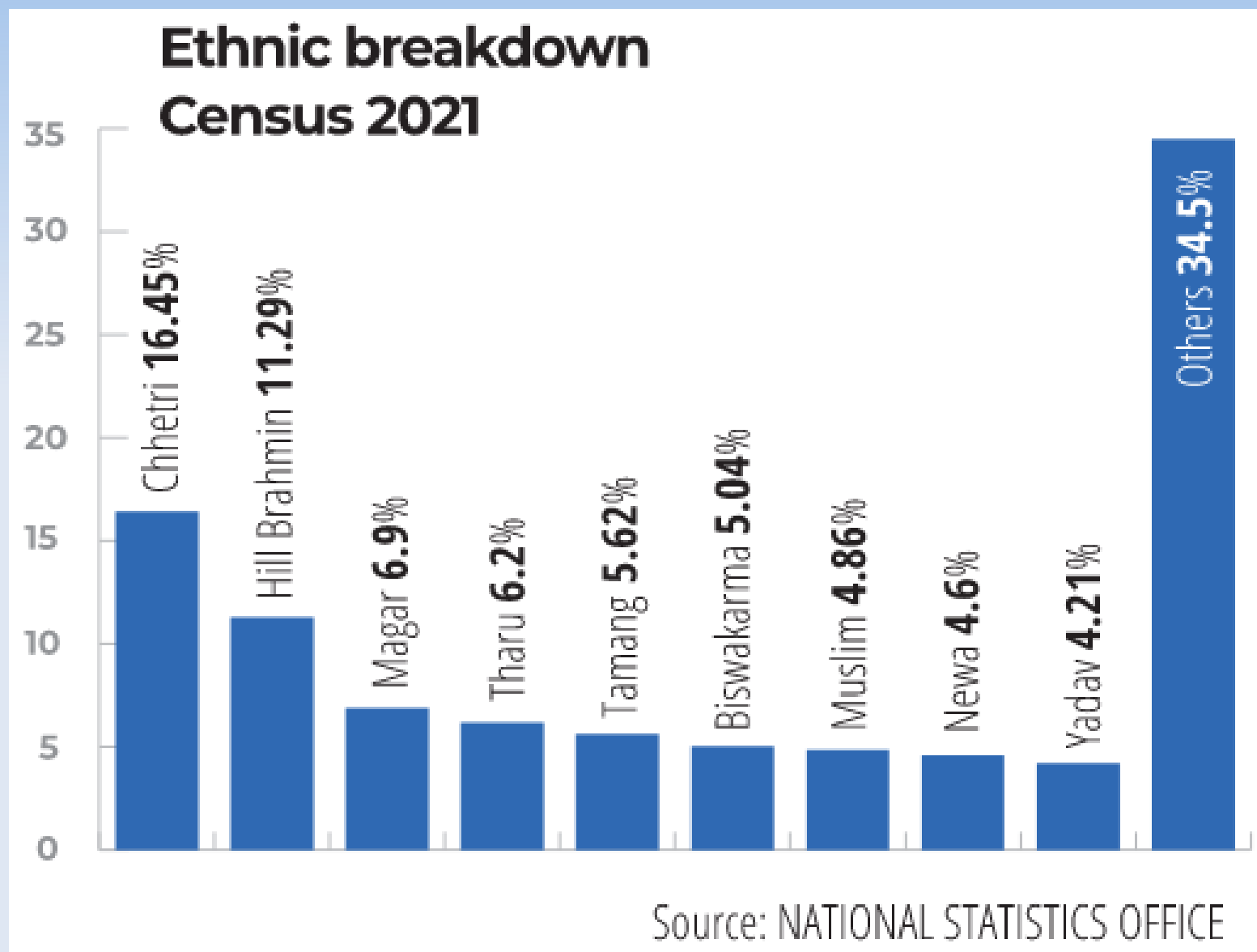
Kami (blacksmiths), Sarki (cobblers), Kadara (descendants of Kami/Sarki marriages), Damai (tailors, musicians), Sunar (goldsmiths), Gaine (Wandermusikanten), Badi (musicians)

some Newar castes (Pore, Chyame)

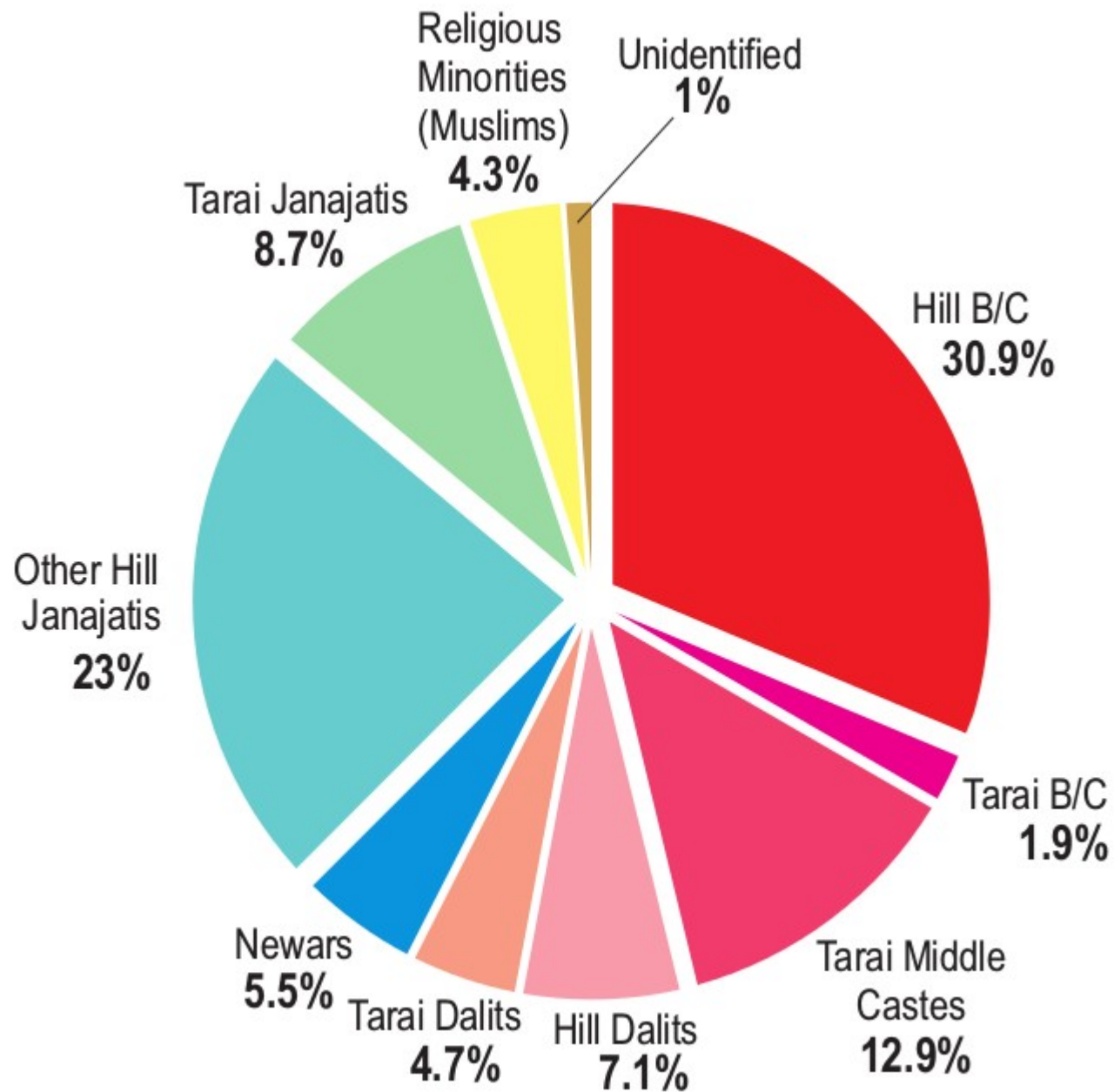
Population by caste and ethnicity



Population according to census 2021



Population by caste and ethnicity (census 2011)



Dimensions of exclusion

Social Category Status	Gender	Caste	Ethnicity/Race	Language	Religion	Geo-political
Dominant	Men/Boys	Tagadhari: Brahman, Chhetri	Caucasoid	Nepali	Hindu	Parbatiya (Hill dweller)
Subordinate	Women/Girls	Dalit	Janajati/ Mongoloid	Other	Non-Hindu	Madhesi (Plains dweller)

Dimensions of exclusion

THE INCLUDED

- Men (especially those from high status groups)
- The well-off/higher class
- "Dominant Group (s)" as defined in Nepali society by:
 - Caste/ethnicity: *Khas Arya*
 - Region: Hill therefore, hill people or *Paharis*
 - Religion: Hindu
 - Language: Nepali
 - Assets: Land owner
- Heterosexuals
- Citizens
- Persons without disabilities
- Adults in prime
- People living in the capital, large towns

THE EXCLUDED

- Women
- The poor/lower class
- Marginalized/Excluded Groups as defined in Nepali society by:
 - Caste/ethnicity: Dalits, OBCs and Adibasi Janajatis
 - Region: Plains, therefore people from the plains or *Madhesis*
 - Religion: Muslims and other non-Hindus
 - Language: Non-Nepali languages
 - Assets: Landless
- LGBTI community
- Non-Citizens
- Persons with disabilities
- People living in remote/difficult geographical locations (e.g. Far West and Karnali)

