



## Urbanization in Far-Western Region of Nepal

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### Abstract

*Nepal is one of the developing countries of the world. Nepal's level of urbanization was low in terms of urban population and number of urban centers until 2011, but it has been increasing over the recent years. The rate of urban growth in the country has also been faster lately. The research work is mainly based on secondary data. In this context, this paper is concerned with urbanization in Far-western Region of Nepal. This paper is mainly focused on analysing the growth of urban population and centers, spatial pattern of urbanization, size of urban areas, ranking of urban areas of Far-Western Region utilizing data from the population census 1881 to 2011 and recent data which are published by Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development 2016 of Nepal. The urban population has increased from 71108 in 1981 to 1058305 in 2016 while the number of urban centers has increased from 2 to 25 in the study area. The level of urbanization in this region was 5.38% in 1881 and it became 43.77% in 2016. The urban growth and urbanization of the Far-western Region is at accelerating stage in the present time. It is notable that out of 9 districts of this region, Kailali and Kanchanpur which are located in the Terai region share 77.55% of total urban population. According to the data we can say Far-western Terai (Kailali and Kanchanpur districts) is the hub of Far-western's urbanization. The spatial pattern of urbanization is disproportionate in the study area.*

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**Keywords:** Census, Region, Trends, Urban, Urbanization

### Introduction

Urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional rural economic to modern industrial one. It is progressive concentration of population in urban unit. It is a process of switch from spread out pattern of human settlement to one of concentration in urban centres (Davis, 1965). Urbanization in general is known as the process of growth in the proportion residing in urban places (CBS, 2003). Urbanization is a process by which rural population is transformed into an urban population or an increase in the proportion of population. Urban change is the result of urbanization process. Increasing urbanization is one of the fast growing processes in developing countries. Nepal is one of the developing countries of the world. Level of urbanization here was low in terms of urban population and number of urban centers in 2011, but it has been increasing over the recent years. The rate of urban growth in the country has also been faster lately. During the last 60 years, Nepal has been experiencing a considerable rise in

population, with increasing urbanization from 1952/54 to 2016. Urban growth has recorded relatively high in 2016. In 2011, 17% of the total population lived in urban areas, in 2016 it rose to 41.78 % (Bista, 2016).

According to the Local Self Governance Act of Nepal-1999 are classified into three categories and adopted some criteria of urban areas.

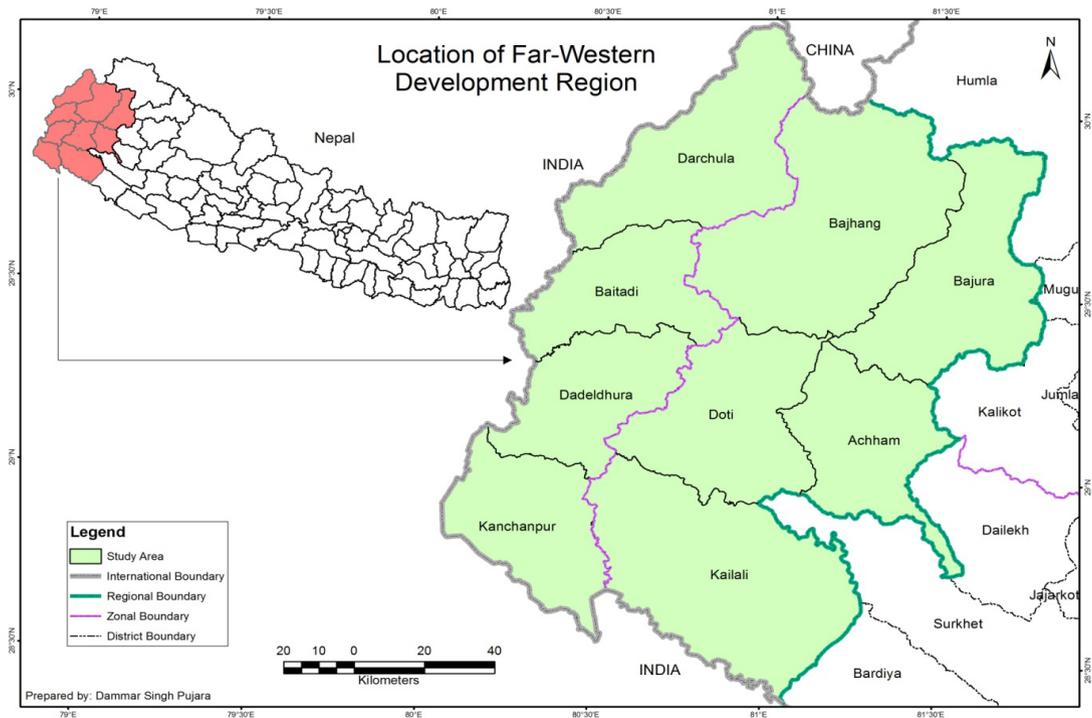
- Mahanagarपालिका (Metropolitan City): population size 300000, annual revenue 400 million (NRs) and other urban facilities.
- उपमहानगरपालिका (Sub-metropolitan City): population size 100000, annual revenue 100 million (NRs) and other urban facilities.
- नगरपालिका (Municipality): population size 20000 in Terai and 10000 in Hill/Mountain, annual revenue 5 million (NRs) in Terai and 500000 (NRs) in Hill/Mountain and other basic urban facilities.

