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Data analysis to leave no one behind in Simta, Nepal

Report

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Acronyms

DI	Development Initiatives
EMIS	employment management information system
HMIS	health management information system
IEMIS	Integrated education management information system
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LNOB	leave no one behind
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMEP	Prime Minister's Employment Program
PWDs	persons with disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	social security allowances
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VERSP MIS	Vital event registration and social protection management information system

Overview

In recent years, Nepal has made significant progress in reducing the number of people living in multidimensional poverty, from 30% of the population in 2014 to 17% in 2019. This represents 3.1 million citizens lifted out of multidimensional poverty. However, while progress at the national level has been substantial, there is a risk that certain groups could be left behind.

In order to gain an understanding of who these groups might be and the data available to inform local decision-making, Development Initiatives (DI) has carried out a data landscaping and analysis assessment in two municipalities in Nepal – Simta and Tulsipur. These assessments form part of DI's body of work in support of the Agenda 2030 commitment to leave no one behind (LNOB).

We first conducted a data landscaping assessment of the availability of data and evidence in the two municipalities. This report then analyses the data collated in the initial [data landscaping assessment in Simta](#), presents the findings and makes recommendations. It largely uses data from the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021 ('the 2021 Census') and local data systems and processes from 2018 to 2022. You can read more about the data sources used in this report in [Part 2](#).

The analysis in this report helps identify those at risk of being left behind – namely women and children. It provides information and makes recommendations that can be used to inform local decision-making to tackle poverty, inequalities, and improve data quality and systems for further evidence. Furthermore, it shows how local data can help identify groups being left behind and that improved data is needed to fully understand inequalities experienced by people of ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

The [Executive summary](#) presents the key findings. [Part 1](#) introduces the report, and [Part 2](#) explains the data sources used and data limitations. [Part 3](#) outlines the municipality's demographic and living standards. [Part 4](#) goes on to identify groups shown to be at risk of being left behind, with a focus on women and children. [Part 5](#) uses available data provided by the municipality to review three social protection programmes and their ability to target and aid groups most at need. Finally, [Part 6](#) summarises the report findings and provides recommendations for data improvement and use in local decision-making.

Executive summary

In a matter of five years, the proportion of people living in multidimensional poverty in Nepal has significantly decreased from 30% in 2014 to 17% in 2019.¹ This substantial progress meant that 3.1 million citizens were lifted out of multidimensional poverty, and both the social and economic living standards of millions of people were improved nationwide. However, while progress at the national level has been substantial, there is a risk that certain populations and communities could be left behind if this progress is not shared. In support of the Agenda 2030 commitment to leave no one behind (LNOB), DI conducted a study to assess the availability of data and evidence in two municipalities in Nepal – Simta and Tulsipur. This report presents the findings in relation to Simta municipality and aims to support government partners in understanding who is at risk of being left behind, in what ways, and why.

This report analyses the data collated in the initial [data landscaping assessment in Simta municipality](#), largely relying on data from the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021 ('the 2021 Census') and local data systems and processes from 2018 to 2022. It seeks to identify those at risk of being left behind and provide information using existing municipal data which can be used to inform local decision-making to tackle poverty and inequalities. This report identifies that women and children are being left behind, while additional data collection and research are required to fully understand inequalities experienced by people of ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Key findings

1. Some notable comparisons can be made between Simta and Nepalese averages, both positive and negative

Simta is a rural municipality of Karnali province with a population of 24,083. In 2022/23, the National Living Standard Survey IV recorded Karnali as having the second highest poverty rate of any province in Nepal – 27%. Poverty is especially high in rural Karnali at a rate of 31%. This study found that, while many indicators of wellbeing may be below the Nepalese average, others show high levels of potential in education and employment.

- [Simta has a very young population, even more so than Nepal's](#). Nepal has a very young average age of 25. Simta's population has an average age of around 23, and more than a third of its citizens are under the age of 18.
- [Citizens have high economic participation and low levels of unemployment, for both men and women](#). 79% of working-age citizens are economically active in Simta, in comparison to 66% nationally. Additionally, the unemployment rate in Simta

is 4.0%, compared to 7.0% nationally. Notably, women have a significantly lower unemployment rate of 3.4% in Simta compared to 8.0% nationally.

- **Literacy and education attendance in Simta is on par with the Nepalese average and particularly high for a rural municipality.** In Simta, 77% of citizens above the age of 5 are able to read and write in comparison to 76% nationally and 72% of national rural citizens. Similarly, 74% of 5–25-year-olds in the municipality are in education, while the national average is 71% and rural national average is 69%.
- **Quality of household structure appears to be below Nepalese norms.** Building materials for walls, floors and so on are of lower quality in Simta. For example, 87% of households in Simta have mud/dirt floors and 84% have mud-bonded brick/stone walls, in comparison to 46% and 33% respectively nationally.
- **Access to household appliances, electricity and personal means of transport is significantly lower in Simta.** Only one in four (25%) of households in Simta have access to electricity in comparison to 92% nationally. Similarly, very few households own a television (9%) and personal means of transport (<1%), in comparison to 49% of households nationally that own a television and 35% that own a bicycle.

2. Women face compounded burdens that place them at risk of poverty and socioeconomic inequalities

This report found clear evidence that women are one group being left behind in Simta. With lower educational levels, literacy and economic participation than men, and high rates of early marriage and single parenting, women face multiple burdens that place them at greater risk of poverty. There are some programmes and social security systems in place to support certain groups of women, but their impact is not always clear or fully measured.

- **Women were found to have less education and lower attendance than men.** 58% of women between the ages of 20 to 39 completed schooling to Grade 10 or higher in comparison to 67% of men in the same age group. The difference is greater among older age groups as 22% of women over the age of 40 report never having attended education in comparison to 4% of men in the same age group. Young girls and women between the ages of 5 and 25 have lower school attendance, with 68% currently in school in comparison to 80% of young boys and men.
- **Literacy levels are significantly lower for older women than men.** While younger generations under the age of 20 have very high literacy of close to 100% for both boys/men and girls/women, literacy rates among the older generations are very different by gender. For example, women between the ages of 65 and 69 have a literacy rate of 7% in comparison to 45% of men in the same age group. These findings do not differ very much from the national averages.
- **The Prime Minister's Employment Program (PMEP) helps unemployed women find work opportunities.** While accessible to all unemployed, the PMEPP specifically targets unemployed women to help decrease the number of women in

unemployment. In Simta, almost two thirds of applicants to the programme were women. However, data on the number of applicants that successfully receive employment opportunities was not available.

- **Single mothers look after a large proportion of the children in the municipality.** One in three children in the municipality were found to live with a single mother.
- **Social security allowances aid widowed and senior single women by providing cash transfer allowances.** In 2021/22, 504 allowances of Nepales Rupees (NPR) 31,920 were granted to widowed women and senior single women.
- **Early marriage is a prevalent trend likely hindering educational opportunities for girls and young women.** While there is limited data to measure the impact of marriage and childcare on education, marriage statistics show that 9% of married women in Simta married before the age of 15, and 50% before the age of 18. Early marriage is likely to contribute to the large number of girls and young women not in education.

3. Children and adolescents receive very little social assistance despite making up almost half of Nepal's population living in poverty

Children and adolescents under the age of 18 make up over a third of Simta's population. However, nationally, children and adolescents under 18 make up the largest share of people living in multidimensional poverty. According to national data, 44% of all Nepalese people living in poverty, the equivalent to 2.2 million citizens, are children. In other words, one in four children in Nepal live in multidimensional poverty.²

- **Only 6 to 11% of all funds provided through social assistance allowances reached children and adolescents under the age of 18.** Without any cash assistance to most children in the municipality, especially those between the ages of 5 and 18 that receive near to no allowances, families face the near full cost of educational materials and nutrition with limited in-kind programmes available.
- **A significant number of adolescents and young adults do not pursue higher levels of education.** Almost 9 in 10 young adults (87%) between the ages of 18 and 25 are not in education and have left schooling.
- **One in three children under the age of 18 live with a single parent.** This places them at higher risk of being in poverty, as well as being involved in child labour to help provide additional income for their household.
- **A considerable number of children are involved in child labour.** 7% of children aged 10 to 14 report working for a period longer than six months in the past year, and 40% worked for up to 6 months.

4. A lack of quality, timely data makes it difficult to understand socioeconomic inequalities and aid those most vulnerable

National censuses are conducted once every ten years in Nepal. This report largely relied on data from the 2021 national census. With limited data gathered from other sources, timely analysis for local decision-making would be difficult to conduct.

- **The lack of disaggregated datasets limits comparison across variables.** With almost all data published being aggregated, census data included, comparison of additional insight in child, gender, and other potential groups at risk could not be analysed.
- **Limited datasets available.** Low-quality data, or in some cases no data, on variables such as income, health, gender violence, nutrition, and ethnicity were found in the collated data.
- **Missing metadata and additional information.** While not totally limiting, the inclusion of metadata could have simplified or improved the analysis process.
- **Incomplete tracking of local social security programs.** Only three social security programs (PMEP, the Social Security Allowance programme (SSA), and girls and Dalit student scholarships) were found to have available data despite there being other programmes available.

Part 1: Introduction

Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It compels governments and development actors to consider those furthest behind and address the discrimination and exclusion that drive the inequalities people experience. As part of DI's Poverty & Inequality programme during 2022 and 2023, DI conducted four studies in Benin, Kenya, Nepal and Uganda to assess the availability of evidence, and to analyse data to support government partners in understanding who is at risk of being left behind, in what ways, and why.

In 2019, 17.4% of the Nepalese population lived in multidimensional poverty, representing just under 5 million people.³ While this indicated substantial progress from a recorded level of 30.1% in 2014, certain groups are at risk of remaining in poverty: particularly women and children. Social inequalities – identified across gender, age, ethnicity, and disability – compound the impact of economic inequality, further distancing these groups from the majority. Indeed, UNDP's Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index report in 2021 identified that 2.2 million children were living in poverty, close to half of the entire population living in poverty in Nepal.⁴

The LNOB assessment in Nepal seeks to understand data and data infrastructure on people being left behind in two municipalities: Simta and Tulsipur. The assessment seeks to illuminate how existing data can be used to inform local decision-making to tackle poverty and inequality, and what data gaps exist. [The first part of the assessment identified and reviewed relevant existing data.](#)

This report forms the second part of the LNOB assessment in Simta municipality. It analyses the available data and provides recommendations that can be used to inform future policy decisions to prevent people being left behind. The report is split into six sections:

- [Part 1](#) introduces the report.
- [Part 2](#) outlines the data sources used and data limitations.
- [Part 3](#) outlines the municipality's demographic and living standards.
- [Part 4](#) identifies groups found to be at risk of being left behind, with a focus on women and children.
- [Part 5](#) uses available data provided by the municipality to review three social protection programmes – the Prime Minister's Employment Program (PMEP), social security allowances (SSA), and the Girls and Dalit student scholarships – and their ability to target and aid groups most at need.
- [Part 6](#) summarises the report findings and provides recommendations for data improvement and use in local decision-making.

Part 2: Data sources

This report uses data systems and programmes identified in the initial data landscaping and inventory report as well as data from the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021 ('the 2021 Census'). Local data sources used for analysis include the Municipal Profile Survey 2075 BS (2018/2019) ('the Simta Profile'), conducted every five years, Simta municipality's Vital Event Registration and Social Protection Management Information System (VERSP MIS), Integrated Education Management Information System (IEMIS), and Disaster Data System.

Datasets and findings were supplemented with existing literature from international organisations and the Nepalese government for secondary information and national comparison. While a large number of findings in this report use data from the more recent 2021 Census, similar examinations could have been conducted using data from the Municipal Profile Survey and other local data systems. Although available, data from the municipality's Health Management Information System (HMIS), Employment Management Information System (EMIS), Disaster Risk Reduction Portal, and Smart Daughter Programme were not used in this report due to insufficient disaggregation, relevance and/or variables for the analysis of groups being left behind.