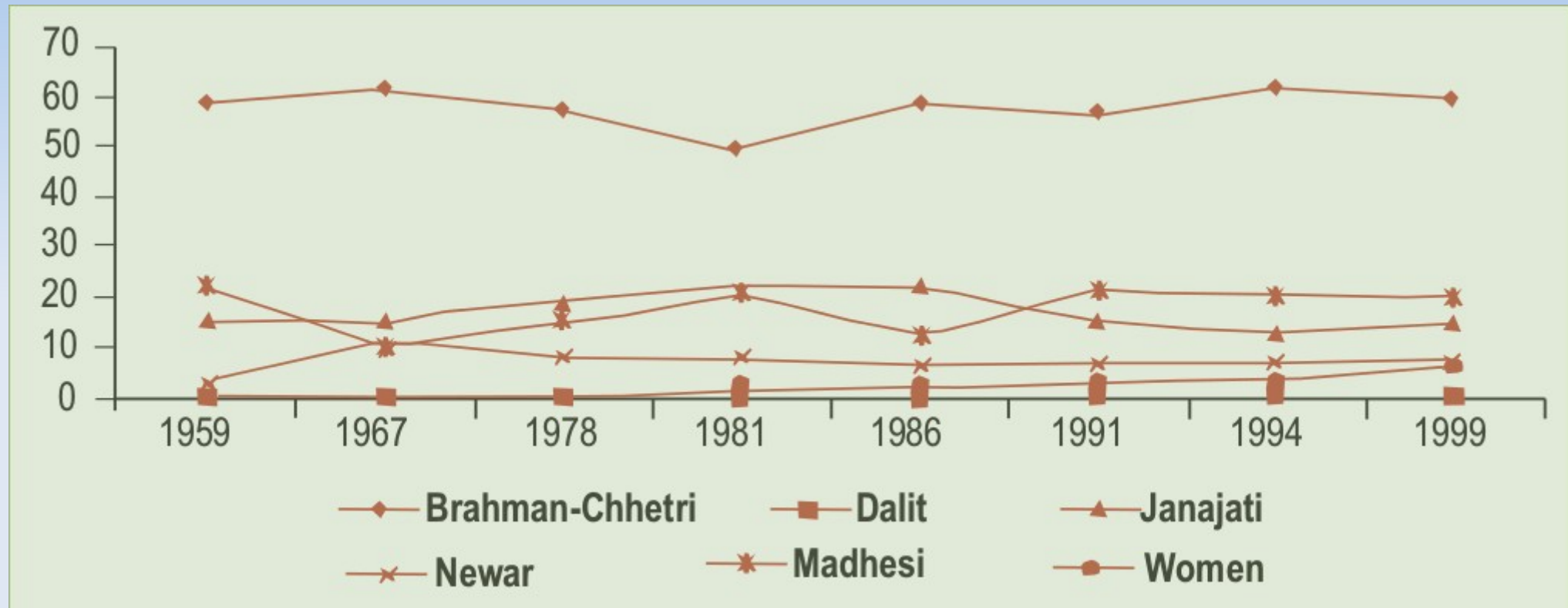
THOSE NOT VULNERABLE

- People living in areas not affected by earthquakes, floods or droughts.
- Non-HIV affected people
- Those not employed in sex work or trafficked
- Adults in prime

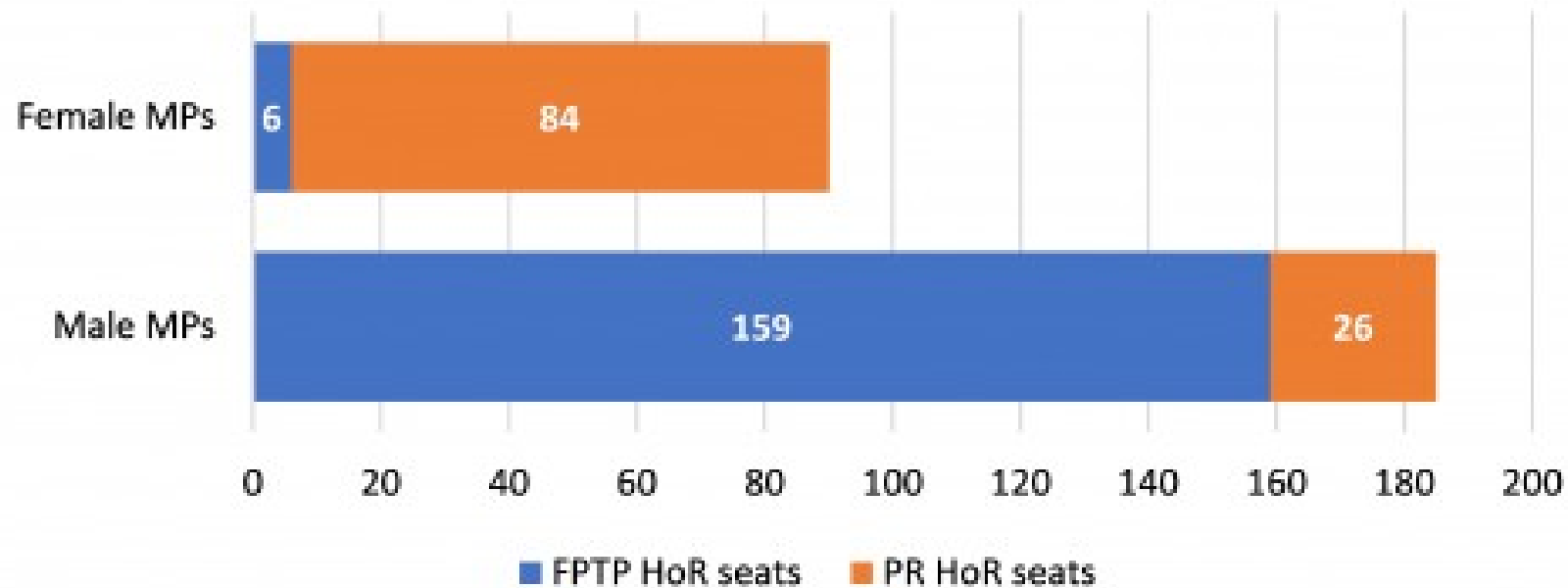
THE VULNERABLE

- People living in areas affected by earthquakes, floods or droughts
- HIV-affected people
- Sex workers and trafficked people
- Children, adolescents, older people

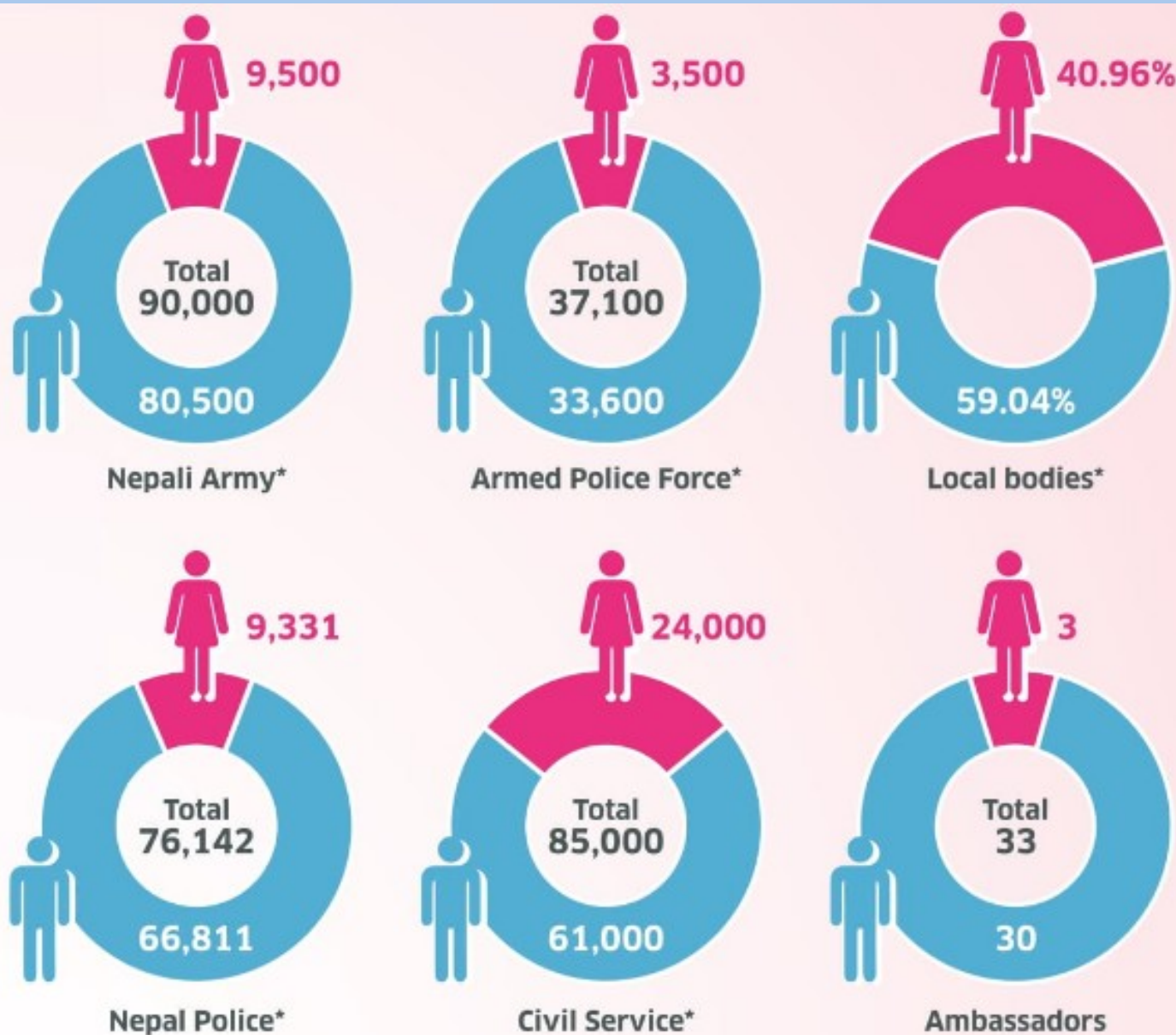
Political exclusion (representation in parliament 1959-1999)



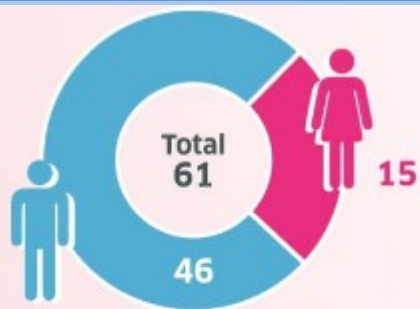
Gender inclusion (HoR 2017-2022)