Administratively, Nepal is divided into five development regions. Among them, Far western Development Region, which is located in the western part of Nepal, is the smallest in area, population and development efforts. This development region comprises two zones and nine districts. Among the nine districts, seven lie in hill and mountain region and two in the Terai. It covers an area of 19539 sq. km. According to Census of 2011, the population was 2552517, which was 9.47% of the total population of Nepal. Far-western's level of urbanization is low in terms of urban population and number of urban centres, but it is increasing both in terms of numbers of urban places and size of population living in the urban areas.

### **Study Area**

Far western Development Region is the smallest in area, population and development efforts. This region is surrounded by India in the west and south, China in north and Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal in east. This development region comprises two zones and nine districts. Among nine districts, three lie in Mountain, four in Hill and two in Terai. It covers on areas of 19539 sq. km. According to Census of Nepal 2011, the population in the region was 2417605 which was 9.47% of the total population of Nepal.

Information on urban population in Far-western Region, was collected from the census 1981. The 1981 population census recorded 5.38% urban population from 2 urban areas. The number of urban centers become 16 and urban population become 43.77 % in 2016. Out of nine districts of Far-western Region, Kailali and Kanchanpur which are located in the Terai region share 77.55% of total urban population. The following map shows it here.



### Objectives the Study

The present study is concerned with urbanization in Far-western Region of Nepal. The specific objectives were as follows:

- To analyse the level and trends of urbanization.
- To show the spatial pattern of urbanization.

### Methodology

For this study, the data already established as a corpus was employed. The necessary sources were purposively selected by considering the objectives of the study. In order to analyse the data and make the results clearer simple statistical tools like percentage and different types of bar graphs have been used.

### Sources of the Data

The study is based on the secondary source of data which are published by government agencies. The following are the source of secondary data:

- CBS 1981 to 2011.
- Population Monograph of Nepal 2014
- Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development 2016

The analysis is based on the data available through 1981 to 2016. The percentage of urban population, urban population growth rate, level of urbanization, share of urban population by ecological regions

and ranking of urban areas are used as techniques of data analysis and are achieved by applying related formulas, tables, graphs and maps are used to present the data.

## Results and Discussion

In this section, the collected data has been discussed in terms of different sub-sections. Further, the results have been interpreted.

### Level and Trends of Urbanization

The year 1981 marked the beginning of a continuously increasing trend in total population, urban population and number of urban centres (Municipalities).