Data and analysis limitations

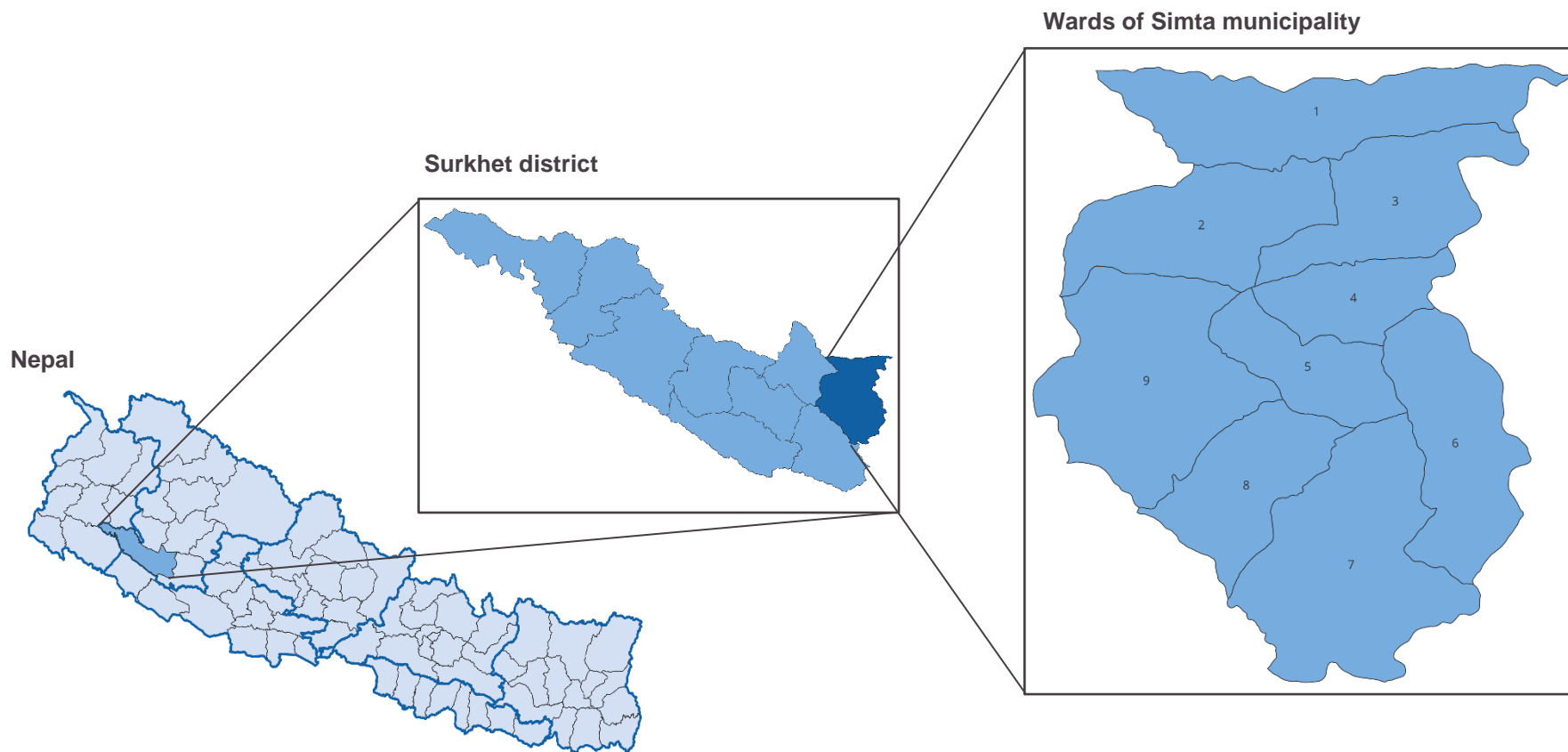
The quality of data collated in this LNOB assessment is dependent on the resources available to the civil agents of Simta municipality. As such, the data gathered from the sources utilised in this report contained a number of notable limitations:

- **Indicator correlations:** The datasets available from the 2021 Census and Simta Profile are composed of aggregated figures (not microdata) that summarise the number of cases or households by administrative ward or, at times, gender. For this reason, correlation analysis of several indicators is limited – particularly between data on social protection programmes and municipality demographics – and comparisons of households and citizens across multiple indicators is not possible.
- **Economic wellbeing and health:** The 2021 Census and Simta Profile datasets do not include detailed measures of income, wealth, or health for citizens in the municipality. As a result, analysis of economic wellbeing or health across social indicators and living conditions is not possible.
- **Disability data:** The questions used to gather data on the number of PWDs in both the 2021 Census and Simta Profile do not conform to internationally recognised best practice. Furthermore, some of the terminology used to describe dimensions of disability in the results risk stigmatising PWDs. The final figures record extremely low prevalence rates of disability, both in the municipality and nationally in comparison to international figures. As a result these figures should therefore be treated with

particular caution and should not be considered representative of dimensions of disabilities.

- **Timeliness and recency:** The findings of this report combine data extracted from the 2021 Census, Simta Profile (2018–2019), and other local systems (2021–2022). The data results are therefore not representative of a single point in time, but instead extend across 3–4 calendar years.
- **Metadata:** The Simta Profile proved a significant source of findings for this report. However, information on important metadata relating to sample size, coverage, and weightings was not readily available.

Figure 1: Map of Simta Municipality in Surkhet District, Nepal



Source: Development Initiatives based on Government of Nepal National Geoportal 2024.

Notes: The boundaries and names used in this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Development Initiatives.

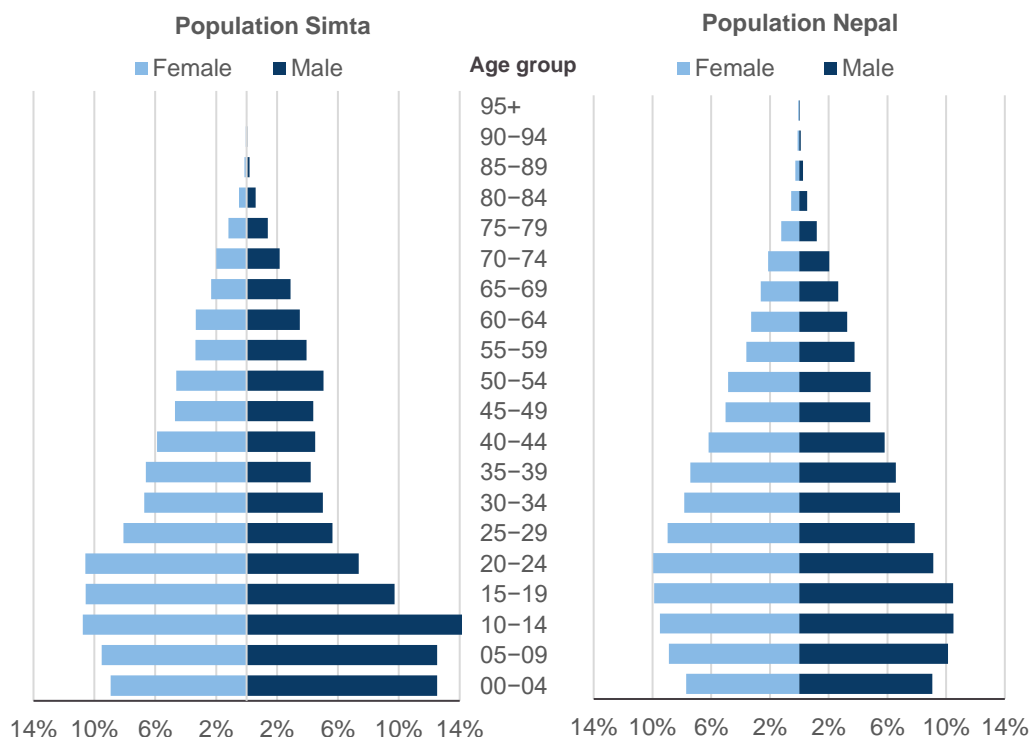
Part 3: Demographics and living standards

Population

Simta is a rural municipality in the Karnali province of mid-west Nepal. In 2022/23, the National Living Standard Survey IV identified Karnali as the province with the second highest poverty rate in Nepal – 27%. Most importantly, rural Karnali showed an especially high rate of 31% in comparison to the national average of 20%. The 2021 Census recorded a total population of 24,083 citizens across nine administrative wards, split by gender as 56% female (13,463) and 44% male (10,620).

Simta has a very young population, slightly below that of national levels – 53% of citizens are under the age of 25. While the 10–14 age group is largest for both genders (making up 14% of male and 11% of female population), the male population drops significantly from age 15 upwards. This is not reflected at the national level, nor among the female population of Simta, which decreases steadily from age 15. A possible explanation for this might be that adolescent and young men move away from Simta to pursue living and work opportunities in larger cities outside the municipality. Recent research and remittance figures show that labour migration is high in Nepal with remittances accounting for 27% of GDP.⁵

Figure 2: Population pyramids for Simta and Nepal

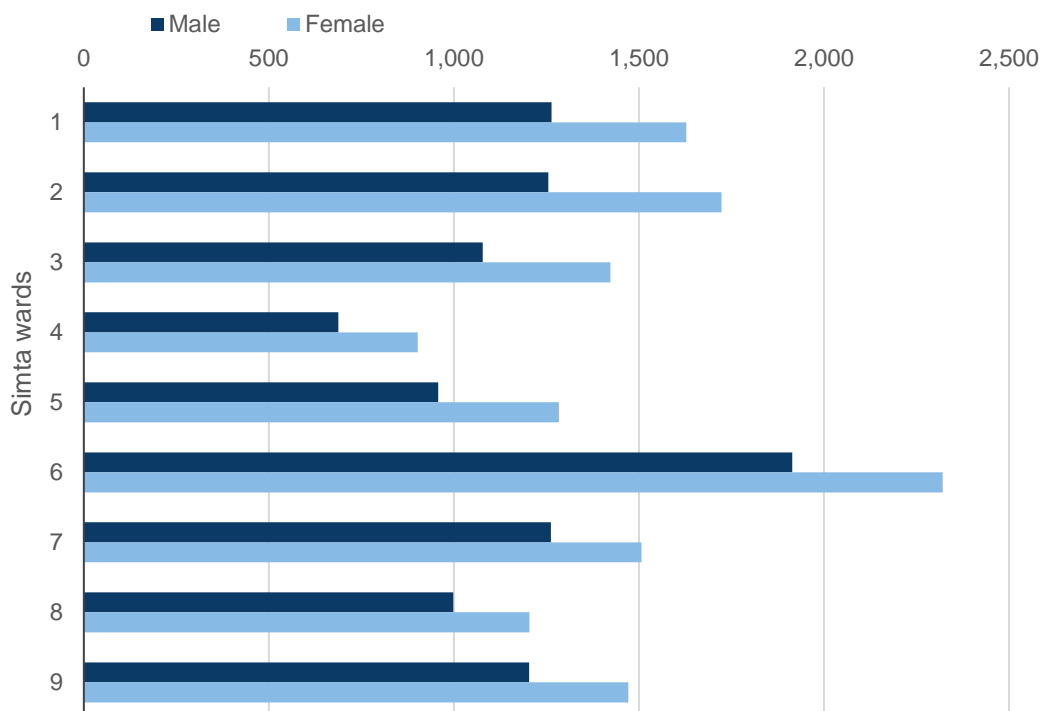


Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

In 2021/22, Simta’s VERSP MIS recorded a total of 1,392 births and 241 deaths indicating a high population growth before accounting for migration and labour mobility. In the 2011 Census, Simta’s population was recorded as 25,845. Ten years later, the 2021 Census recorded a slightly smaller population of 24,083. This represents an annual negative growth rate of -0.7% between 2011 and 2021. By comparison, Nepal’s population increased by 10% during that period. Additionally, the 2021 Census recorded that 555 out of the 3,084 (18%) of Simta’s children under the age of 5 did not have their birth registered at the time of data collection.

Population figures do not vary much across Simta’s nine wards, with most ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 citizens per ward. There are two exceptions to this – Ward 4 has a smaller population of 1,590, and Ward 6 has a larger one of 4,235. Simta is 241.7 square kilometres (km^2) in size, and has an average population density of 100 citizens per km^2 . Wards 7 and 9 are the least densely populated (64 and 68 people per km^2 respectively), and Wards 5 and 6 are the most densely populated (151 and 156 people per km^2 respectively). This makes Simta much less densely populated than the country average of 198 people per km^2 .

Figure 3: Ward population distribution by gender in Simta



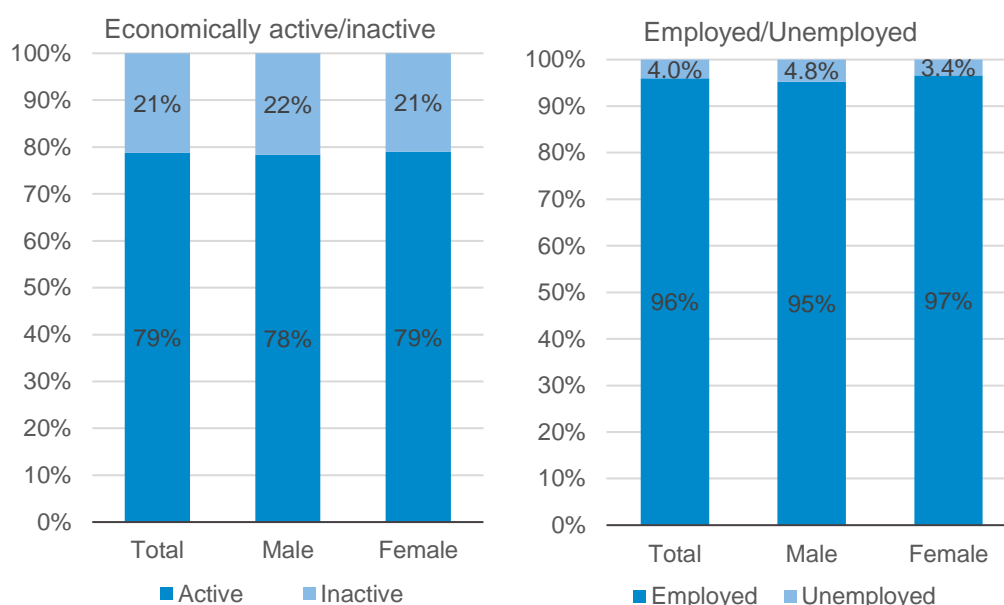
Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Employment

The level of economic inactivity in the rural municipality is 21%, representing 4,026 citizens that do not work and are not seeking employment. By comparison, the national level is 34%. Economic inactivity accounts for all citizens above the age of 10 that are not engaged in any formal work nor are actively seeking to join the workforce. This therefore includes students, retirees, and persons engaged in informal employment. Of those who are economically active (working or looking for work), the unemployment rate in Simta is 4.0%, compared to 7.0% nationally.