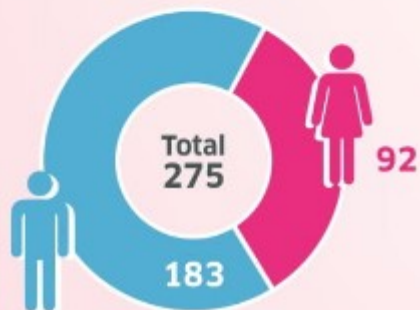
Gender inclusion: Women in positions



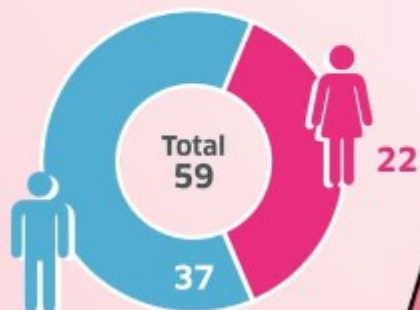
Gender inclusion: Women in parliament



Constitutional bodies

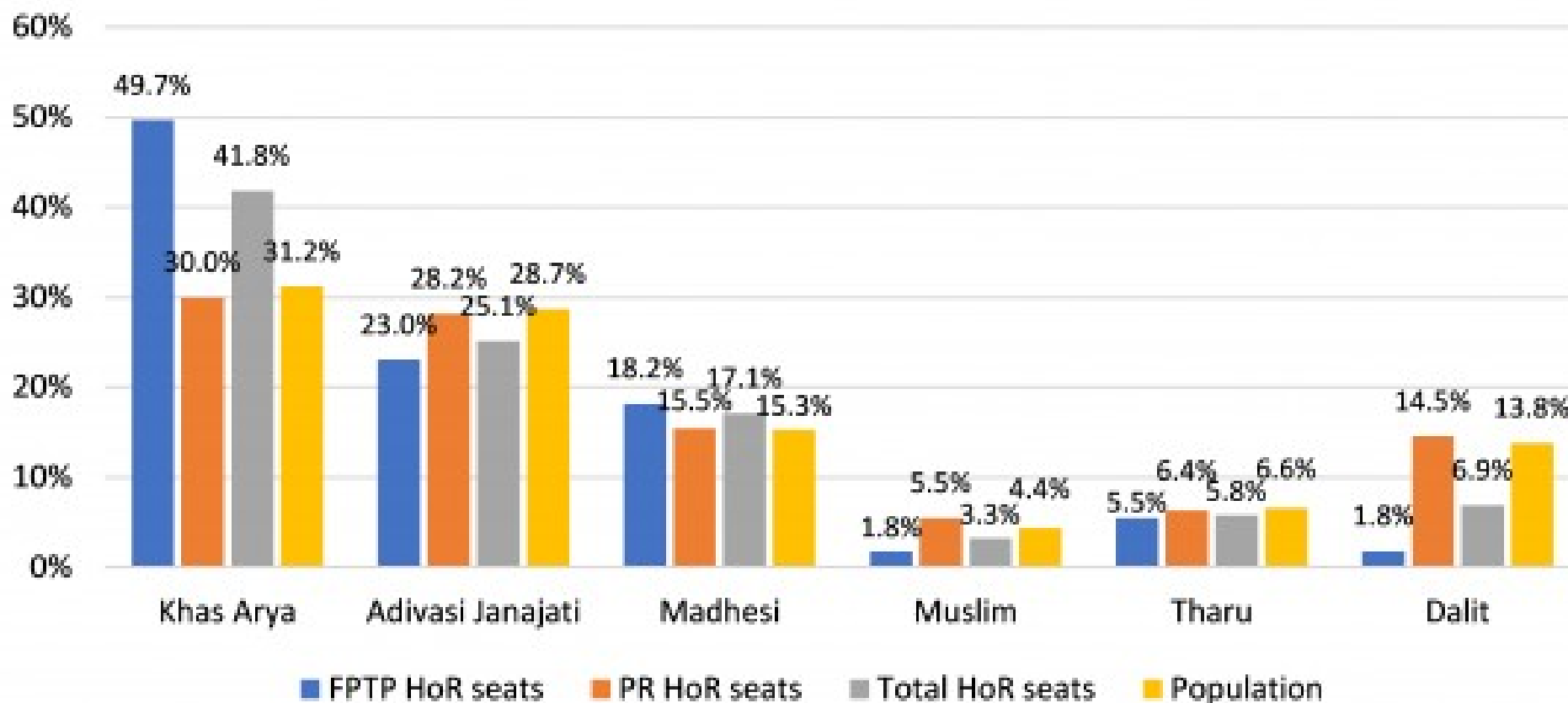


Federal Parliament
(House of Representative)



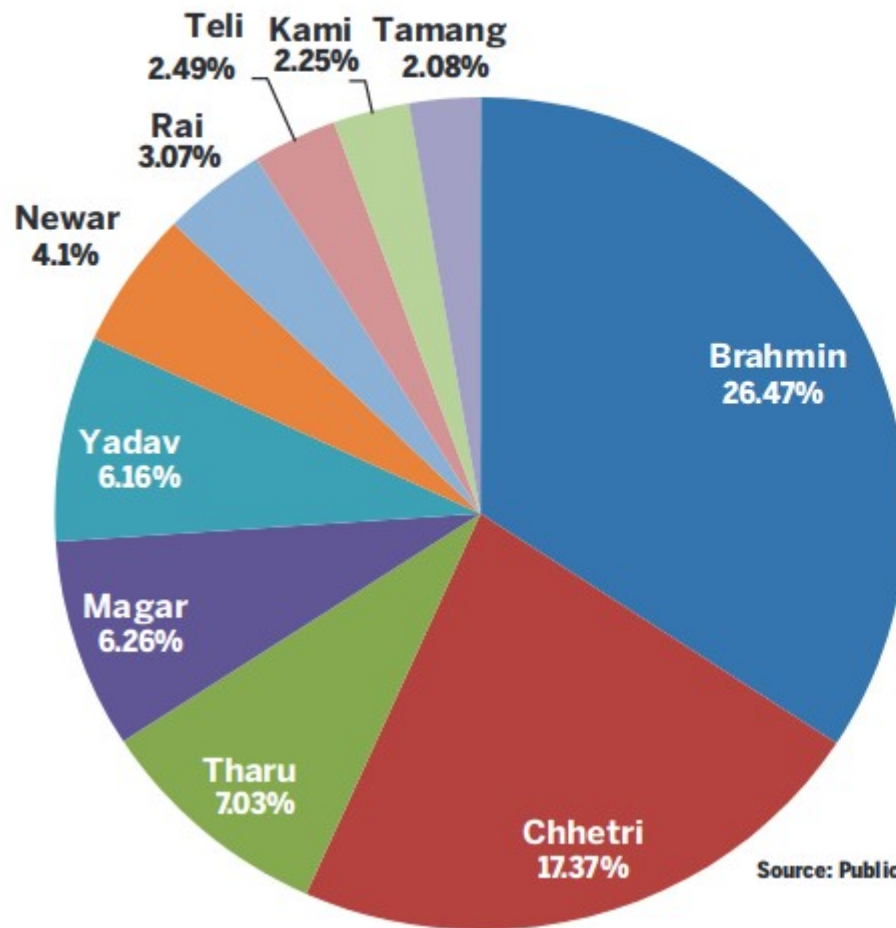
Federal Parliament
(National Assembly)

Ethnic inclusion (HoR 2017-2022)

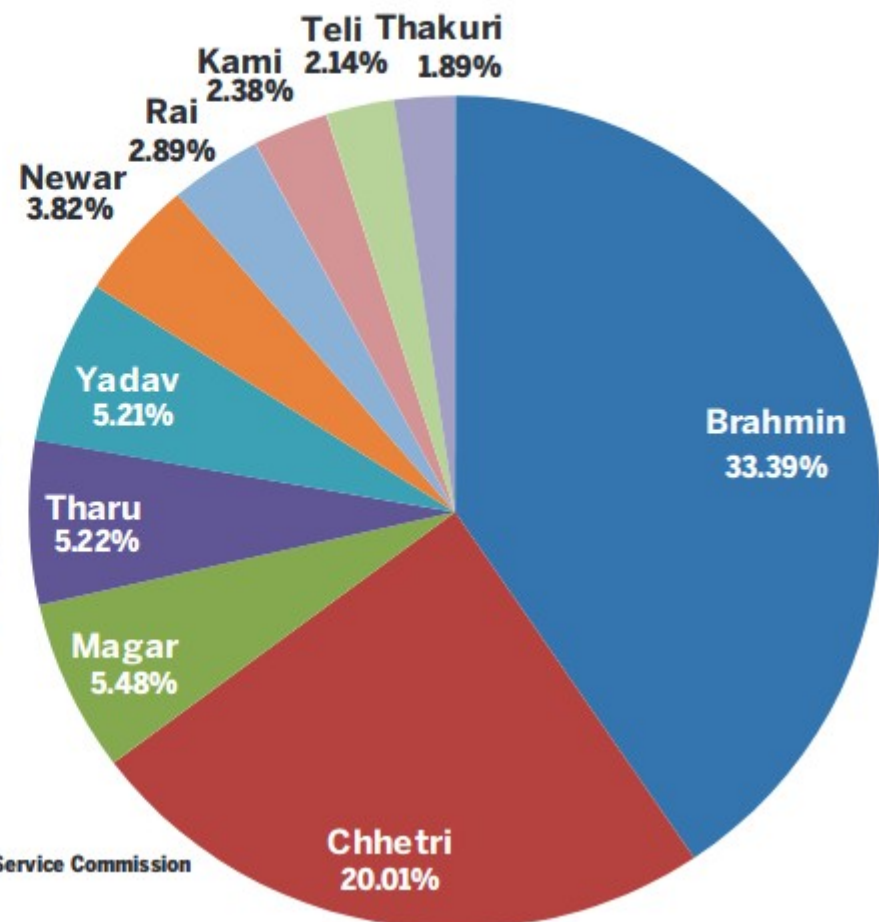


Ethnicity and inclusion (administration)