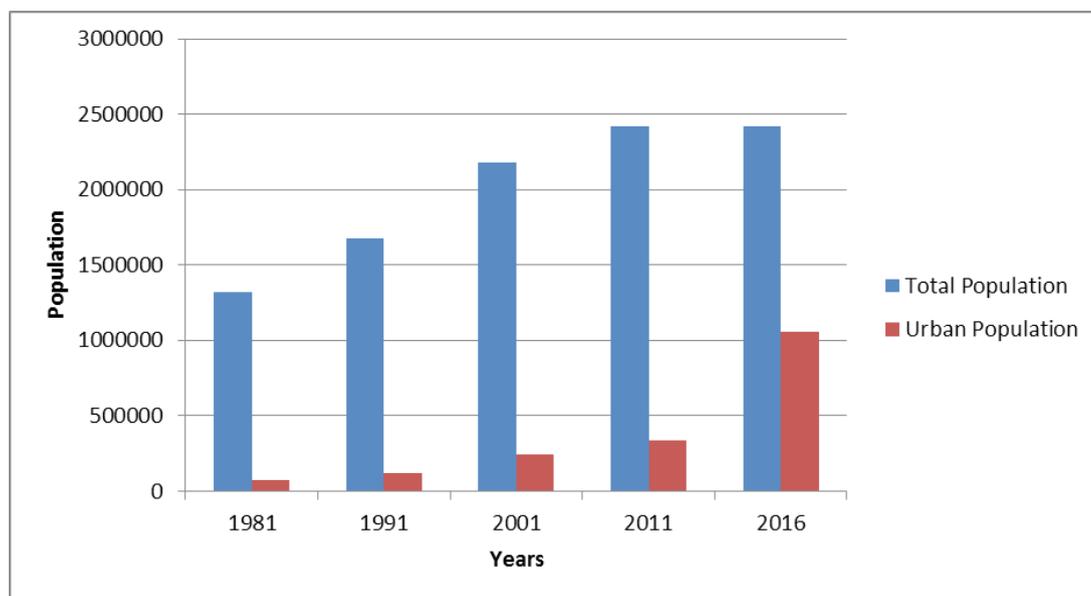
The number of urban centres has grown from 2 in 1981 to 25 in 2016. The total population has increased from 1320089 in 1981 to 2417605 in 2016, where the number of population residing in urban area has increased from 71108 in 1981 to 1058305 in 2016 (see table 1 herewith).

**Table 1: Trends of Urbanization of Far-Western Development Region (1981 to 2016)**

Census	Number of urban areas	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban population %
1981	2	1320089	71108	5.38
1991	3	1679301	119163	7.09
2001	6	2183175	243805	11.25
2011	6	2417605	333872	13.08
*2016	25	2417605	1058305	43.77

Sources: CBS (1981- 2011) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development of Nepal (2016)

**Figure 1: Trends of Urbanization in FWDR**



Sources: CBS (1981- 2011) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development of Nepal (2016)

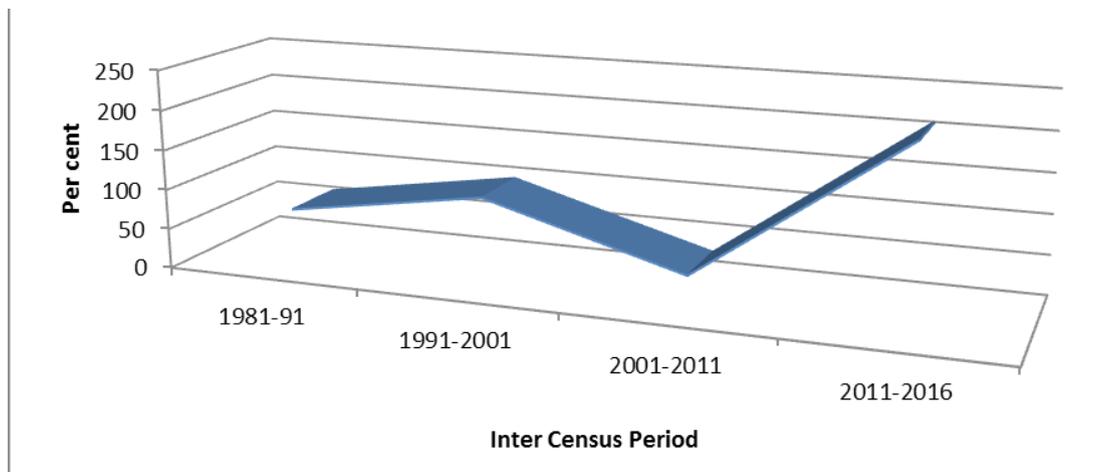
The level of urbanization as a percentage of people living in urban areas has gradually increased between 1981 to 2011, but the increase has been rapid from 2011 to 2016. From 1981 to 2016, the urban population as a percentage of the total population of the FWDR reached from 5.38% to 43.77%. The data shows that the urban population and number of urban centres continuously increased from 1981 to 2016. But after the declaration of new additional urban areas by government of Nepal in 2016, the number of urban areas and urban population has rapidly increased within just three years.