At the national level, economic participation tends to vary slightly by gender with an unemployment rate for women of 8.0%, and 6.2% for men. However, in Simta, the level of economic participation and employment is very similar between men and women. 79% of women and 78% of men are economically active, while 3.4% of women and 4.8% of men that are economically active are unemployed and seeking work.

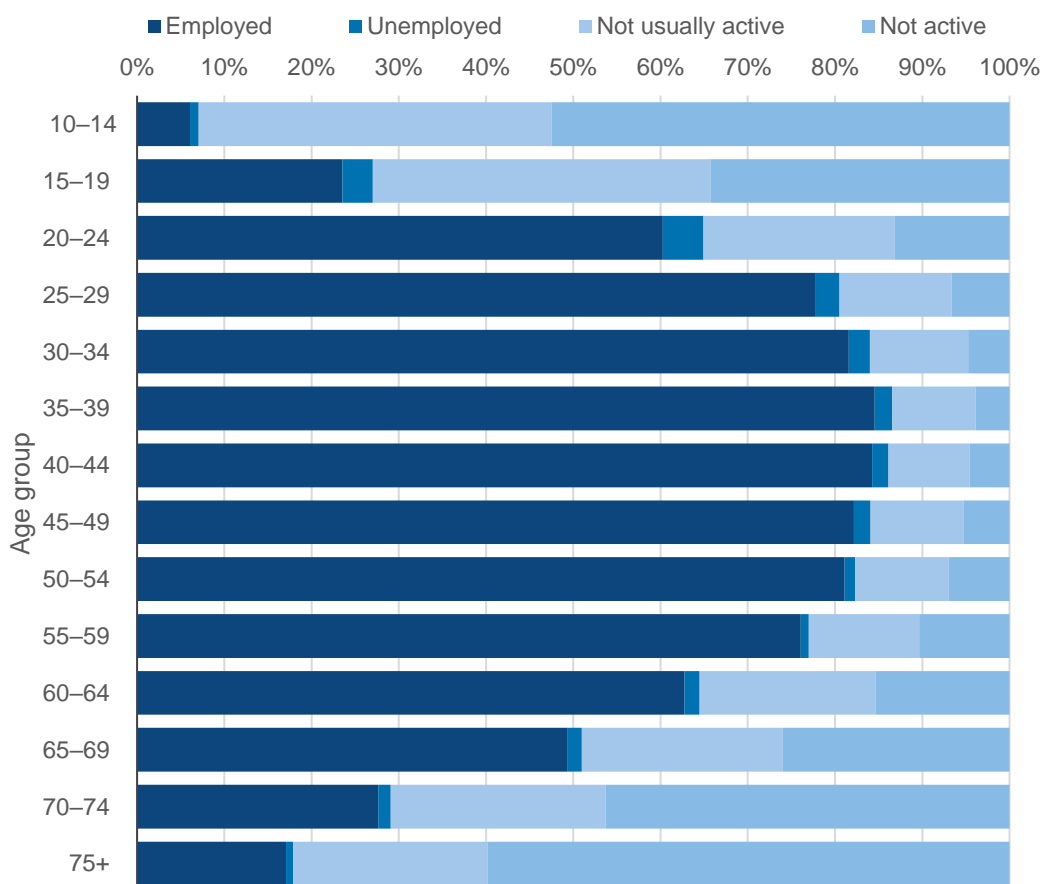
Figure 4: Share of population above the age of 10 economically active/inactive and employed/unemployed in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
 Notes: 'Economically active/inactive' includes all citizens above the age of 10. 'Employed/Unemployed' only accounts for those who are economically active.

The measures used in the aggregation of employment data can be somewhat misleading due to the inclusion of 10–15-year-olds and senior citizens (including retirees). Some caution must therefore be taken when considering employment data, particularly if comparing at an international level. For instance, OECD member countries and many other countries limit economic activity classification to those aged 15–64.⁶ However, this inclusion of data on 10–15-year-olds and senior citizens is highly beneficial for understanding the number of citizens working within those age groups. For example, data from the 2021 Census shows 7% of all 10–14-year-olds in Simta claim to usually work and almost half (47%) are economically active. Meanwhile, 49% of 65–69-year-olds, 28% of 70–74-year-olds, and 17% of people above the age of 75 claim to be employed.

Figure 5: Share of economic activity by age group in Simta

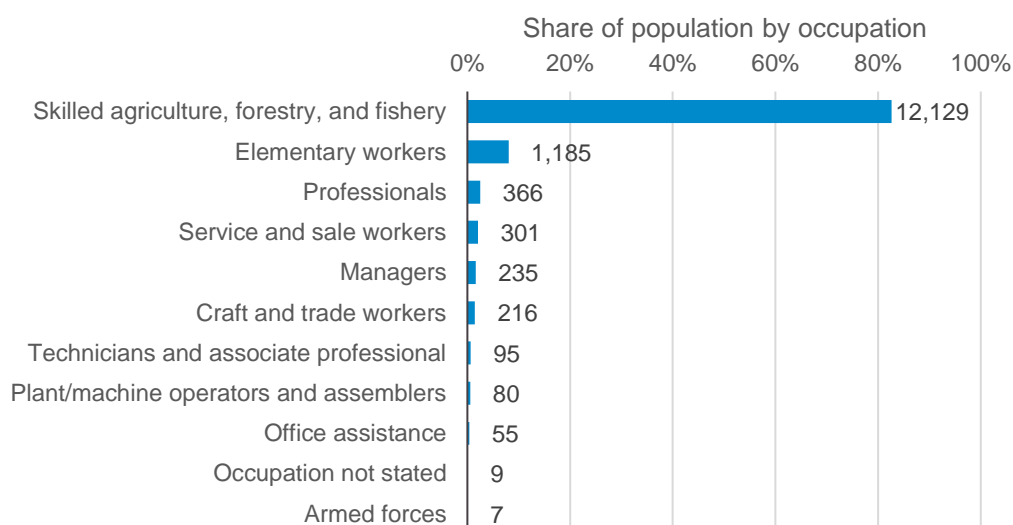


Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
 Notes: Data on economic activity includes all citizens in the municipality aged 10 and above. 'Economically active' is categorised as people 'employed', 'unemployed', and 'not usually active'. 'Economically inactive' includes all citizens that categorise themselves as 'not active'. 'Not usually active' accounts for those who have worked or looked for work for fewer than six months over the last year.

Sources of income

The primary sector is by far Simta's largest sector of work. In 2021, 83% of Simta's employed population reported working in 'skilled agriculture, forestry, and fishery', equivalent to 12,129 of the 14,678 active workers in the municipality. 8% report to be elementary workers – these appear to be mainly young children and elderly workers involved in unskilled retail, construction, and agricultural work. The remaining population work as education professionals (2%), service and sale workers (2%), managers (2%), craft and trade workers (1%), and others as technicians, plant operators, office assistants and so forth (3%). The 2018/19 Simta Profile also found that remittances and seasonal employment in foreign countries (mainly India) make up the main income source of almost one fourth (22%) of Simta's population.

Figure 6: Occupation for economically active population in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

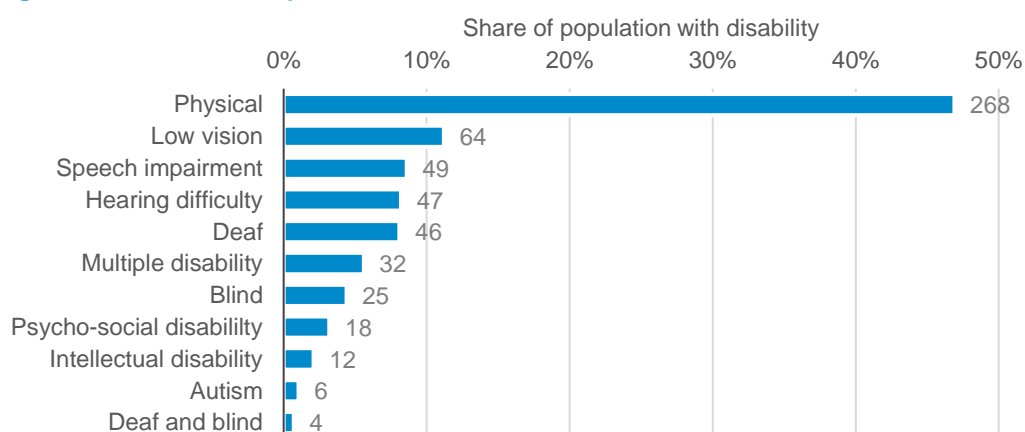
Notes: The 2021 Census includes all citizens above the age of 10 when considering economic activity. Occupation name as described in census data.

Disabilities

The 2021 Census shows that 571 out of 24,083 people in Simta identify as having a disability. This represents a low rate of 2.4% of the population. The national rate is similarly low at 2.3%. By comparison, OECD countries identify approximately 1 in every 7 (15%) working age adults as having a disability.⁷ Respondents to the 2021 Census were asked to classify their disabilities by type: of those reported in Simta, 47% of disabilities reported were recorded as 'physical'; 11% as 'low vision'; 9% as 'speech impairment'; 8% as 'hearing difficulty'; 8% as 'deaf'; 6% as 'multiple'; 4% as 'blind'; 3% as 'psycho-social'; 2% as 'intellectual'; 1% as 'autism'; and 1% as 'deaf and blind'.

Such low figures may indicate a lack of quality reporting and means of assessment of PWDs. The typification of disabilities in the 2021 Census is also not conducted in accordance with international standards – such as the Washington Group approach to disability questions.⁸ These factors indicate that the figures on PWDs in Nepal should be treated with caution and further researched.

Figure 7: Disabilities reported in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on 2021 National Population Housing Census.

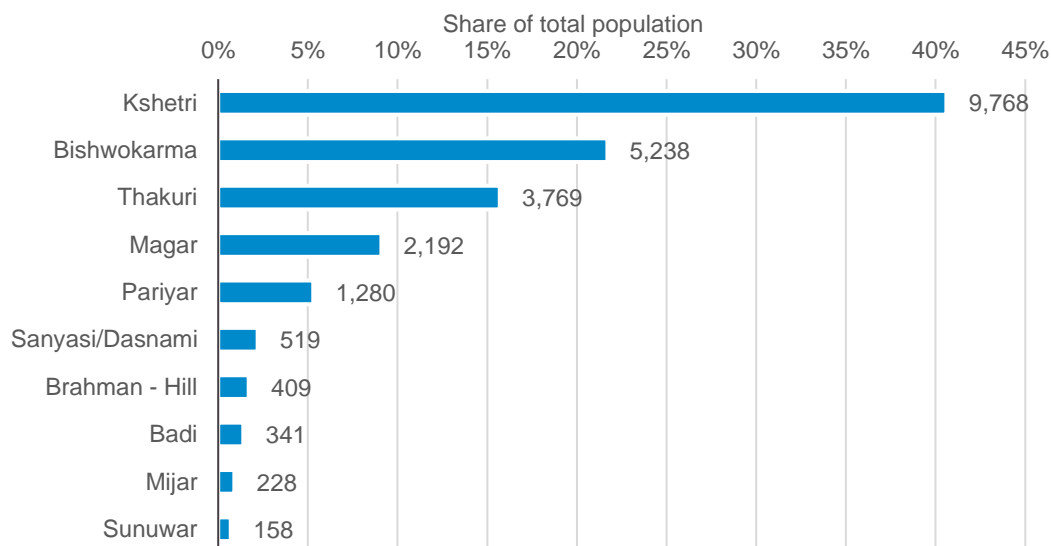
Notes: Disability classification as recorded by data source. Terminologies do not represent best practice. There is a total of 571 people with a disability in Simta.