Top 10 castes of job applicants
in fiscal 2017-18

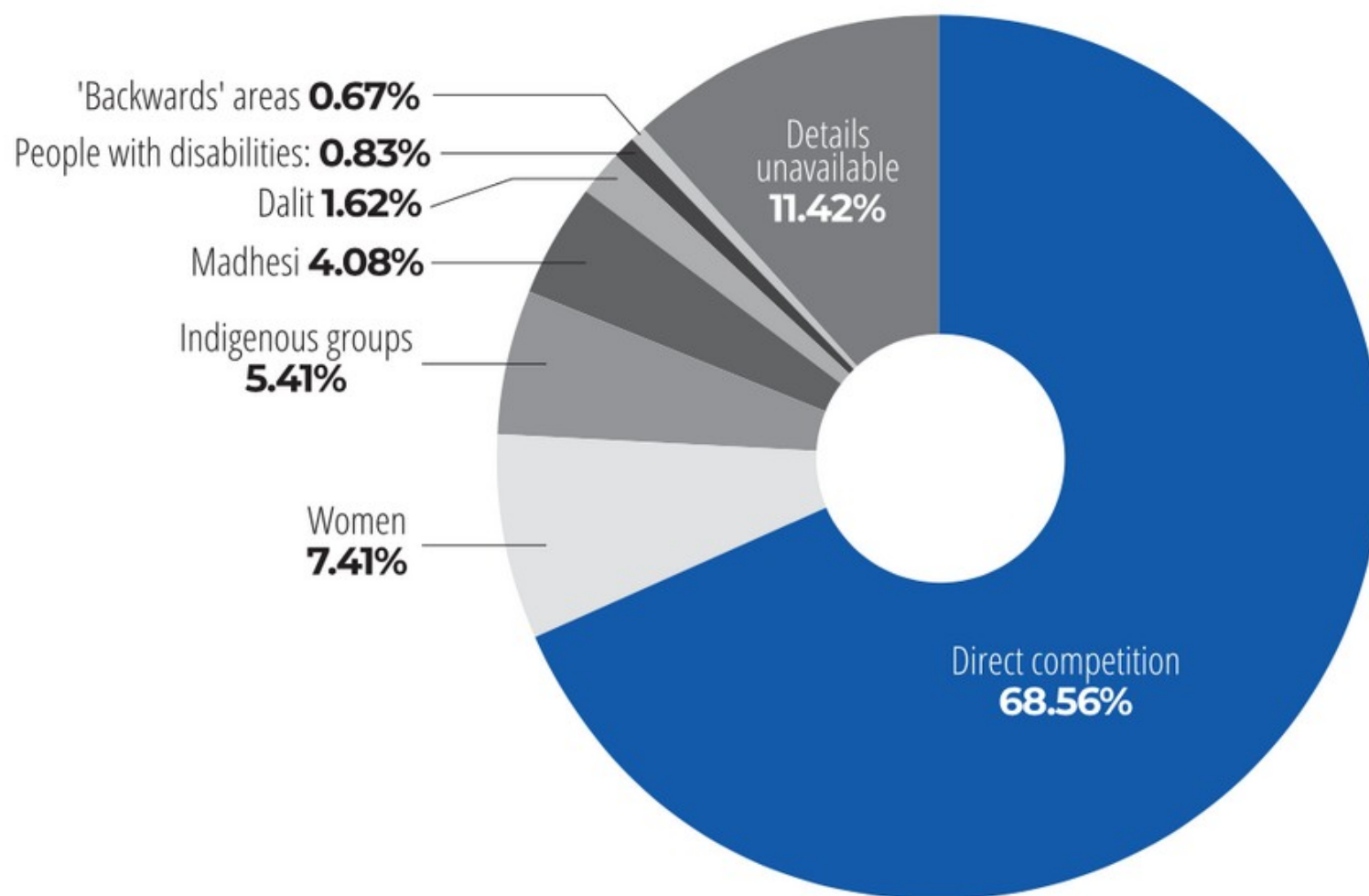


Top 10 castes in terms of job
recommendations in 2017-18



Source: Public Service Commission

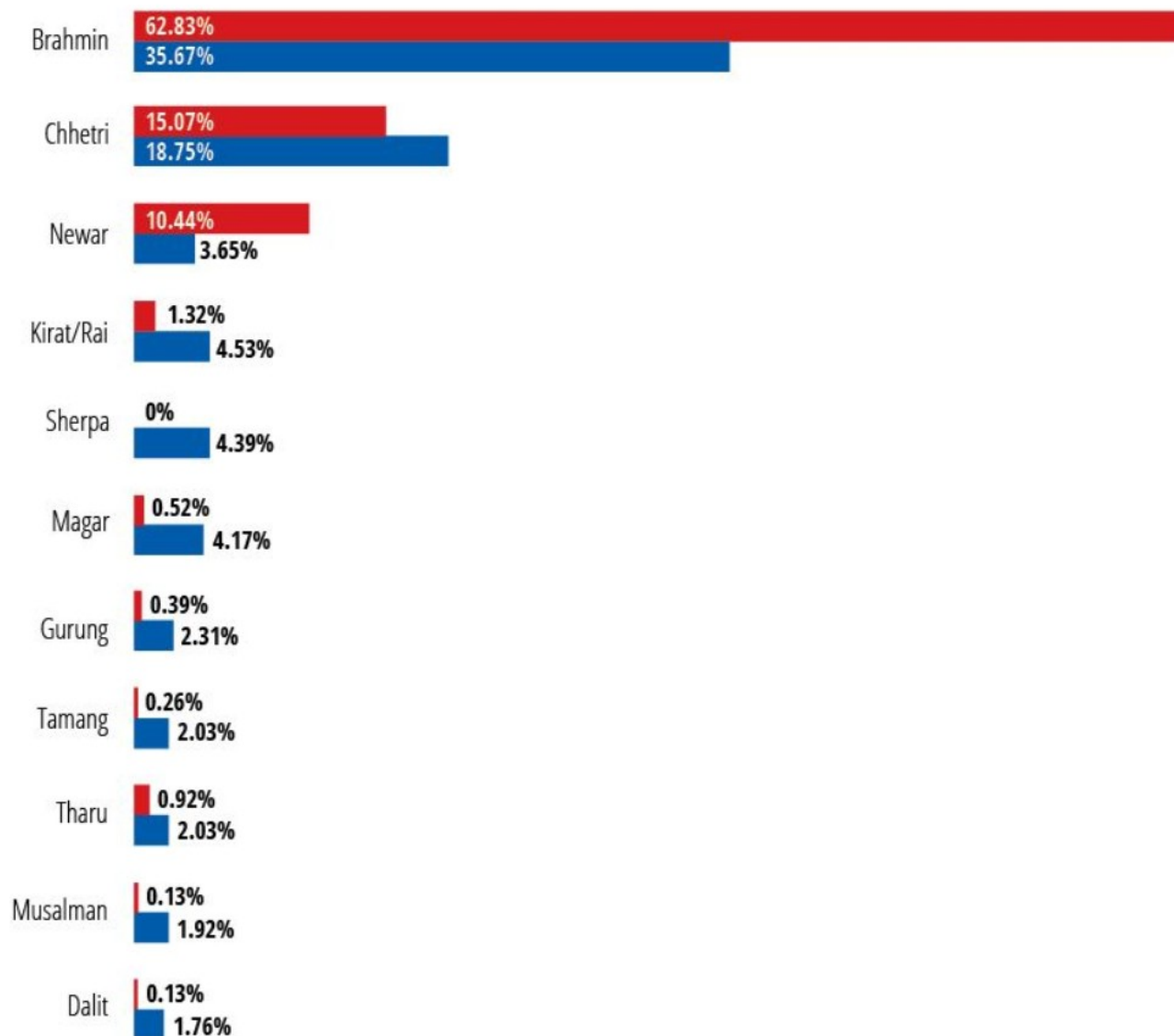
Ethnicity and inclusion (administration, 2024)



Current distribution of civil service jobs by cluster groups.

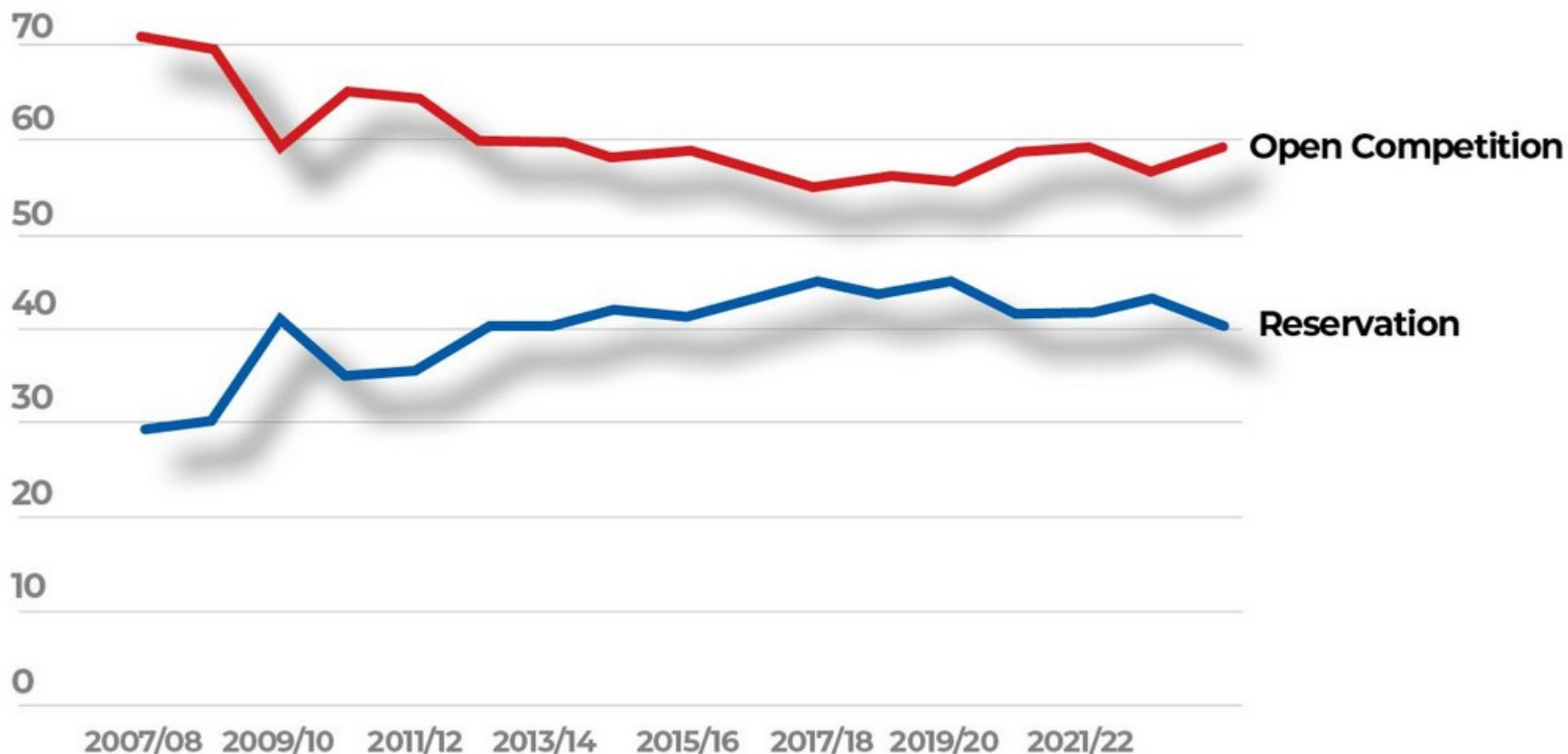
Ethnic inclusion (administration, before and after reservation)

Proportion of civil servants by main caste and ethnicity **before** and **after** reservation