**Table 2: Urban Population Growth in Inter Census Period (1981-2016)**

Year	Urban Population	Internal Increase in Urban Population %	Period
1981	71108	-	-
1991	119163	67.58	10 year
2001	245803	106.27	10 year
2011	333872	35.82	10 year
2016	1058305	216.97	5 year

Sources: CBS (1981-2011) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development of Nepal (2014)

**Figure 2: Increasing Trends of Urban Population**



Sources: CBS (1981-2011) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development of Nepal (2014)

In the year 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2016 the urban population was 71108, 119163, 245803, 333872 and 1058305 respectively which on the whole showed increase of urban population 1388.30 percent in the last 33 years. The table above shows that increase in urban population growth has been the highest in 2011 from 2016. Within a five year period the urban population increased from 333872 to 1058305. In this short period the urban population has rapidly increased on trippled.

**Spatial Pattern of Urbanization**

The spatial pattern of urbanization and urban growth has uneven pattern. Ecologically FWDR is made up of diverse landscapes ranging from plain, hills and mountains. Human settlement patterns in Nepal to date are largely governed by the availability of fertile land, which is normally available in the plains and valleys. The lowlands or plains are more densely settled than the hills and mountains. Urbanization

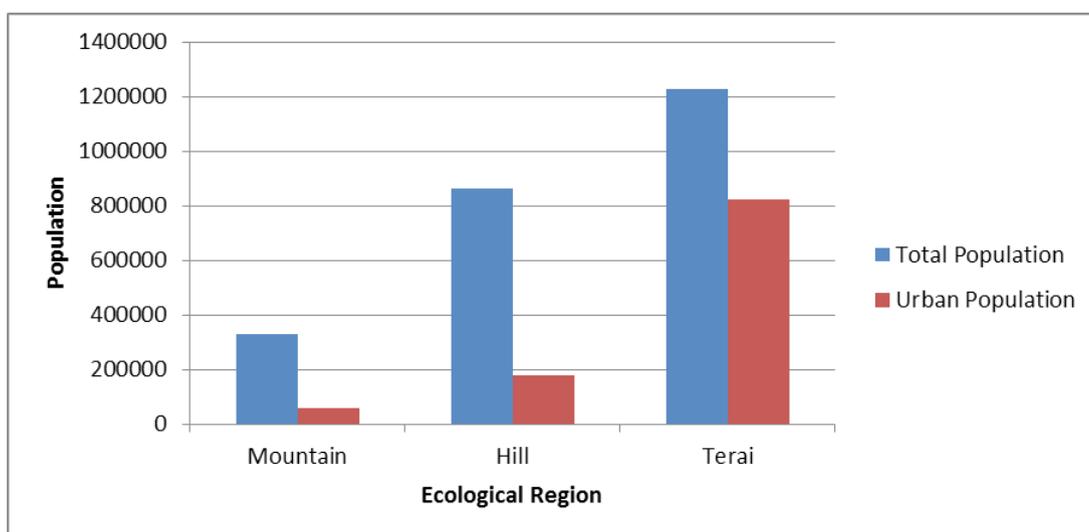
on the other hand is largely associated with population concentration rather than general population distribution (Subedi, 2014). FWDR's current distribution of urban population clearly reflects this.

**Table 3: Urban Population Distribution by Ecological Area (2016)**

Area	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Share of urban population %
Mountain	328433	59285	18.05	5.6
Hill	862215	178199	20.66	16.83
Terai	1226957	820821	66.89	77.55
FWDR	2417605	1058305	43.77	100

Source: CBS (2011); Population Monograph of Nepal (2014) and MoFALD (2016)

**Figure 3: Distribution of Total and Urban Population by Ecological Region (2016)**



Source: CBS (2011); Population Monograph of Nepal (2014) and MoFALD (2016)

Table 3 and figure 3 show the total population, urban population, percentage of urban population and share of urban population in different ecological area of FWDR.

Terai region is by far the most population concentrated and most urbanized area of FWDR. The level of urbanization among geographical regions in Terai is higher than in other regions.