Ethnicity and religion

Understanding ethnic inequalities in Nepal is a key area for identifying groups at risk of being left behind. Nepal's 2015 constitution specifically highlights this issue, aiming to 'end discriminations relating to class, caste, indigenous ethnicity, region, language, religion and gender'.⁹ As a population made up of various ethnic groups, languages, and customs, present-day Nepal is working to overcome the legacy of an old caste system that discriminated between different ethnicities and social classes. That said, the data available on ethnic and religious groups in Simta, and throughout Nepal, is very limited. The 2021 Census has yet to publish data on ethnic or religious populations apart from the overall composition of the population due to the sensitive nature of the topic. This impedes any analysis on the disparities and signs of discrimination to minority ethnic groups. However, recent government reports have announced plans to release cross-tabular data comparing ethnicity to other indicators at a later stage.¹⁰

The majority of Simta's population, 41%, identify as Kshetri. Just over a fifth (22%) of the population identify as Bishwokarma; 16% as Thakuri; 9.1% as Magar; 5.3% as Pariyar; 2.2% as Sanyasi/Dasnami; 1.7% as Brahman - Hill; 1.4% as Badi; 0.9% as Mijar; and 0.7% as Sunuwar.

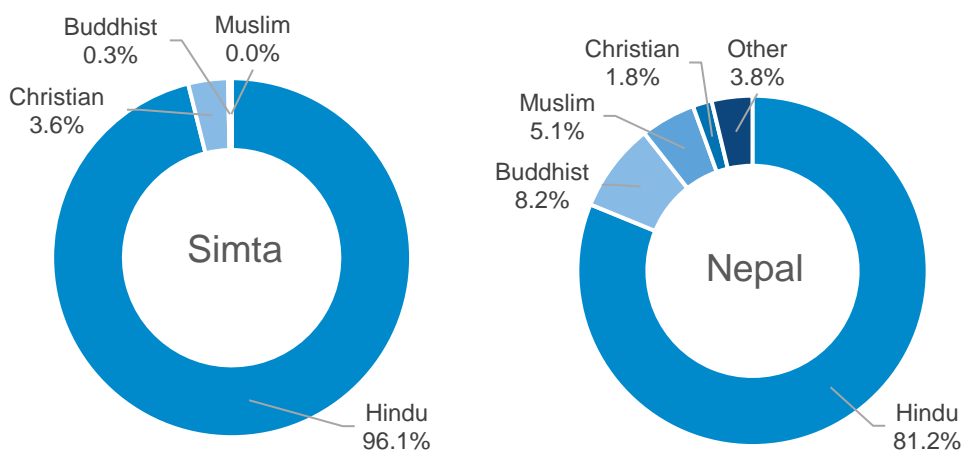
Figure 8: Population ethnicity in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
Notes: Ethnic groupings as recorded by source.

The majority of the population, both in Nepal and in Simta, identify themselves as following Hindu beliefs. 82% of Nepalese citizens consider themselves Hindu. Simta has a higher share of Hindu followers, representing 96% of the population. The remaining identify as either Christian (3.6%) or Buddhist (0.3%). Simta also differs from the national composition somewhat in that it is home to a much smaller proportion of Buddhist followers – 0.3% in Simta compared to 8.2% nationally.

Figure 9: Population religion, Simta and Nepal



Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Household living conditions

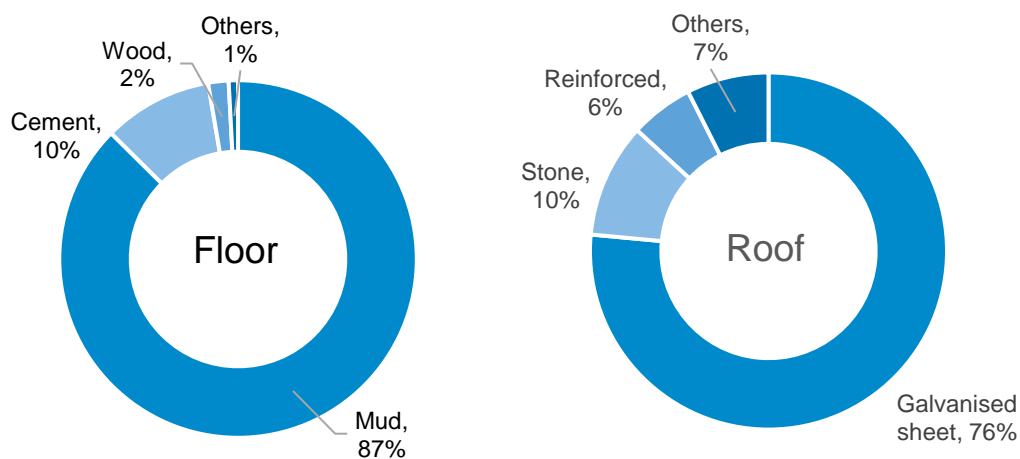
House structure

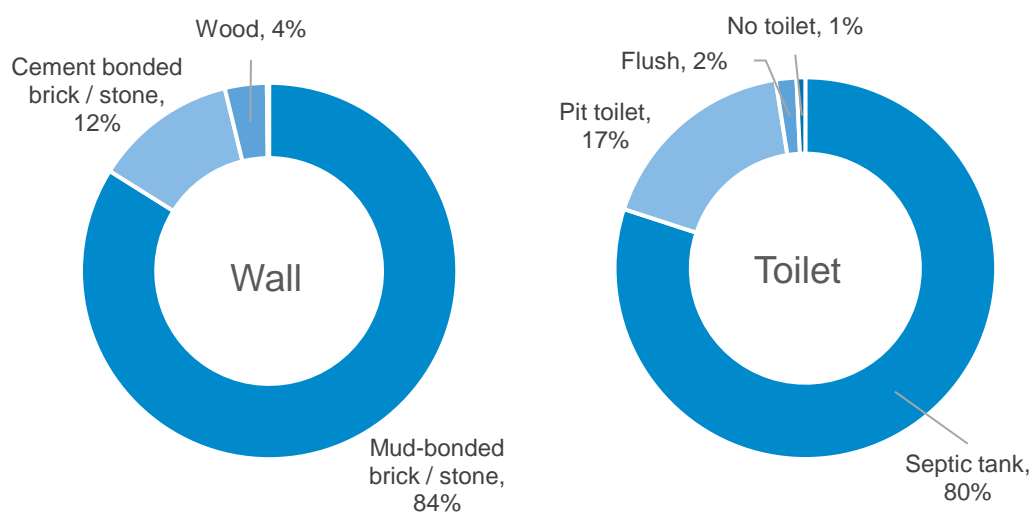
Household living conditions and the materials used to build them across the municipality are composed very similarly with little variation across wards, with the exception of the more populous Ward 6. The 2021 Census shows that 87% of homes in the municipality have mud floors and 12% have cement and wood floors, mainly found in Ward 6.

A similar trend was found for roofing and outer wall materials – 76% of households use galvanised sheets, while 6% use reinforced cement roofs. In the case of outer walls, 84% are mud-bonded brick or stone, and only 12% use cement. Of those that had cement walls, 66% were located in Ward 6, while 77% of households with reinforced cement roofs were also in Ward 6.

On the other hand, toilet facilities don't vary significantly between wards; across the municipality, 80% of households use flush septic tanks, 17% have a pit toilet, 2% a sewage system, and 1% were found to have no waste facility. From these results, the common home structure in the rural municipality of Simta is formed of mud floors and mud-bonded brick/stone walls, galvanised sheet roofs, and a flush septic tank.

Figure 10: House structure (floor, roof, outerwall) and toilet facilities in Simta





Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
 Notes: Material names are as described by data source.

Electricity

The 2021 Census found that 73% of households in the municipality used solar lighting and one in four households (25%) had access to electricity.¹¹ Of fuel used for cooking, 89% of households used wood, with the remaining 11% using liquefied petroleum gas. Both findings are significantly different to national averages – 92% of households use electricity as the main source of lighting and only half (51%) use wood as fuel for cooking.

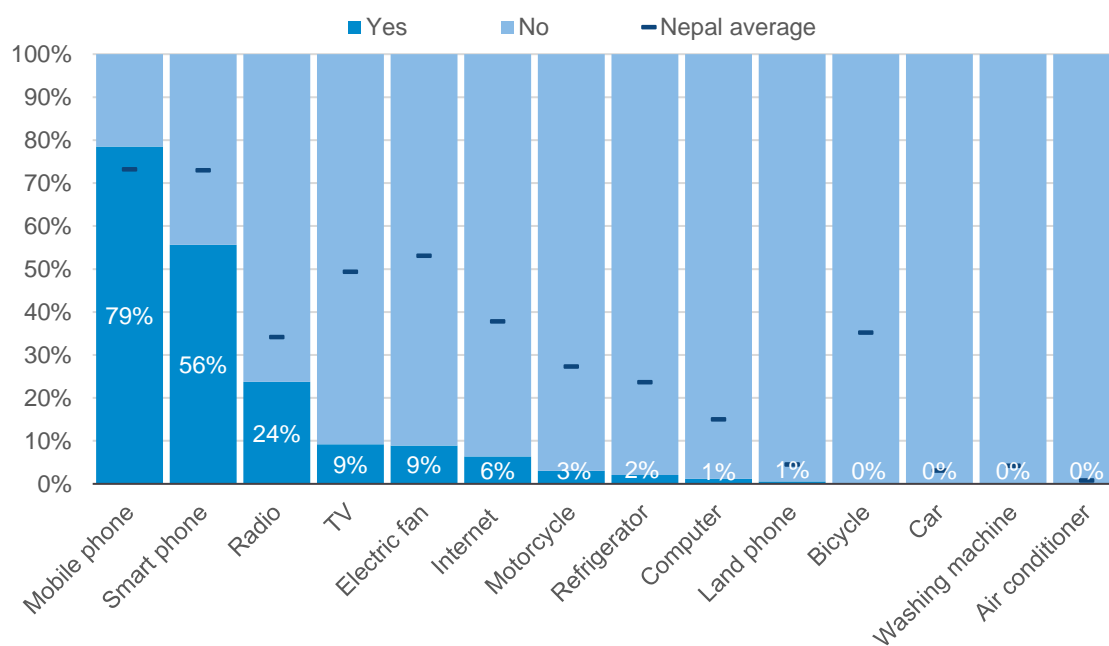
Drinking water

The source of water for households varies depending on the infrastructural conditions provided. Tap water through pipes is provided to 91% of households across the municipality (45% to indoor taps, 46% to outdoor taps). The remaining 8.8% of the population collects its drinking water from unimproved sources such as spouts (6.3%), streams (1.8%), wells (0.3% covered, 0.2% uncovered), and other sources (0.1%).

Amenities

Access to household amenities is an important indicator of economic wellbeing – appliances like refrigerators and internet connection facilitate daily life but hold a large financial burden. Notably, 7.3% of citizens in Simta were found to live without any of the amenities listed in the 2021 Census. Most households in Simta own some means of communication, either a mobile phone (79% of households) or smart phone (56%). On the other hand, only 0.2% own a car, 3.1% a scooter, and 0.2% a bicycle, likely leaving much of the population with no means of personal transportation. In comparison to national levels, Simta's access to household appliances is below most averages. For example, 49% of Nepalese households report having a TV and 35% a bicycle in comparison to 9% and 0.2% respectively in Simta.

Figure 11: Share of households in Simta with access to household amenities compared with national averages

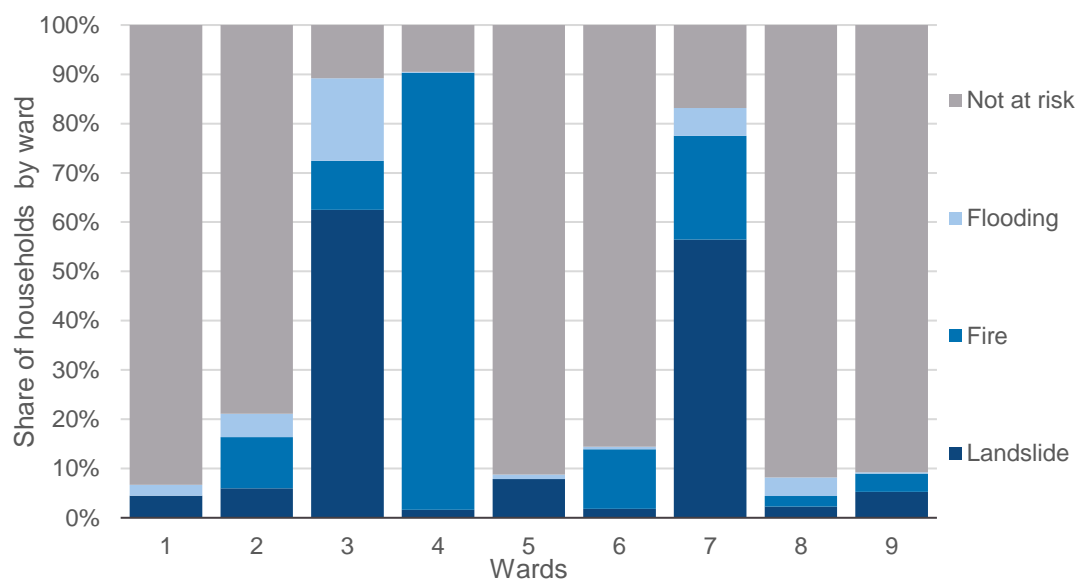


Source: Development Initiatives based on Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
 Notes: These categories are not mutually exclusive e.g. a household can have both a smart and ordinary phone.