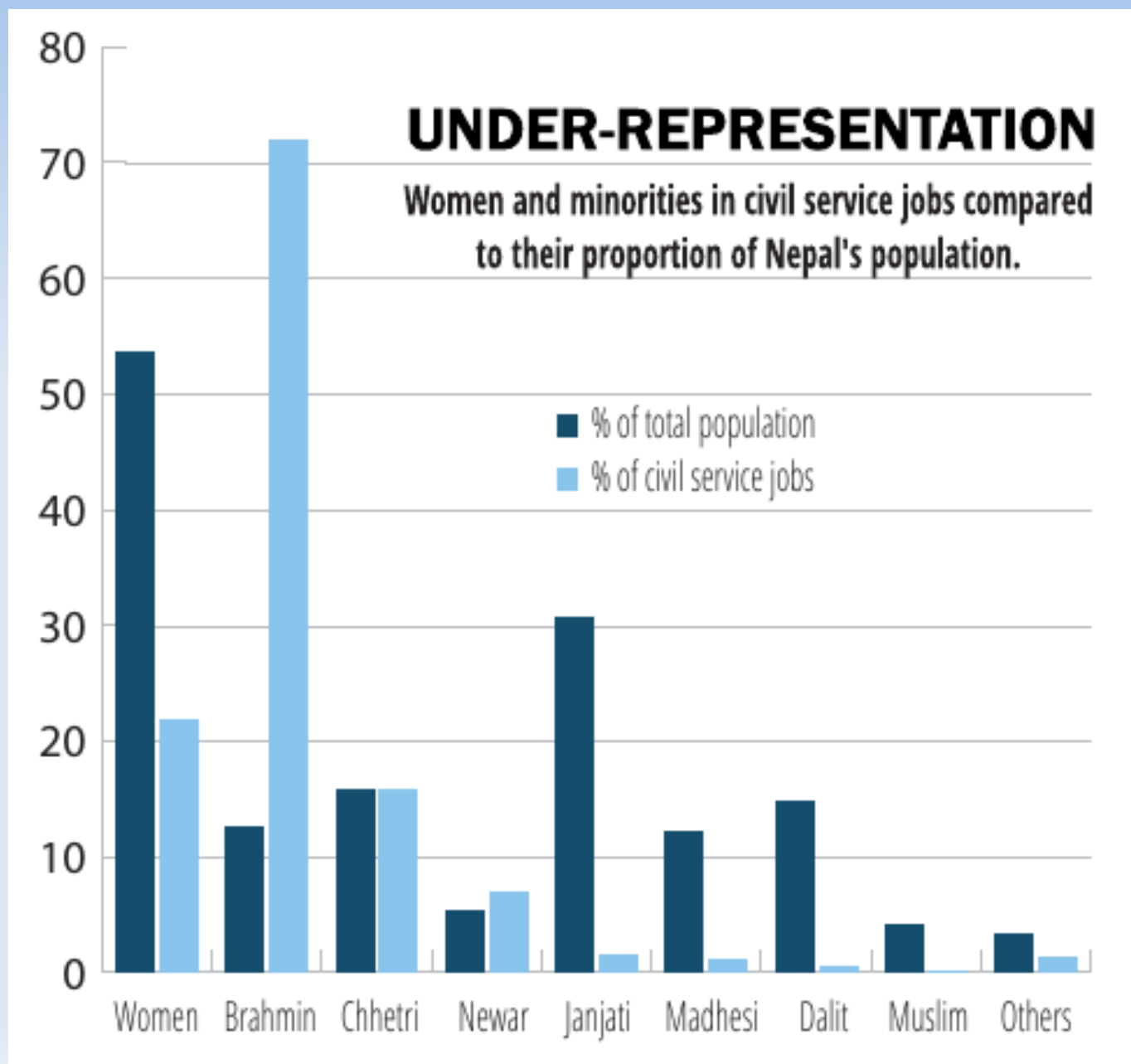


Ethnic inclusion (administration, recruitment)

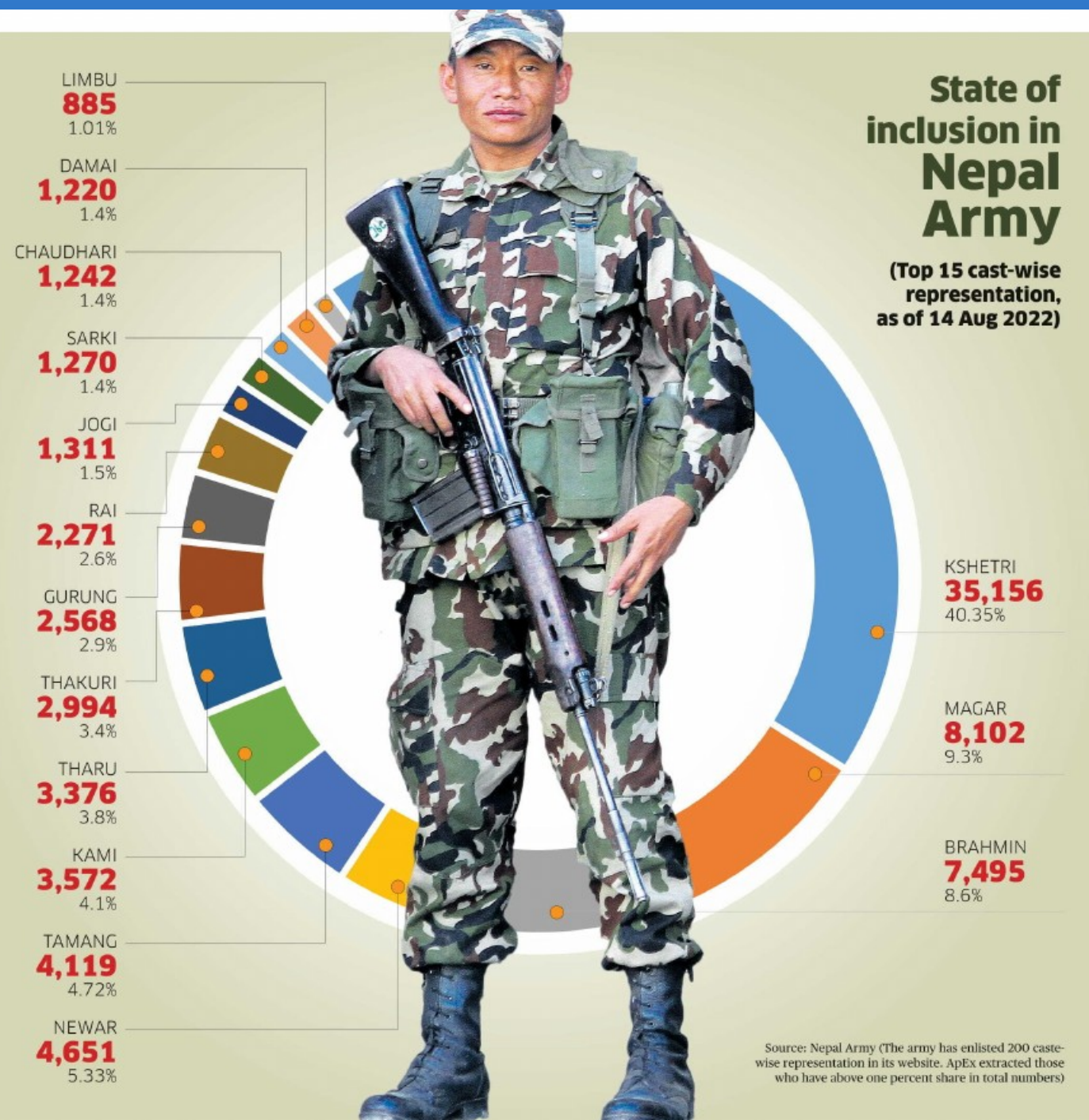
Civil service jobs by recruitment criteria



