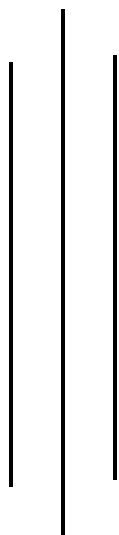
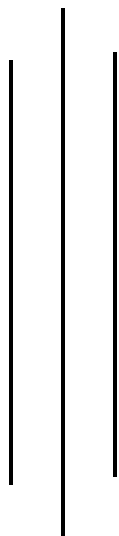


PLANNING FOR CENSUS OF POPULATION 2001 IN NEPAL



**Presented at the 18th Population Census Conference
East West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
Aug 26-29, 1998**



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Planning for Census of Population 2001 in Nepal:

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1. Conducting a Census of Population in any country is always a challenging task. In Nepal, it is more so, because of the lack of even basic infrastructures for the successful conduct of a Census. While it is true that the general level of technical advances in the country is quite poor, the Census organization and the Census planners also have not been able to harness even the available technologies for carrying out the Census. This lack of technological advancement in Census is caused both by a lack of understanding of the technological advances that are useful for the purpose of a Census and a lack of financial resources of acquiring those technologies. But more than the financial constraints, it is the mental constraints to innovate and change, that is keeping the Census process in its traditional mould.
2. However with the upcoming Census of 2001, the following changes that are planned to be undertaken, will certainly enhance the operational ease, usefulness and access and availability of Census data in Nepal.

i) Census Mapping : Integration of Spatial or Physical Data with Socio-Economic Data from the Census :-

In Census 2001, the fundamental concern of a Census mapping exercise to produce EA maps are planned to be taken a step further by digitizing the EA maps and linking these digital physical information with socio-economic information for the same area. This would provide a new dimension to the information collected from the Census by providing at the same time valuable

and up-to-date information of the physical area to which socio-economic information pertain to. The computer storage of these physical and socio-economic data would allow its access by a larger user than has been possible so far . Since these EA^s would be small areas, they would be highly useful for local level plans in the context of decentralization and the promotion local self governance.

There are several problems to a successful implementation of this plan. The inadequacy of the existing infrastructure, lack of experience and management skills for carrying out a project as large as the one proposed (even with the collaboration of the Department of Survey) and the need to acquire the required equipment's form abroad - are some of the issues that needs to be resolved. The technical and financial assistance expected from European Union to this project hopefully would be able to complete this task successfully and in time.

ii) Distributed Processing and Computer Networking :-

The processing of the Census 2001, for the first time, is planned to be carried out in Five Regional Centres in addition to one at the Centre. Though this may sound as not much of a change to speak about, it is quite a challenging innovation in Nepal made possible by the development of telecommunicating facilities and the easy availability of networking softwares and modems of only a few years back. Distributing the processing of a large volume of Census data to different processing centres is expected to minimize the excessive centralization of all Census schedules and forms and the resulting problems of handling theme carefully and in a controlled manner. This arrangement also is expected to expedite the processing.

The only problem one could visualise at this moment of following this approach would be to coordinate and synchronize the completion of processing function and also ensuring minimum acceptable standard of data quality.

iii) Dissemination of Data in Digital Format :-

The traditional practice of printing volumes and volumes of Census data running into thousands of pages would hence forth be discontinued and instead all such data would be made available to the users in digital form in various mediums such as the floppy disks, magnetic tapes and only few selected data items of general interest only would be produced in printed forms and distributed widely. The electronic form of data dissemination would help its users to use the Census data in the form they would like and at the same time relieve the scarce resources and time of the Bureau that is traditionally spent in preparing 'dummies' for the Census tabulation.

However, this planned innovation has some risk in the sense that whatever little used to be produced in the form Census tables also might not be available to those who are not capable of producing for themselves the tables that they want or in other words, it might be inhibitive to those that are not familiar with computers to seek and find the data that they were used to finding in Census volumes. This change might have to be supplemented by a comprehensive "user services" efforts at the Bureau.

3. Census, like all other massive operation that depends upon the cooperation and a good understanding of the processes involved, might profit appreciably if planned to move in with the existing and available technological changes. If such operations can not assimilate and exploit the available technologies and try to follow only the traditional methods, they are bound to suffer and pay the price for their intransigence.