Risks of natural disaster

Of the 5,622 households included in the Simta Profile, 1,964 were found to be at risk of a natural disaster, the equivalent of one in five (21%) households. Most notably, Wards 3,4 and 7 have especially large shares of households at risk of landslides, fire, and flooding, with over 80% of households at risk. For example, 63% of households in Ward 3 are at risk of landslides. By comparison, the remaining wards have less than 20% of households at risk of any natural disaster.

Figure 12: Households at risk of natural disasters (landslide, fire, flooding) by ward in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta Profile 2075/76.

Part 4: Groups at risk of being left behind

This report looks to identify and highlight population groups facing compounded vulnerabilities across various social and economic outcomes. This analysis considers ethnicity, gender, children and PWDs for identifying groups at risk of being left behind. The risk of inequality by ethnicity and class is particularly acute in Nepal – the country abolished the historical caste system in 1963, but it is found to still influence some rural areas in present-day Nepal.¹² However, the lack of publicly available data linked to ethnicity inhibits meaningful analysis of key indicators of deprivation (e.g. living conditions, education, health, etc.). Similarly, due to data limitations an analysis on disability is not possible, reducing findings to the previous overview of each of these groups in Part 3, and their coverage by social protection systems in Part 5.

The following sections on women and girls, and children describe the inequalities experienced by women in the municipality with regards to education, household structure, and household violence, as well as the difficulties of children in education, employment, and social structural behaviours. Due to lack of data, analysis of outcomes by nutrition, health, or income is not possible.

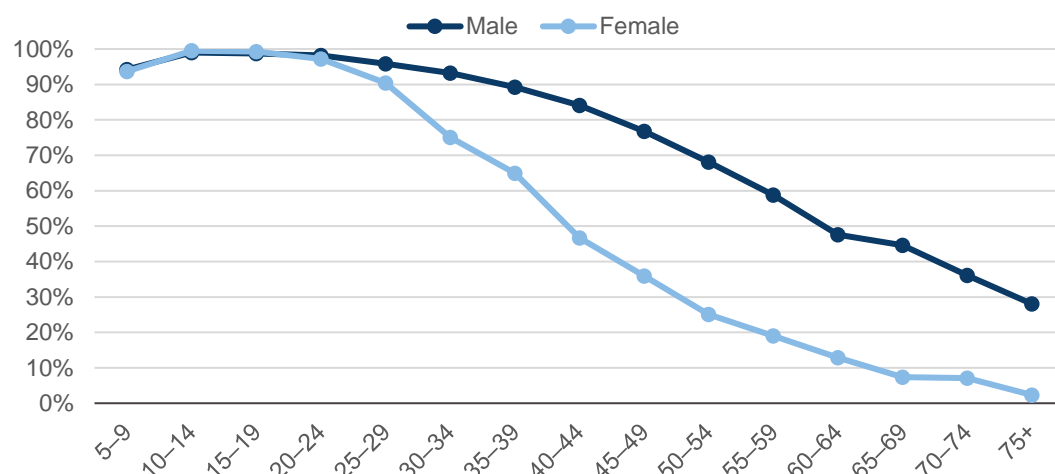
Women and girls

The population of Simta has a gender ratio of 79 men for every 100 women. Gender comparisons of household composition and educational indicators show women to have lower access to education and literacy, as well as being at greater vulnerability to poverty due to compounded risks of early marriage and single parenting. Despite no available data at the municipal level, findings from the 2022/23 NLSS IV found that citizens with no level of education accounted for 51% of all Nepalese people living in poverty, while those that completed secondary and tertiary education showed significantly lower poverty rates. In 2021, the UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Report for Nepal estimated 2.3 million women and girls, and 1.9 million men and boys, to be in multidimensional poverty.¹³

Education and literacy

The 2021 Census shows that 76% of Simta's population above the age of 5 are literate. A higher proportion of men are literate – 85% – than women – 70%. That said, literacy among Simta's population varies enormously by age group and has vastly improved over time, both in terms of the number of literate people and in reducing gender inequalities. Currently, women between the ages of 65 and 69 have a literacy rate of 7% in comparison to 45% of men in the same age group. Meanwhile, 10 to 20-year-olds today have a combined literacy of 99% with almost every child or adolescent, male and female, being able to read and write.

Figure 13: Literacy rate by gender and age group in Simta

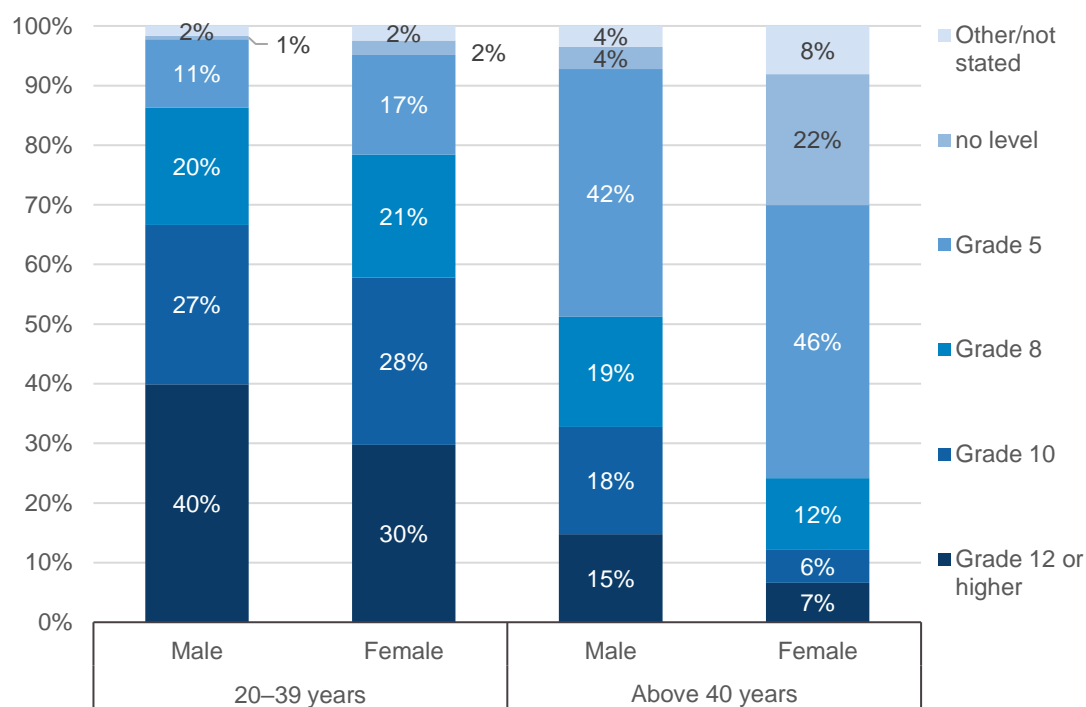


Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Findings from the 2021 Census indicate that, on average, women have lower access to education than men in Simta. As with literacy, the differences in the level of education completed differ by gender and age group, with reduced inequalities and improved overall levels of education in younger generations. For example, 52% of men above the age of 40 completed their lower secondary education (Grade 8) or higher in comparison to 25% of women in the same age group. Notably, 22% of women above 40 report never having attended education in comparison to 4% of men above the age of 40.

In younger generations this gender disparity is also present but to a lower extent and with much improved levels of education. Today, 78% of women aged 20–39 completed lower secondary (Grade 8) and 30% completed all 12 grades or higher. In comparison, 86% of men aged 20–39 completed Grade 8 or above, and 40% all 12 grades or higher. Most notably, only 1% of men and 2% of women in this age group claim to have no education. These results are further improved for 20–30-year-olds, and likely to continue for younger generations with not one person between the ages of 10 and 20 in the municipality currently claiming to never having attended education.

Figure 14: Highest attained educational level by gender and age group in Simta



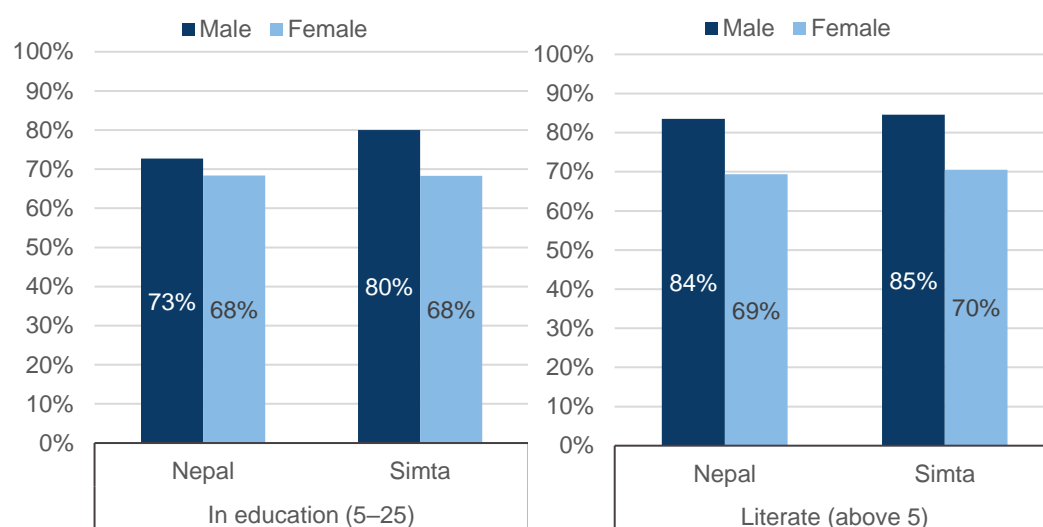
Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Notes: Education levels are categorised as completing primary education (Grades 1–5), lower secondary (6–8), upper secondary (9–10), SLC/SEE (11–12), or higher.

Simta’s population has similar rates of literacy levels and school attendance to the national average. In Nepal, 71% of 5–25-year-olds are in education, and 76% of the population above the age of 5 are able to read and write. Simta on the other hand, has 74% attendance and 77% literacy.

Educational attendance and literacy better enable citizens to apply for social programmes and improve employable skills, providing increased economic and social wellbeing. Notably, previous research in Nepal found that households with low literacy levels have higher rates of food insecurity.¹⁴ Amidst this, gender inequality in accessing education persists in Simta with women being less literate, specifically at older age groups, and with lower proportions of 5–25-year-old girls and women in education (68%) than boys and men (80%).

Figure 15: Attendance and literacy in Simta and Nepal



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
 Notes: Literacy measures population above the age of 5 able to read and write. 'In education' measures all between the ages of 5 and 25 currently attending some level of schooling.

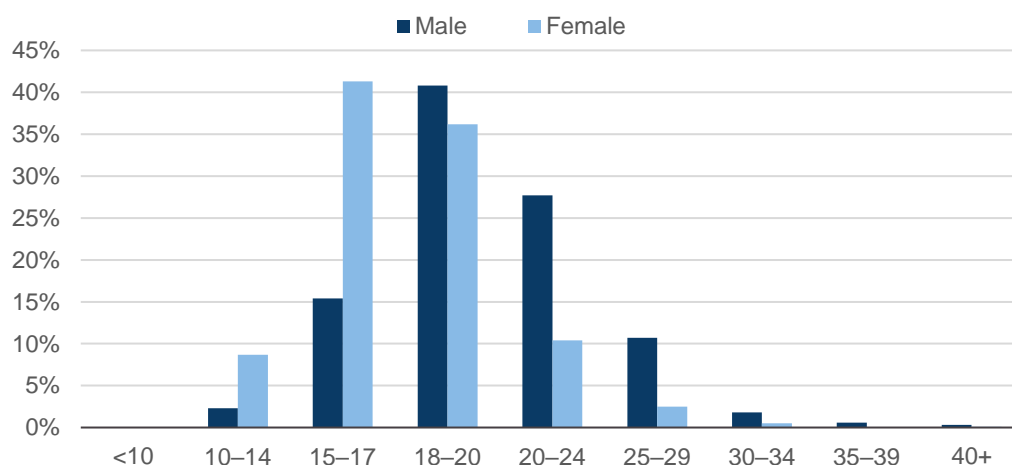
Marriage and household composition

While there is limited data available to assess the impact of marriage and childcare on educational, economic, and other wellbeing outcomes, marriage statistics show that 1 in 11 (9%) currently married girls and women in the municipality married before the age of 15, half before the age of 18 (the expected age of finishing secondary education), and 86% married before the age of 20. On the other hand, boys and men tend to get married later, with 18% marrying before the age of 18.

While this trend is reflected nationally, Simta has slightly younger ages for the marriages of both men and women. However, this trend appears to be decreasing over time. For example, 17% of current 65–69-year-old women married before the age of 15, and 54% before the age of 18. In comparison, 7% of current 30–34-year-old women married before the age of 15. Today, 0.6% of current 10–14-year-old girls were involved in child marriage, and 33% of girls aged 15–19 report being married.