Ethnicity and gender in civil service

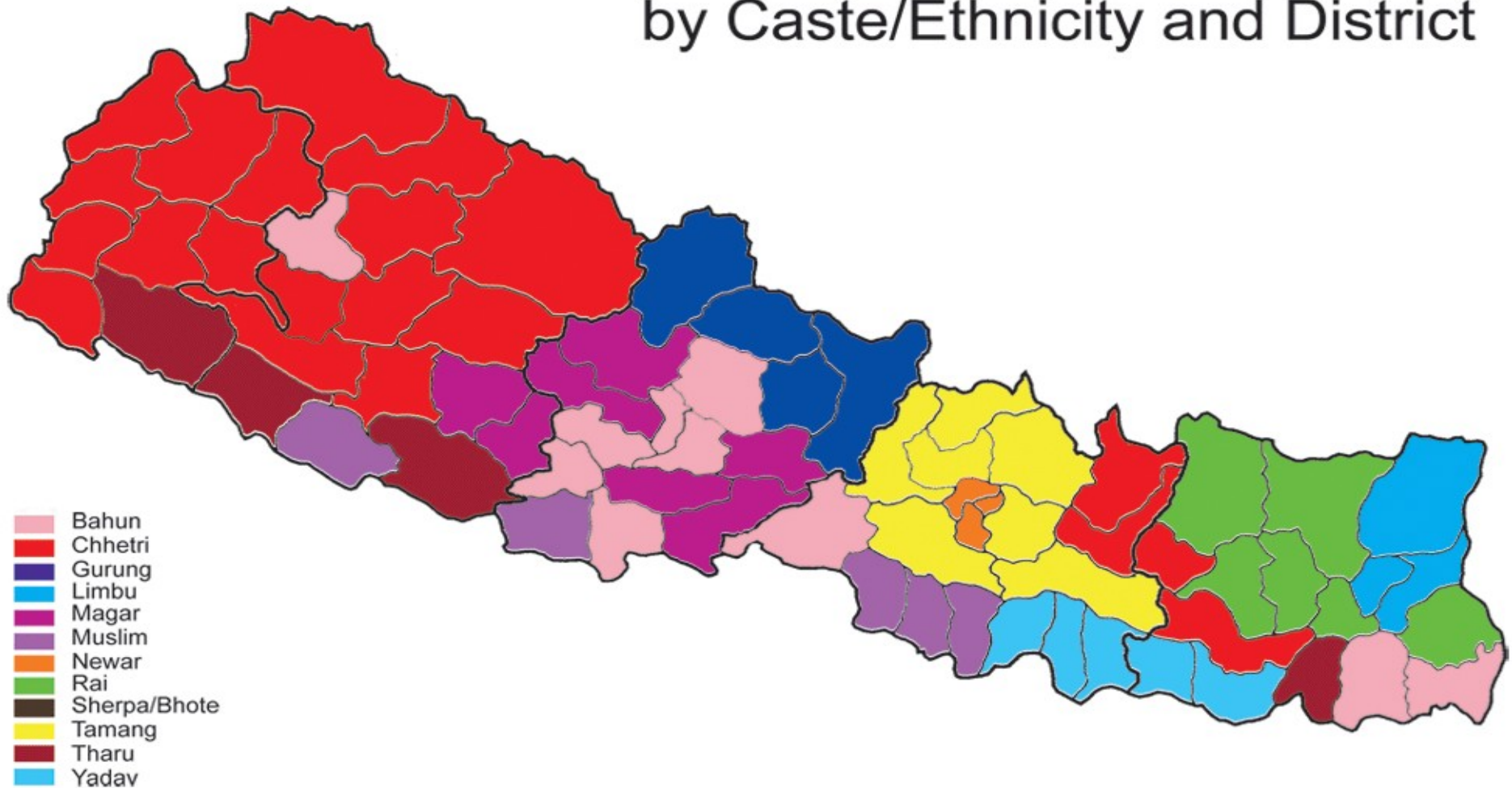


Ethnic inclusion in army



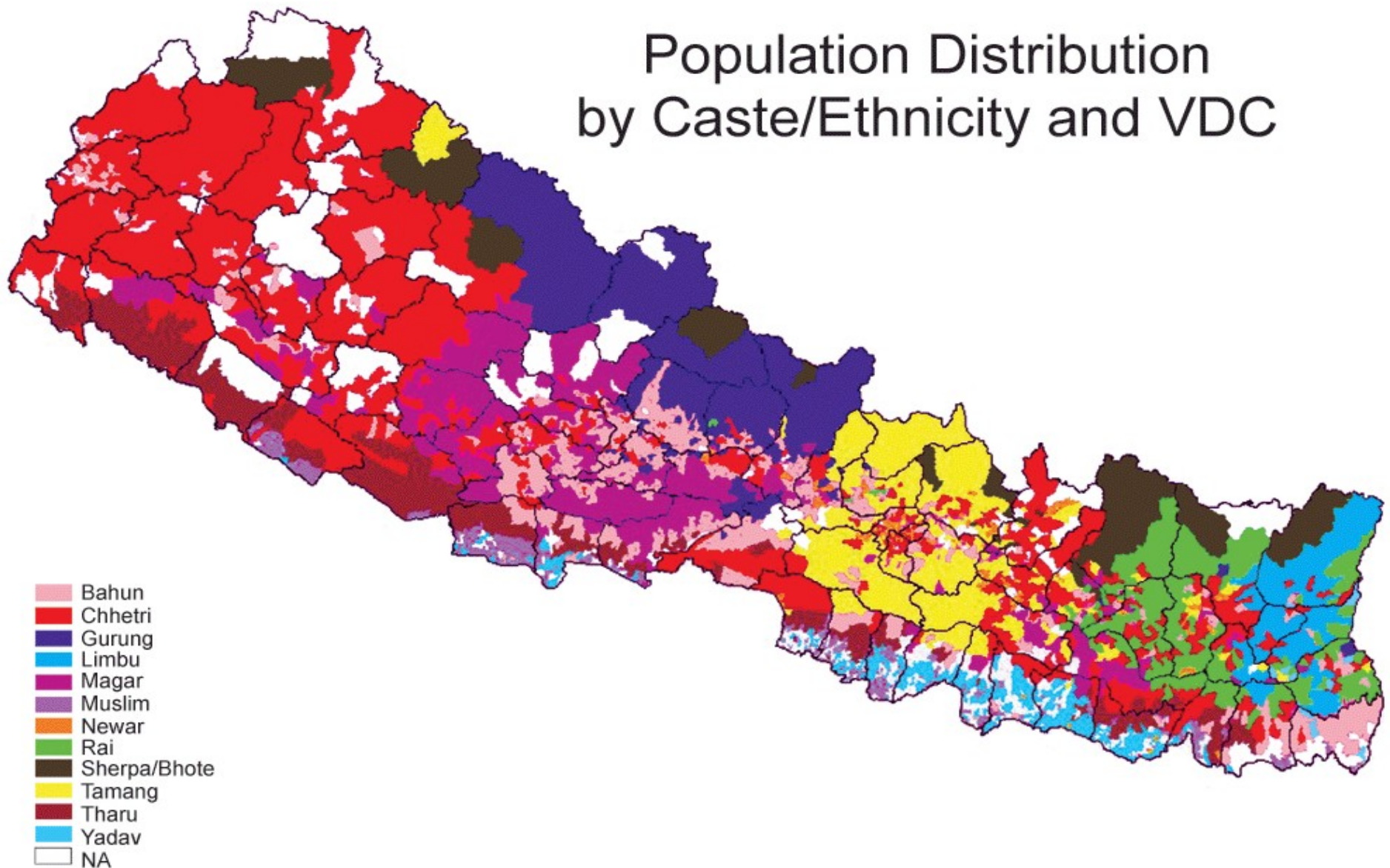
Traditional settlement areas

Population Distribution
by Caste/Ethnicity and District



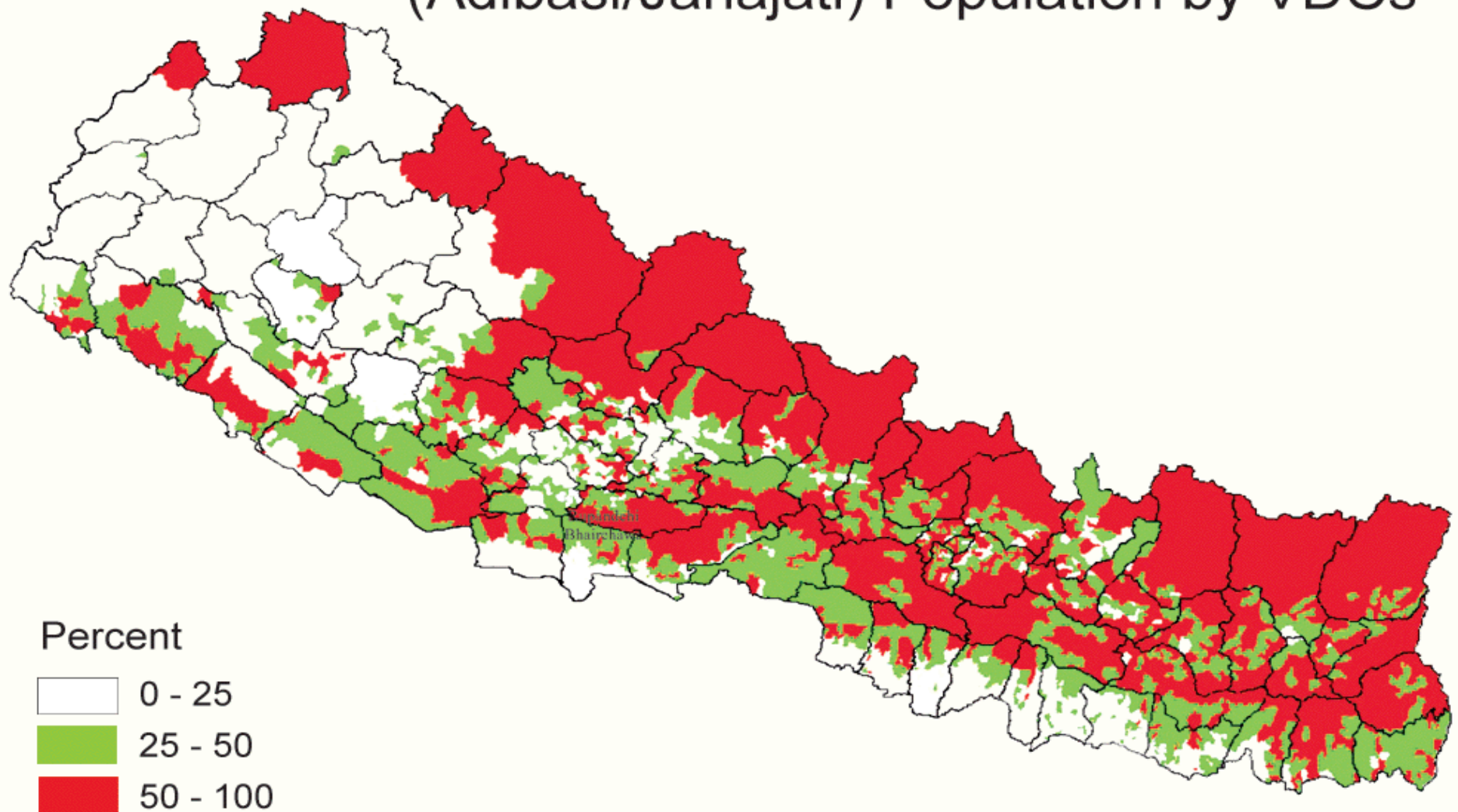
Ethnicity on the basis of VDCs and municipalities

