

Background

Gorkha district is located in Nepal's western development region, with the *terai* in the south and Tibet in the north. The district's elevations range from 488 to 8,156m. The average annual rainfall is 1,491.5ml. The topographical distribution of land in the district ranges from high Himalayas and high mountains to middle mountains. The total area is 361,470ha, of which 112,535ha are forest, 41,482ha are cultivated agricultural land, 23,057ha are non-cultivated agricultural land, and 58,990ha are used for grazing.

According to the 1991 census, the total population of Gorkha district is 252,524, with a population density of 70/km². The average household size is 5.1. The literacy rate for people six years of age and above is 43.6 per cent (from 18.3% recorded in the 1981 census). Although more than 20 languages are recorded among the local population, Nepali is the mother tongue of the majority of the people. Other commonly spoken languages are *Gurung*, *Magar*, and *Bhotia/Sherpa*. Similarly, 225,939 persons are Hindus and 22,399 are Buddhists.