Additionally, findings from the 2021 Census show that one in three children in the municipality under the age of 18 currently live with a single mother. This means that more than 3,000 children and adolescents are cared for by a single mother in Simta.

Figure 16: Age of marriage by gender in Simta

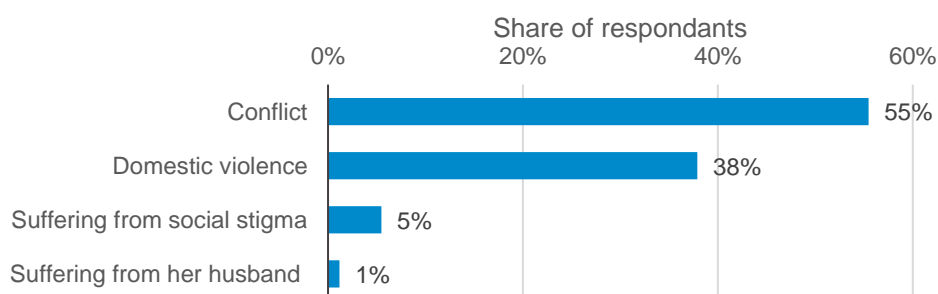


Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
Notes: Columns show distribution of different size sample populations: 5,061 men, and 8,220 women. Data gathered from all married citizens regardless of age.

Violence against women

Data on violence against women is limited in terms of detail and availability. The 2021 Census holds no information on gender-based violence. The only available data on violence against women was that collected in the 2018 Simta Profile. The data which is available does not state the number of citizens surveyed and counted a total of 256 victims of violence. Violence experienced by women at home was categorised as 'conflict' (55%), 'domestic violence' (38%), 'suffering from social stigma' (5%), and 'suffering from her husband' (1%). No further description was provided on the classification of these categories and further research is encouraged.

Figure 17: Household violence in Simta, by share of female respondents



Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta Profile 2075/76.
Notes: Chart shows a total of 256 respondent from an unknown sample population. Category titles as recorded by data source.

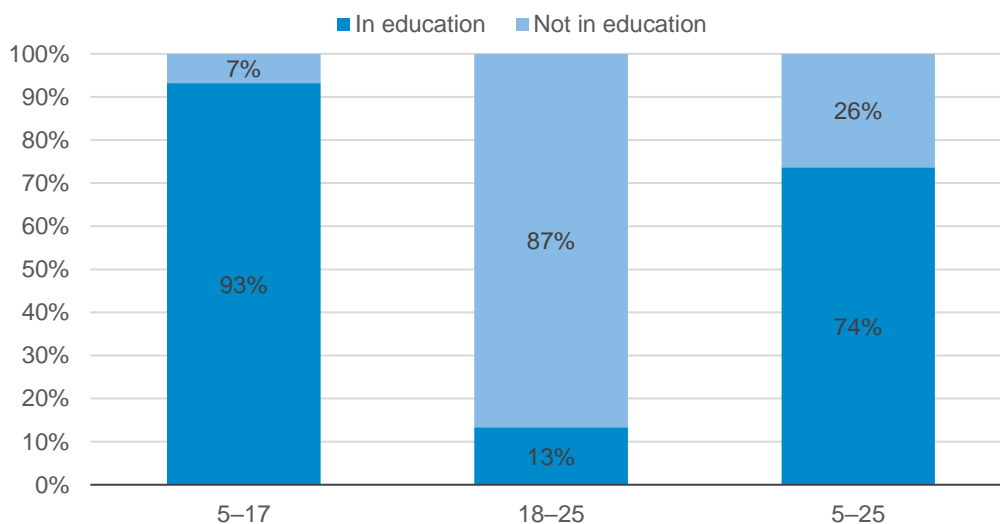
Children

In 2019, close to one in four children in Nepal were living in multidimensional poverty, the equivalent of 2.2 million children. In proportion to the total population in poverty, children accounted for 44%, almost 1 in 2 citizens, of people in poverty.¹⁵ Similarly, over a third (36%) of children under 5 were found to be stunted, and 10% suffering from wasting in 2017.¹⁶ In 2021, the International Labour Organization stated that one third of Nepalese children between the ages of 5 and 17 were found to be involved in child labour.¹⁷ These previous findings at national level show that children are being left behind, and should highlight the importance of children as a group in the fight toward alleviating poverty in Nepal.

Education

The 2021 Census identified 2,352 citizens between the ages of 5 and 25 not attending school in Simta, the equivalent to one in every four 5-to-25-year-olds (26%). This figure is largely driven by young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 that no longer attend education, as only 13% of citizens in this age group are currently studying. The reasons for young people and children not attending school are varied. They can include early marriage, financial constraints, distance and accessibility, quality of education, or simply for having already finished their education. Unfortunately, no data was provided in the 2021 Census or other local surveys on the causes for discontinuing their schooling.

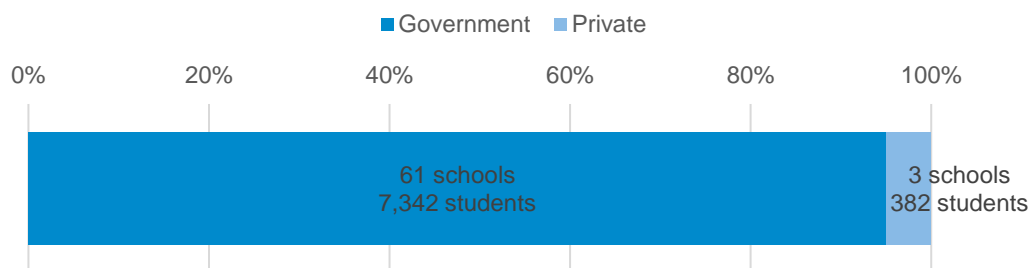
Figure 18: Proportion of students aged 5–25 currently in education in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.
Notes: Total population of 8,935 between ages of 5 and 25.

Unlike larger cities in Nepal, schools in Simta vary little by type with almost all institutions being public government schools. In 2022, 95% of students in the municipality attended government schools (7,342 students), and 5% attended private schools (382 students).

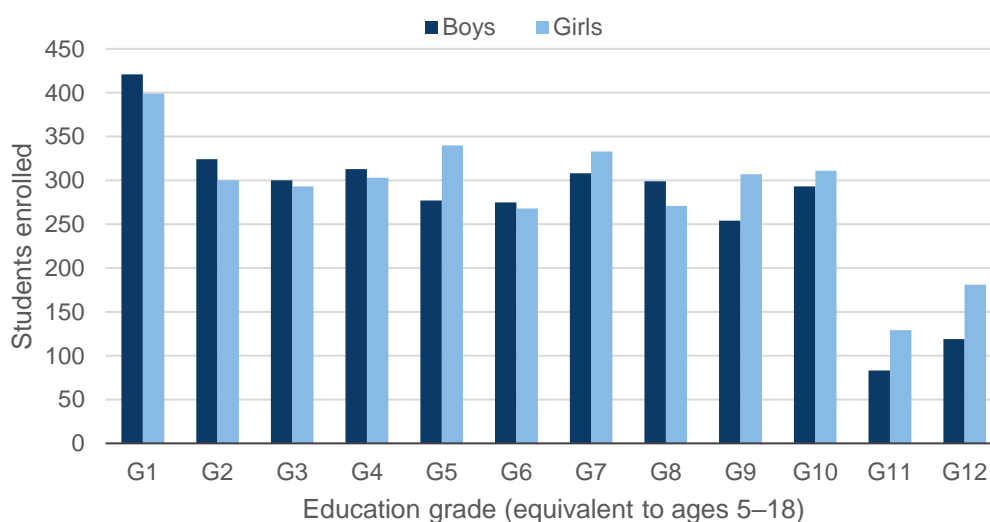
Figure 19: Number of students attending government or private schools in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta IEMIS 2021/22.

Of those attending Grades 1–12 in Simta, data from the Municipality Department of Education in 2022 showed a total of 3,785 male and 3,939 female enrolled students. The number of students in each grade decreases as grades progress, with fewer boys and girls in the higher grades than at the start of their education. Boys have higher dropout rates as grades progress, showing a 72% decrease in the number of students from Grade 1 (421 students) to Grade 12 (119 students). In comparison, the number of girls in school decreases by 55% from Grade 1 (399 students) to Grade 12 (181 students), making them more likely to complete formal education despite lower enrolment rates. However, this assumes the Grade 12 cohort began with similar numbers to 2022’s Grade 1 cohort, and thus shows that few children finish their secondary education in Simta, with only around 1 in 3 students completing all 12 grades. That said, a large majority of students do seem to remain in school until Grade 10.

Figure 20: Number of boys/girls in school by grade in Simta

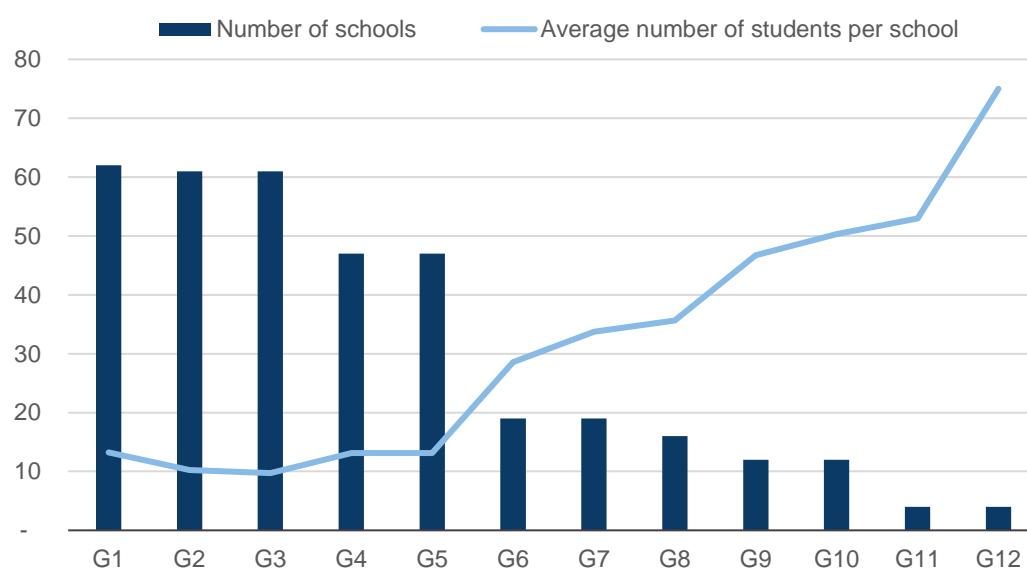


Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta IEMIS 2021/22.

Similarly to the number of students enrolled, the number of schools that teach higher classes also decreases with each grade, as there are far fewer schools in Simta that teach Grades 11 and 12 compared to Grade 1. Just four schools in the municipality teach

Grade 12 students, while 62 schools currently teach Grade 1. The result of this is a large increase in grade sizes in the final grades despite the total number of students per grade actually decreasing. At Grade 1, schools were found to have an average of 13 students, while Grade 10 has an average of 50 students, and 75 students in Grade 12. With a lower number of available schools at higher grades, students are placed in larger cohorts, have fewer school options, and may be forced have to travel further to access education.

Figure 21: Number of schools and average number of students per school by grade in Simta



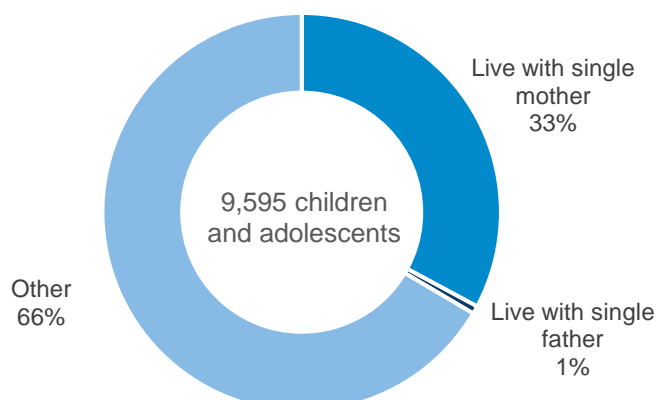
Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta IEMIS 2021/22.

Marriage and household composition

Early marriage and pregnancy at a young age can significantly impact educational attendance. Currently, one third of teenage girls (ages 15–19) (32%) and 9% of teenage boys in the municipality are married.

Findings also show that a third (33%) of children under the age of 18 live with a single parent, almost all of whom are single mothers. This only further compounds the likelihood of leaving education to help raise income for the household.

Figure 22: Household composition in which under 18s live in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Notes: 'Other' includes all other household compositions with more than one adult parent.