Population Distribution
by Caste/Ethnicity and VDC

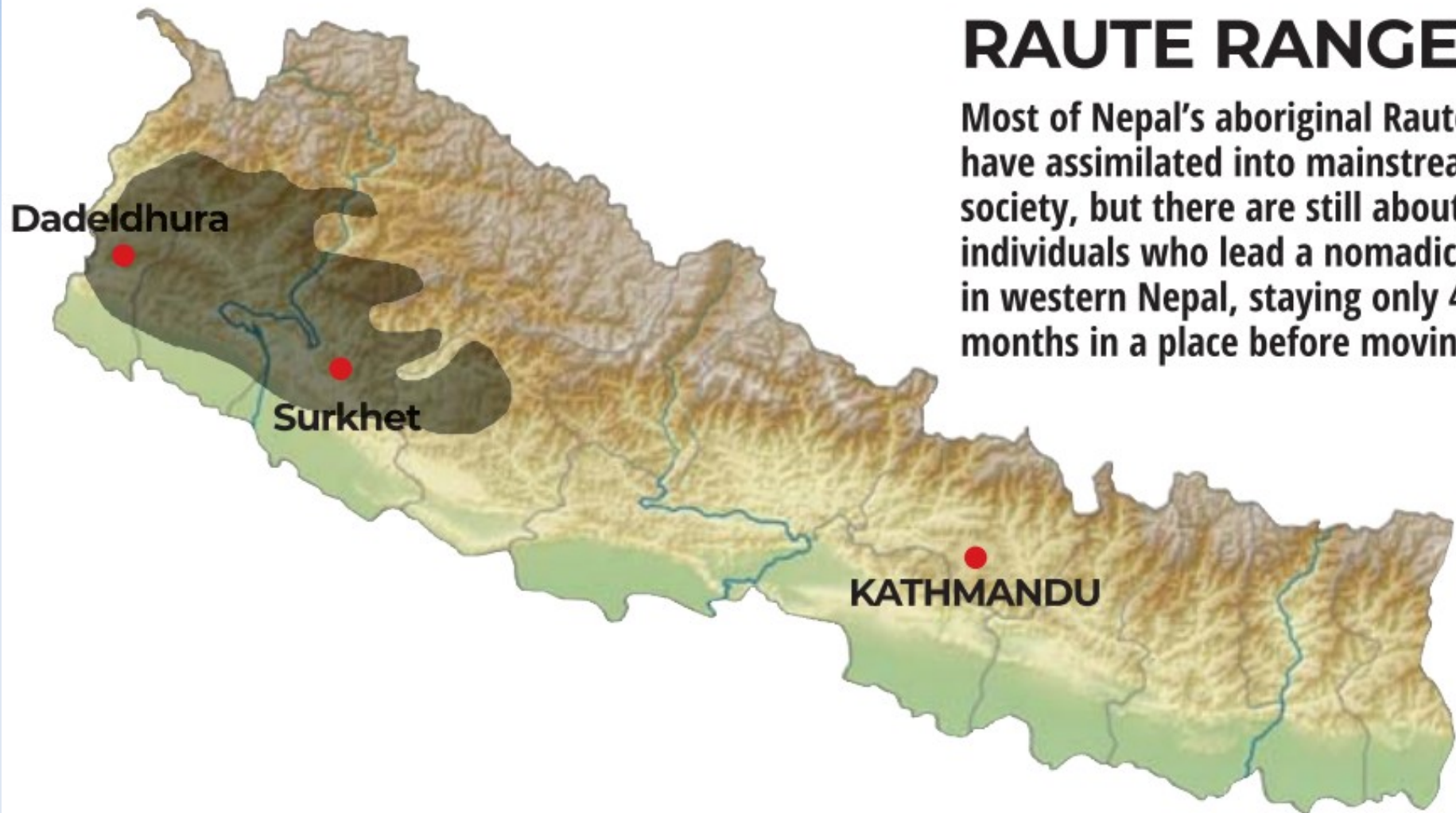


Share of Janajati population on basis of districts

Percentage Distribution of Ethnic
(Adibasi/Janajati) Population by VDCs



Raute nomads

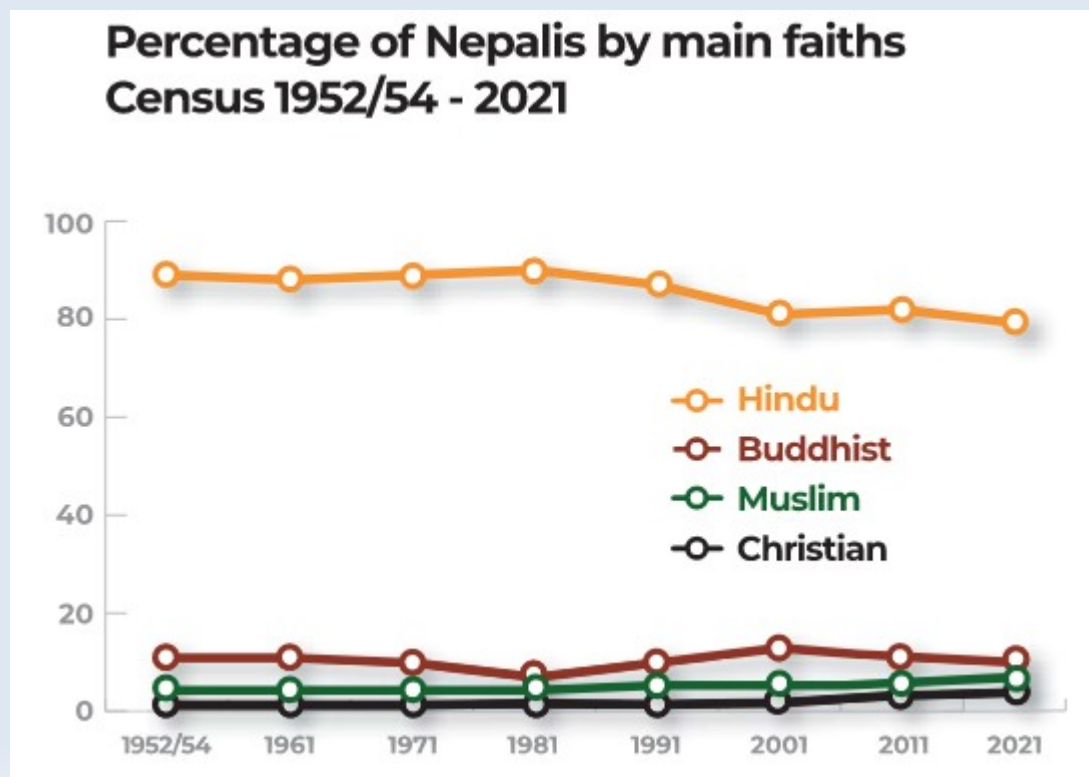


RAUTE RANGE

Most of Nepal's aboriginal Raute have assimilated into mainstream society, but there are still about 150 individuals who lead a nomadic life in western Nepal, staying only 4 months in a place before moving on.

Religions (according to census)

Religion	1952	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Hindu	88.9	87.6	89.4	89.5	86.5	80.6	81.3	81.2
Buddhist	8.6	9.3	7.5	5.3	7.8	10.7	9.0	8.2
Muslim	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.7	3.5	4.2	4.4	5.1
Kirat					1.7	3.6	3.1	3.2
Christian				0.1	0.2	0.4	1.4	1.8
Other	0.0	0.1	-1.0	2.5	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.6



Religions

(source: Gellner/Chiara, Routledge Handbook, 2021)

Religion	1952/4		1961		1971		1981		1991		2001		2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Hinduism	7,318,392	88.9	8,254,403	87.7	10,330,009	89.4	13,445,787	89.5	15,996,953	86.5	18,330,121	80.6	21,551,492	81.3
Buddhism	707,104	8.6	807,991	9.3	866,411	7.5	799,081	5.3	1,439,142	7.8	2,442,520	10.7	2,396,099	9.0
Islam	208,899	2.5	280,597	3.0	351,186	3.0	399,197	2.7	653,218	3.5	954,023	4.2	1,162,370	4.4
Kirati									318,389	1.7	818,106	3.6	807,169	3.0
Christianity			458		2,541		3,891	<0.1	31,280	0.2	101,976	0.5	375,699	1.4
Jainism			831		5,836		9,430	0.1	7,561	<0.1	4,108	<0.1	3,214	<0.1
Nature													121,982	0.5
Bon													13,006	<0.1
Others	684						365,445	2.4	26,416	0.1	78,994	0.3		
Unstated			5,716	0.1					18,138	0.1			61,581	0.2
Total	8,235,079	100	9,412,996	100	11,555,983	100	15,022,831	100	18,491,097	100	22,736,934	100	26,494,504	100

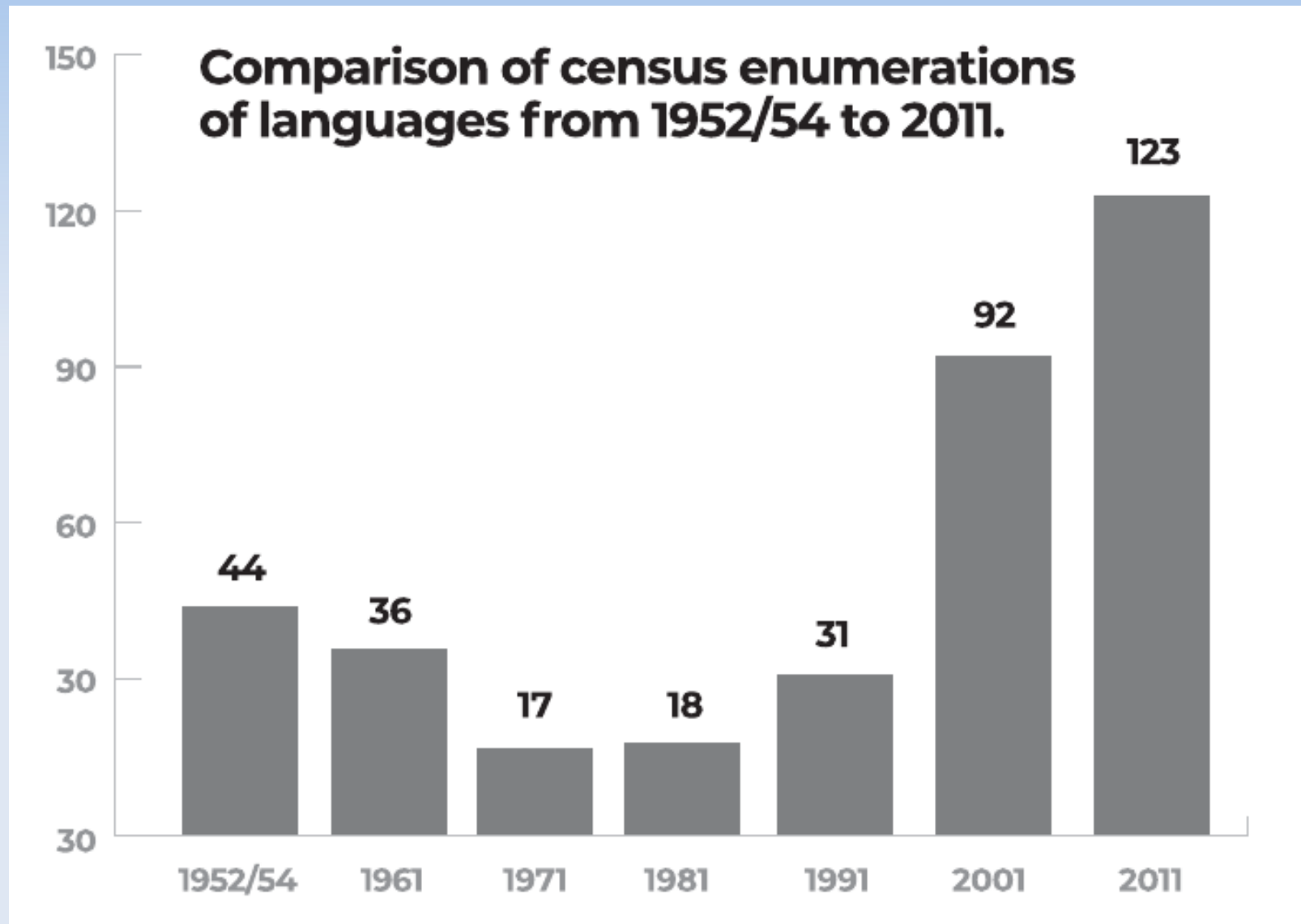
Notes: percentages do not always add up to 100 because of rounding; the last digit of the total for 1981 has been corrected from '9' to '1'; the total for 2001 is left as reported in the 2001 census even though it is 15 too few.

Sources: H. Gurung (1998: 95), Dahal (2003), and 2011 census.

Mother tongues (according to census 2021)

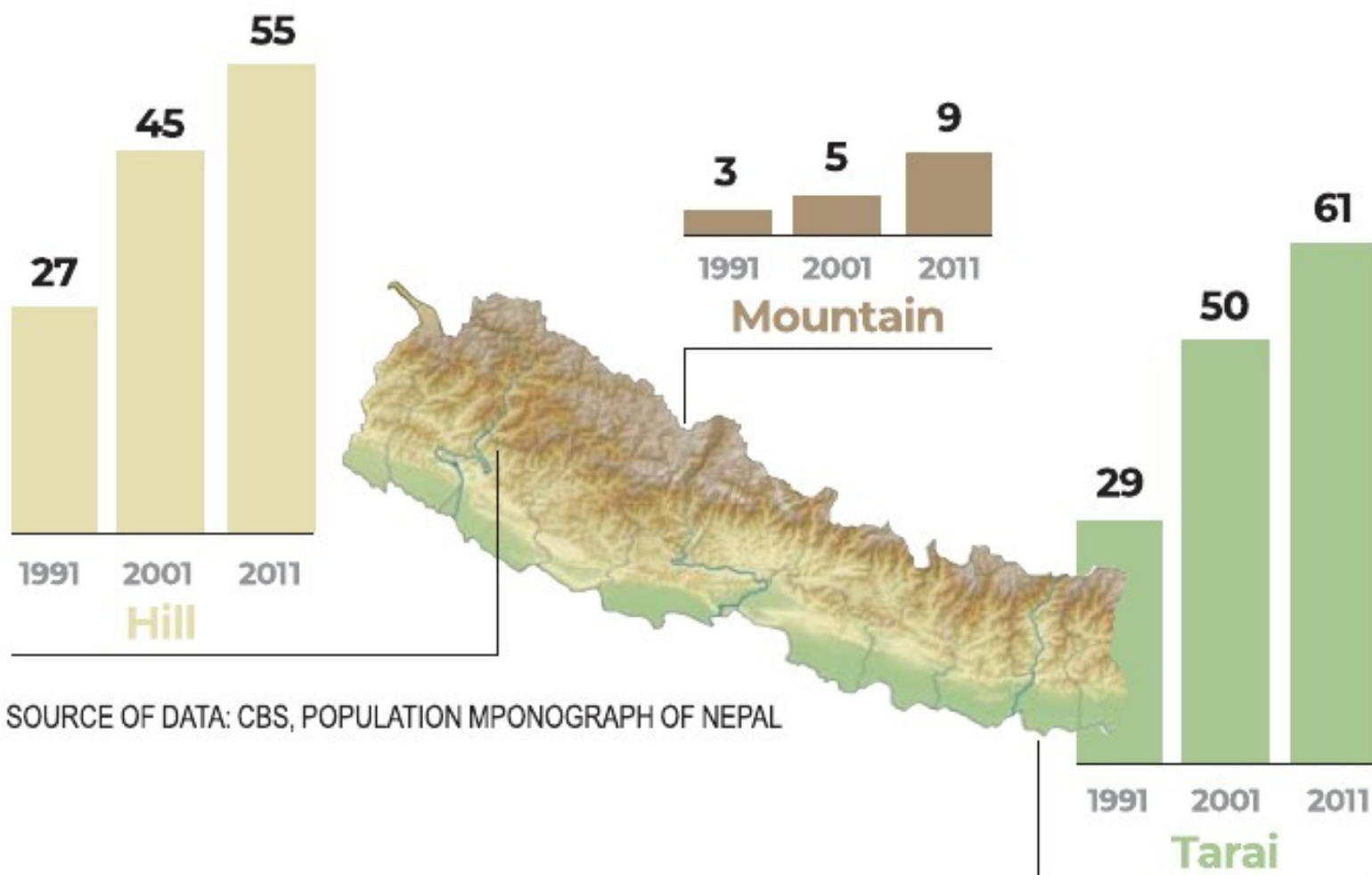
Language	1952	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Nepali	48.7	50.1	52.5	58.4	50.3	48.6	44.6	44.9
Maithili	11.2	12.0	11.5	11.1	11.8	12.3	11.7	11.1
Bhojpuri	0.2	6.1	7.0	7.6	7.5	7.5	6.0	6.2
Bajjika								3.9
Awadhi		4.8	2.7	1.6	2.0	2.5	1.9	3.0
Tharu	4.4	4.3	4.3	3.6	5.4	5.9	5.8	5.8
Tamang	6.0	5.6	4.8	3.5	4.9	5.2	5.1	4.9
Nepal Bhasa	4.7	4.0	3.9	3.0	3.7	3.6	3.2	3.0
Magar	3.3	2.7	2.5	1.4	2.3	3.4	3.0	2.8
Rai languages	2.9	2.5	2.0	1.5	2.4			1.8
Limbu	1.8	1.5	1.5	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.2
Gurung	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.1
	Indo-European languages							
	Tibeto-Burman languages							

Number of languages registered in census



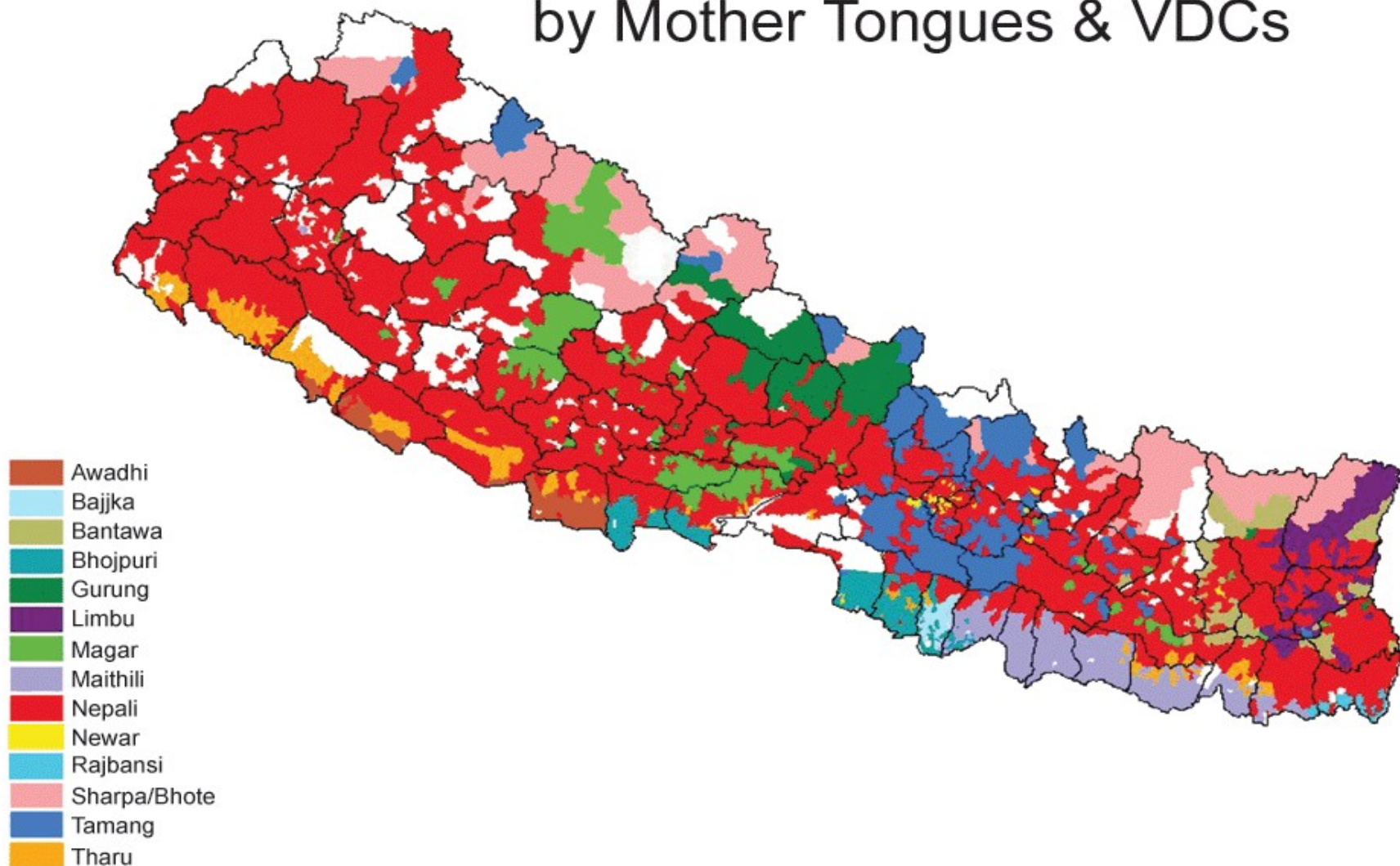
Number of languages registered in census

Census results in 1991, 2001 and 2011 for total languages spoken in Nepal, disaggregated into Mountain, Hill and Tarai.



Leading mother tongue on the basis of VDCs (2006)

Distribution of Major Languages
by Mother Tongues & VDCs



Main language areas

NEPAL

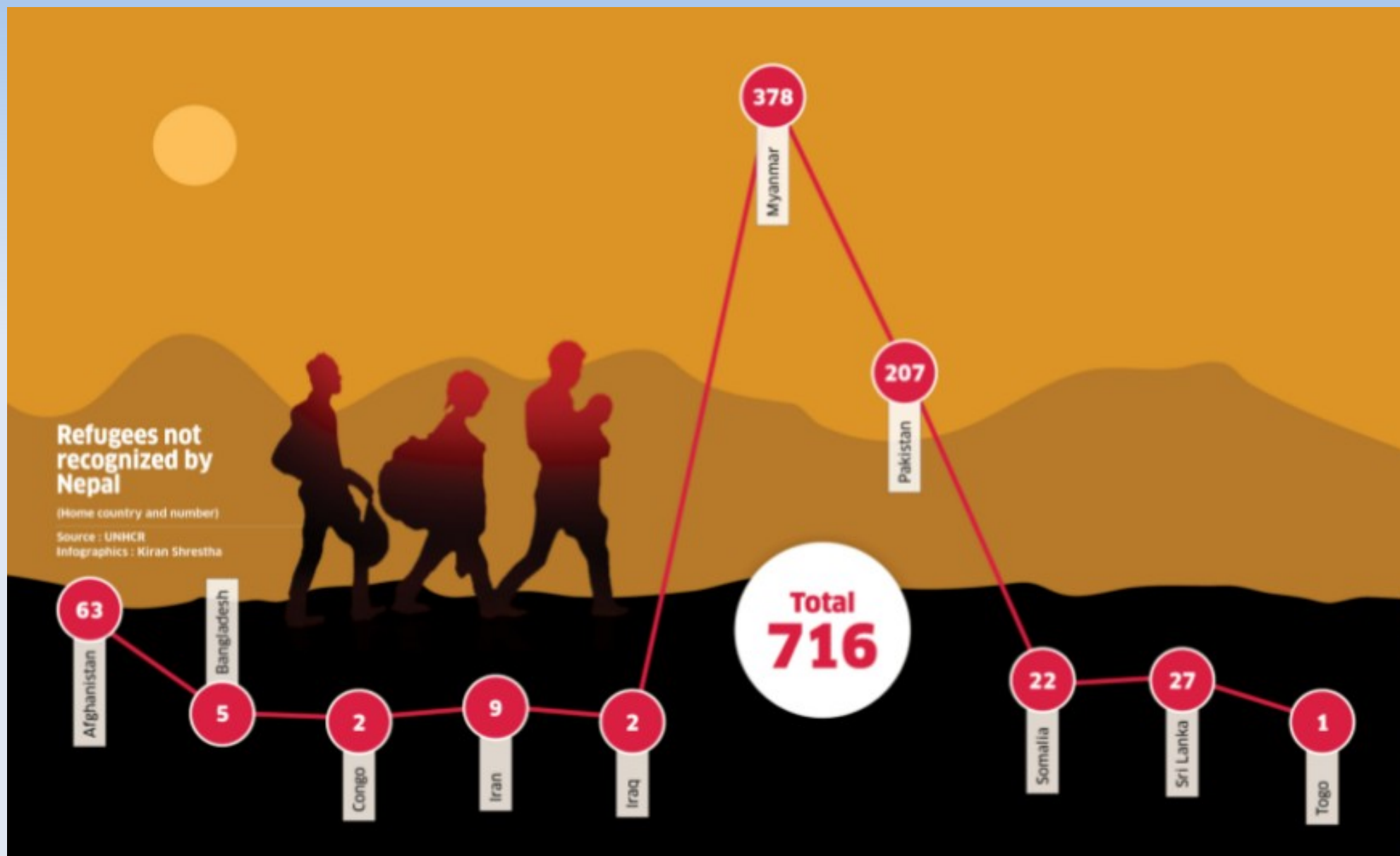
Districtwise Distribution of Major Mother Tongues
Except
Khas Nepali



Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (2017)



Not recognised refugees (2021)



Map of Nepal

(Political and Administrative)