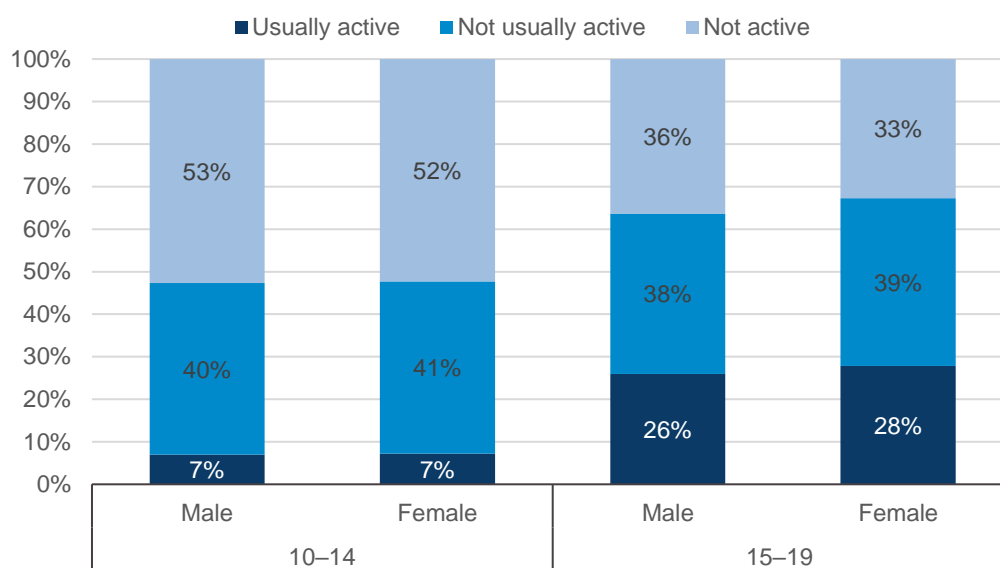
Child labour

According to data from 2019, 1.1 million children in Nepal were found to be involved in child labour, accounting for 15% of the population aged 5 to 17. With the Covid-19 pandemic placing financial pressures on families, ILO (2022) estimates that the share of children in labour has increased to around one third (33%).¹⁸

The 2021 Census collected data on the economic activity of all citizens above the age of 10. This data provides some insight into the number of children aged 10 to 19 currently formally working but excludes anyone under the age of 10 and those informally working. Findings show similar results for both young boys and girls. At the time of collection, data shows 16% of all children/adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 to be 'usually active', 40% 'not usually active', and 44% 'not active'. These classifications used by the government census classify 'usually active' as someone working or looking for work for a period greater than six months during the last year. Someone 'not usually active' has either worked or looked for work for fewer than six months in the last year, while someone 'not active' has not worked or looked for work in the last 12 months.¹⁹

Most notably, almost half (47%) of children between the ages of 10 and 14 report doing some sort of formal work in the last year, with 7% of children in the same age group working for longer than a six-month period. Data on occupation shows that the majority of these children tend to work as 'skilled agriculture, forestry or fishery workers'.

Figure 23: Proportion of children economically active in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Nepal National Population and Housing Census 2021.

Notes: In total, 16% of 10 to 19-year-olds record being active, 40% not usually active, and 44% not active. 'Active' indicates working or seeking work for longer than six months in the past year. 'Not usually active' is classified as someone working or seeking work for less than six months in the past year. While someone 'Not active' has not worked or looked for work in the past year.

Part 5: Access to social protection programmes

Nepal's social welfare system is comprised of three components: 1) contributory social benefits programme for formal workers (pensions, retirement benefits, and so on); 2) an unconditional social support scheme (cash and in-kind support, scholarships, and so on); and 3) employment programs for the unemployed. This report covers three programmes in the latter two non-contributory components of the welfare system for which municipal data was available, specifically the:

- Prime Minister's Employment Program (PMEP)
- Girls and Dalit student scholarships
- Social security allowances (SSA)

This section explores the accessibility and reach of these programmes to minority groups and those most at risk of being left behind, with a focus on gender, age, ethnicity, disabilities, and children.

Prime Minister's Employment Program: Overview

In 2019, the Nepalese government launched the PMEP with the aim to provide at least 100 days of work opportunities to unemployed citizens. Ultimately, this program aims to decrease unemployment rates and reduce the number of citizens living in poverty. In Simta, 1,925 citizens applied for the PMEP during the fiscal year 2021–2022. Unfortunately, the number of successful applicants that received employment was not published alongside the data.

The PMEP's selection process uses a points-based system, scoring applicants out of a maximum of 100 against specific social and economic criteria. Points are awarded across eight criteria including income level, food security, ethnicity, and gender. Applicants were from a range of backgrounds, varying in age, ethnicity, and ward. Overall, there is a particular emphasis on female applicants, with women making up the majority of applicants, and also being a targeted group.

Of the local population potentially eligible to apply for the programme, the 2021 Census identified a total of 429 citizens in Simta to be unemployed and 3,588 citizens aged 20 and above economically inactive.

Student scholarships for girls and Dalit children: Overview

The scholarship programmes are cash stipends provided by the Nepalese government to all girls and all children of Dalit ethnicity in community schools throughout Nepal. These scholarships are part of the government's social assistance programme aiming to tackle education and literacy inequalities among girls and Dalit citizens. One common critique of this approach is that group-based social policies, such as these, bypass children in poverty that are part of other social groups.²⁰ In 2021/22, 2,683 scholarships were provided to all girls in Grades 1–8 and 1,041 to Dalit boys in the same grades. Each scholarship provided a stipend of NPR 400 annually to cover textbooks, uniforms, and any other supplies to help children attend school (community schools have free tuition). In aggregate, this meant that over two-thirds (70%) of students in Grades 1–8 going to community schools received a scholarship.

Social security allowance: Overview

The social security allowances provided by the Nepalese government are made up of nine grants of different sizes targeting specific groups in need of cash assistance. These grants are the largest component of social protection in Nepal, accounting for around 43% of the national social protection budget which also funds pensions, benefits, and in-kind assistance.²¹ In the fiscal year 2021/22, around 3,398 allowances were granted to individuals in Simta, amounting to a total estimate of NPR 25 million. These allowances reached around 14% of Simta's citizens. The size of allowances has notably increased annually; for example, the senior citizen allowance incrementally increased from NPR 6,000 in 2014/15 to NPR 48,000 by 2021/22.²² The data provided in this section was extracted from the municipality's VERSP MIS for the second quarter of 2021/22 and projected for the entire year.

Table 1: Types of social security allowance grants

Type of social allowance	Allowances provided	Grant size (NPR)
Senior citizen 68+	1,378	48,000
Senior citizen Dalit 60–67	302	31,920
Senior citizen single women 60–67	187	31,920
Widow	317	31,920
Partial disability	132	25,536
Full disability	36	46,680
Endangered ethnicity	0	47,880
Child grant – Dalit	1,046	6,384

Type of social allowance	Allowances provided	Grant size (NPR)
Child grant – Endangered ethnicity	0	12,000

Source: Development Initiatives based on Simta VERSP MIS for the second quarter of 2021/22.

Notes: The grant sizes given are the maximum values found in the dataset for the corresponding grant types. Most, but not all, recipients received the maximum grant size. Grant sizes are given in per annum figures in Nepalese Rupees (NPR). The number of allowances is based on data from second quarter 2021/22 and assumed constant for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Social security programmes

Gender

Prime Minister's Employment Program

The PMEP has a particular focus on women: of all applicants to the program in Simta, 61% were female. The eight selection criteria include two categories specifically targeted for women – providing 20 points to applicants that are unemployed female citizens, and five points to applicants of a female-headed household. Men, on the other hand, have no targeted selection criteria, and as a result, women are more likely to receive employment opportunities through the program. Nationally, women make up the largest share of applicants to the program due to the higher national unemployment rate than men. Although this is not the case in Simta, more women applied for this program than men.

Social security allowance

Of the nine grants available in the social security allowance for citizens of Simta, two are reserved specifically for women: the senior single women allowance, and the widow's allowance. These two grants are only provided to female citizens, while no allowances are reserved for male citizens. Unfortunately, the data provided by the VERSP MIS does not show recipient information on gender and therefore it is not possible to calculate the total share of other allowances reaching women or whether they were equitably distributed.

Nevertheless, a total of 187 senior single women allowances were distributed in 2021/22 in Simta, providing a contribution of NPR 31,920. This allowance is granted to all single women aged between 60 and 67. From the age of 68, these citizens then qualify for the normal senior citizen allowance available to both genders. The widow's allowance is given to all widows under the age of 60. In 2021/22, 317 widow allowances were granted with an individual annual contribution of NPR 31,920.

Age

Prime Minister's Employment Program

The PMEP has no age-based selection criteria as the program targets all unemployed citizens above the age of 18. Applicants between the ages of 30 and 40 made up a particularly large share, accounting for a third of all applicants. Citizens under the age of

30 made up 25% of applicants. As there is no information on successful applicants, it is not possible to show whether this distribution was maintained or not.

Social security allowance

Age is another area of focus for the social allowances, with three of the nine grants targeting senior citizens. The senior allowances are: for senior citizens above the age of 68, for Dalit seniors aged 60 to 67, and for senior single women aged 60 to 67. Together, these allowances make up almost two thirds (64%) of all grants provided in terms of monetary value. The senior citizen allowance for those above the age of 68 was the most widely distributed with 1,378 allowances provided, and also represented the largest grant in terms of monetary value, at NPR 48,000 per recipient. The senior Dalit and senior single women allowances target citizens aged 60–68 of Dalit ethnicity or single women, each providing NPR 31,920 per grant. For every NPR 100 granted through the social security allowances in Simta, NPR 79 reached a citizen over the age of 60.

Ethnicity

Prime Minister's Employment Program

The PMEP has one criterion (5 points) focusing on citizens of Dalit and indigenous ethnic groups. While an exact figure of Dalit citizens in Simta cannot be provided, an estimate of approximately 25% (6,000 people) shows that a large number of Dalit citizens applied for the PMEP. In 2021/22, 40% of all applicants were of Dalit background, 37% were Chhetri, 21% were Janajati, and 2% were Brahman.

Social security allowance

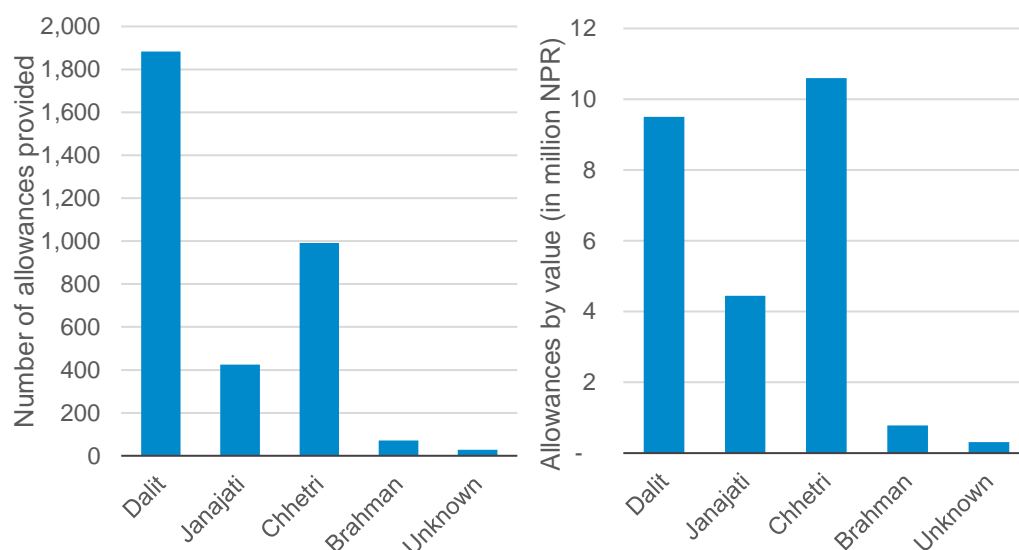
Minority ethnicities are another key focus of the SSA programme, with four of the nine available social allowances targeting ethnic minorities: senior citizen Dalit grant, endangered ethnicity grant, Child grant – Dalit, and Child Grant – Endangered ethnicity. In the fiscal year 2021/22, no allowances were found to have been provided to ethnic endangered citizens. Over half (55%) of all allowances reached Dalit people through a range of grants, including but not limited to the two noted above. For every NPR 100 provided through allowances, NPR 37 reached citizens of Dalit ethnicity.

The senior citizen Dalit and Child Grant – Dalit provide allowances for Dalit citizens aged 60 to 68 and under the age of 5 respectively, with the former providing NPR 31,920, and the latter NPR 6,384. In 2021/22, 302 senior Dalit allowances and 1,046 Child grant – Dalit grants were provided. This meant 12% of all grants were reserved solely for Dalit citizens.

Whilst it is difficult to calculate an accurate share of all grants by ethnicity due to the complexity of Nepal's many ethnicities, Simta's population is estimated to have around 6,000 Dalit citizens, or approximately 25% of the total population. By comparison, a total of 1,883 grants across all allowance types were provided to Dalit citizens, covering 31% of the Dalit population. When compared to other ethnicities, Dalit citizens receive the largest number of grants, 1,883, in comparison to those given out to persons of Chhetri ethnicity, 991. However, over half (56%) of the allowances provided to Dalit citizens were the Child grant – Dalit, and of significantly lower value, almost eight times smaller than

the senior grant. Therefore, when looked at monetarily, citizens of Chhetri ethnicity received a slightly larger share, 41%, of grant value in comparison to people of Dalit ethnicity, 37%.

Figure 24: Social security allowances provided by volume and total contribution per ethnicity in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Simta VERSP MIS.

Notes: Total contribution for fiscal year 2021/22 is an estimate based on second quarter results. 'Unknown' ethnicity implies all recipients for whom ethnicity was not specified.

Disability

Prime Minister's Employment Program

The PMEP has no selection criteria targeting PWDs. Similarly, no information was provided as to whether any of the applicants or successful recipients had a disability.

Social security allowance

Two disability-focused allowances are provided by the SSA program. The full disability allowance is available for PWDs holding a red disability identification card – defined as persons 'who cannot go about daily life even with help from others'. The partial disability allowance is targeted to those who hold a blue disability identification card – defined as persons 'who can go about daily life with help from others'.²³

In Simta, 36 full disabilities allowances of NPR 46,680 and 132 partial disability allowances of NPR 25,546 were provided during 2021/22. For every NPR 100 provided through allowances, NPR 5 reached PWDs.

The 2021 Census identified 571 persons with a disability in Simta, whereas a total of 168 applicants received either full disability or partial disability grants, representing a coverage of 30%. This gap is likely due to the type/degree of disabilities included in the social security requirements.

A big limitation of these grants is that recipients of the SSA programme can only claim one grant at any one time. For citizens who are part of multiple social minority groups, this means that support through these allowances is not always fully realised. For example, a child of Dalit ethnicity with a disability would not receive the Child Grant for Dalit citizens (NPR 6,384) while collecting the disability grant (NPR 25,536 or 47,880 depending on the degree of disability), despite meeting the requirements for both. Similarly at senior ages, qualification for the senior Dalit grant (NPR 31,920) would not be available if the person continues to claim a disability grant (higher in value). This also applies to other target groups, for example a single Dalit woman between the ages of 60 and 67 can only receive either the single senior women grant or the senior Dalit grant, not both.

Child benefits

Prime Minister's Employment Program

As an employment social protection scheme for unemployed citizens, the PMP does not target children and adolescents under the age of 18.

Student scholarships for girls and Dalit children in Grades 1–8

The girls and Dalit student scholarships of NPR 400 per year help increase accessibility of education to students in social groups that show higher tendency to leave school early. As previously explored in [Part 4](#), 32% of girls/young women are not attending school in comparison to 20% of boys/young men. Similarly, while an analysis on the inequalities between different ethnicities was not possible due to lack of interconnectable data, Dalit citizens have historically faced high levels of poverty and show the highest prevalence to being involved in child labour.²⁴ As such, these two scholarships, while being low in monetary value, provide some aid in keeping young girls and Dalit children in education, limiting them from undertaking child labour, and increasing their future chances at improved quality of living.

Social security allowance

The SSA programme offers cash transfers that reach children through five of the nine grants available, with two of the grants specifically targeted to children. The child grants are provided to children under the age of 5 who are of Dalit or of endangered ethnicities. The remaining three grants which are inclusive of children are: the two disability allowances irrespective of age, and the endangered ethnicity allowances. The Nepalese government has recently made the child nutrition grant available to all children under the age of 5 in 25 districts, of which Simta is not currently covered, but there are plans to make this available nationally in the coming years.

On top of these grants, other in-kind support programmes exist for children such as the provision of school meals and scholarships. However, data on these programmes in

Simta is limited. Research at a national level found that 52% of children received at least one in-kind social benefit, while the child grant cash transfer reached 6% of children/adolescents in Nepal in 2020/21.²⁵

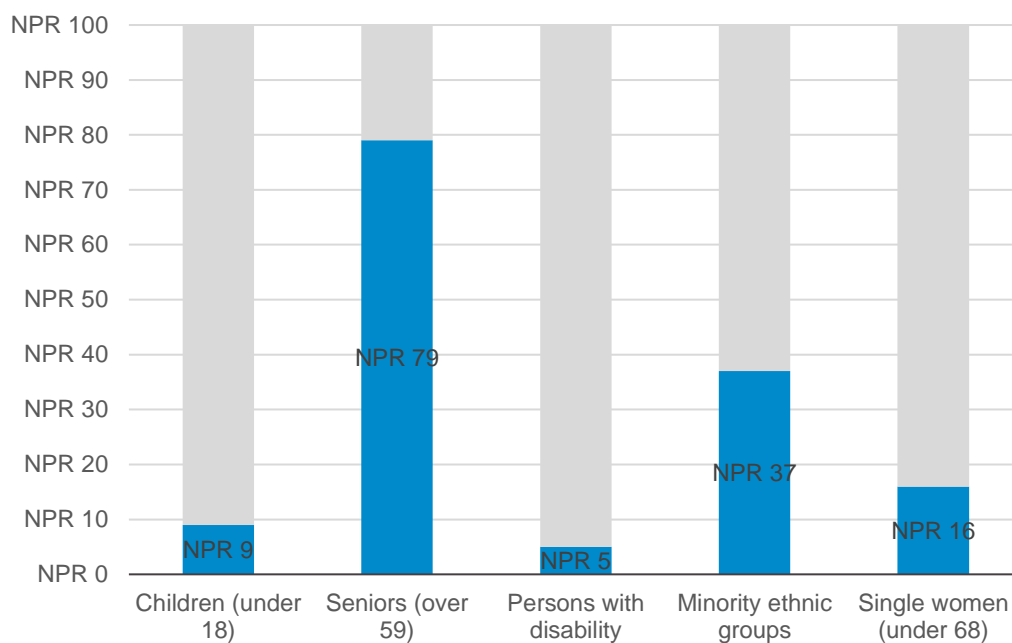
The child grants are provided to Dalit and endangered ethnic children under the age of 5 for the amounts of NPR 6,384 and NPR 12,000 annually respectively. In 2021/22, 1,046 Dalit child grants were provided in Simta. The 2021 Census identified 2,533 children under 5 living in Simta. This means that the child nutrition grants reached 41% of all young children in the municipality, regardless of ethnicity. No data is available on the number of Dalit children in the municipality. Of all funds from the SSA programme in Simta, for every NPR 100 spent in allowances, NPR 6 reached children under-5 through the child grants.

Due to missing information on the age of allowance receivers it is not possible to count the number of grants provided by the SSA programme to children and adolescents under the age of 18. However, knowing that 6% of funds went towards the child grant and 5% towards disability (of which some recipients are children), citizens of Simta under the age of 18 received anywhere from 6 to 11% of the monetary value of the social security allowances. Additionally, considering the child grant only targets those under the age of 5, children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 18 would have received close to no funds through the social security allowances. Meanwhile, citizens over the age of 60 received 79% of the programme's funds.

While Dalit child allowances are considerable in number – 1,046 – the monetary value of these allowances remains low, at NPR 6,384. Research at the national level shows that nearly 75% of all respondents receiving the child nutrition grant indicated that it was not sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of their children.²⁶ Similar research found the monthly contribution to be equivalent to less than five days of a child's minimum consumption needs.²⁷

Presently, very few children receive cash assistance despite 22% (2.2 million) of Nepalese children being in multidimensional poverty. Nationally, more than a third (36%) of children under the age of 5 were found to be stunted, and 10% found to be suffering from wasting due to malnutrition in 2017.²⁸ With close to 44% of Simta's population under the age of 18, social protection systems are crucial to tackling child poverty and reducing the number of children in labour and suffering from malnourishment.

Figure 25: Amount in NPR reaching specific minority groups for every NPR 100 provided through allowances in Simta



Source: Development Initiatives based on the Simta VERSP MIS 2021/22.

Notes: Groups are not mutually exclusive. For example, a person can be both senior and single woman, and therefore receive from the same grant (senior single women allowance).

Part 6. Conclusion and recommendations

Women and children are identified as being at risk of being left behind in Simta, Nepal. With persisting trends of early marriage, inequitable literacy and education levels, single parenting, and limited cash assistance targeting children, these groups in particular face compounded burdens of multidimensional poverty and socioeconomic inequalities placing them at high risk of deprivation. However, data limitations mean that further research into Dalit ethnic communities and PWDs is needed to better understand the risk these groups face of being left behind.

Social protection programmes are a key tool in ensuring that people are not left behind in Nepal. The PMP is found to provide employment opportunities to women however, the extent to which applicants successfully received employment is unknown and its impact should be evaluated. The school scholarships provided to young girls and Dalit children help children from groups commonly found to leave schooling early, but the size of its stipend and its economic impact should be reviewed. The social security allowance programme, Nepal's largest social welfare scheme, on the other hand, shows to target various groups vulnerable to being left behind – notably senior citizens, single women, ethnic minorities, and citizens with disabilities. However, the programme only reaches 14% of Simta's population, with the majority of programme value (79%) provided to senior citizens above the age of 60. While these allowances deliver significant benefit to senior citizens and single women, children under the age of 5 receive around NPR 6 for every NPR 100 provided by the programme, while those between the ages of 5 and 18 receive almost no assistance.

As indicators of local and national poverty show that women and children are affected in particular, social programmes must work in conjunction to address these inequalities and ensure younger generations have the means and access to education to increase their current and future wellbeing. Additional research alongside improved data collection, infrastructure, and administrative systems would help improve evidence and guidance into these processes to ultimately bring an end to multidimensional poverty in Simta and Nepal while leaving no one behind.

Recommendations

Data use and sources

- **National and local government:** Improve disaggregation of future and existing data into larger datasets that provide more room for cross-tabular analysis rather than aggregated tables. Large, disaggregated datasets would have allowed greater

comparison of smaller groups to multiple variables. For example, comparing a child's educational level, family structure, marriage status, age, and/or economic activity.

- **Local government:** Improve administrative systems, VERP MIS, HMIS, and EIMS, to access more data on income, health, and food security indicators. See previous work by DI on [data landscaping in Simta](#) and how to [improve administrative systems](#).
- **Local government:** Extend the digital collection of data wherever possible, particularly to primary healthcare facilities, primary schools and registry offices. Encourage the use of this data by facility staff and local government.
- **Local government:** Ensure complete metadata is published alongside datasets, including but not limited to sample sizes, definitions, and date of collection. This helps improve understanding of context and sampling methodologies.
- **Local government:** Ensure staff are trained and able to conduct basic data analysis and identify key trends and areas with missing data.
- **Local government:** Hold workshops with key officials to promote the value of evidence-informed decision-making, celebrate positive improvements, and highlight overlooked areas and groups.

Gender

- **National and local governments:** Disaggregate existing data, both census and other. This could allow for relationship analysis of single mothers'/single women's living conditions, education level, child's education, and ethnicity.
- **Development partners:** Increase investment in data collection and research into gender-based violence, informal work, and formal working conditions.
- **Local government, community, and civil society:** Provide opportunities for women in older age groups to improve their literacy, given the high likelihood of economic participation and the need to access social protection systems.
- **Local government:** Improve tracking and data collection about the PMEP to provide greater understanding of women's unemployment and interest for work.

Children

- **Development partners, community, and civil society:** Advocate for child poverty relief programmes and provide quality data on all social programmes that already exist, whether cash or in-kind assistance.
- **National government:** Expand the child grants to all children in Nepal. While it is good to target ethnic minorities (which this report could not review due to limited

data), children, as a group identified to be at risk of deprivation, receive very little aid from the primary social security programme (SSA).

- **Development partners:** Invest in further research and data collection on the number, intensity, and causes of child labour in Simta, Surkhet, and more generally Nepal. This would provide greater insight into how young children could be supported to stay in education and away from manual labour.
- **Local governments, community, and civil society:** Continuously ensure all children receive adequate levels of education and advocate for greater participation in higher levels of schooling.

Social security programmes

- **Local government:** Improve evidence of social benefits to unemployed citizens, either through additional data on the implementation of the PMEP or other social programmes.
- **All actors:** Advocate for greater inclusion of children and adolescents in social assistance programmes to incentivise continued education and reduce trends in child labour and early marriage.
- **Local and national governments:** Complete coverage of all available social security programmes nationally but also at local level when managed by local actors. Greater evidence of all available social programmes would improve research on groups being left behind and measure growth over time.
- **Local and national governments:** Commit to greater levels of coverage for all grants in the social security allowances and ensure all eligible recipients receive their benefits. Attempt to provide evidence and assessment of the number of eligible recipients not collecting grants. This would improve understanding of those who are not receiving social benefits to which they are entitled, and the number of individuals eligible to multiple grants but who, by design, are not able to collect more than one.

Notes

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