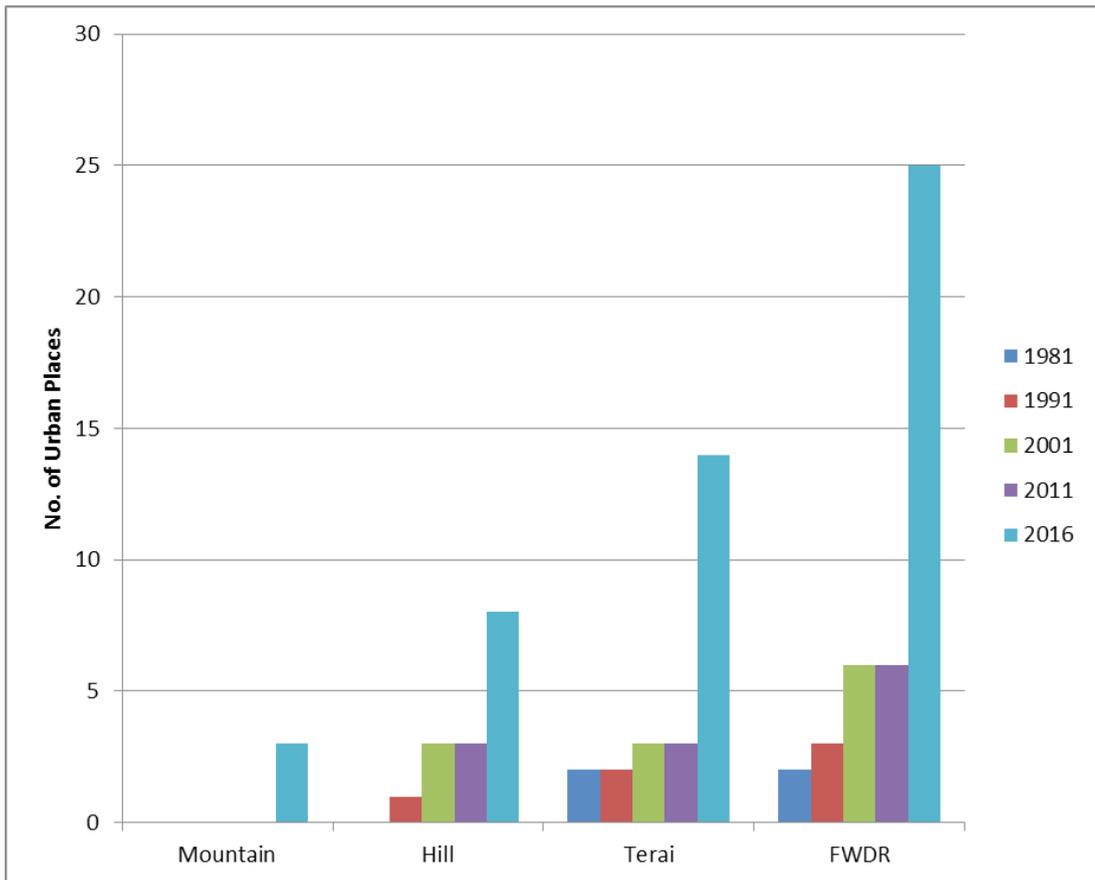
The population distribution within urban places is an important demography aspect of the process of urbanization. The distribution of urban places by geographical region in different census are shown below in table 4.

**Table 4: Ecological Distribution Pattern of Urban Areas (Municipalities)**

Ecological Region	Number of Urban Places (Municipalities) in different year				
	1981	1991	2001	2011	2016
Mountain	-	-	-	-	3
Hill	-	1	3	3	8
Terai	2	2	3	3	14
FWDR	2	3	6	6	25

Source: CBS (1981 to 2011); Population Monograph of Nepal (2014) and MoFALD (2016)

**Figure 4: Urban Places in Different Ecological Region**



Source: CBS (1981 to 2011); Population Monograph of Nepal (2014) and MoFALD (2016)

Ecologically, there was no urban area (Municipality) in Mountain region before 2016. After the declaration of new Municipalities in 2016 by government of Nepal Jay Prithivi (Bajhang) and Api (Darchula) are only two Municipalities in the mountain region, which share about 5.6% of total urban population of FWDR. The hill region has 8 urban areas in 2016 which share 16.83% of total urban

population of the FWDR. Terai region alone has 14 urban areas (out of 25 urban areas) that share 77.55% of total urban population of FWDR.

### Urbanization by District

The urbanization situation of FWDR is relatively low than other development region of Nepal. Among them, the urban population and urban areas are uneven in the different districts.

**Table 5: District-wise Urbanization (2016)**

S.N.	Districts	Number of Urban areas	Total Population	Urban Population	Per cent of Urban Population
1	Bajura	1	134912	18207	13.49
2	Bajhang	1	195159	20280	10.4
3	Darchula	1	133274	20797	15.60
4	Achham	3	257477	57129	22.18
5	Doti	1	211746	26508	12.51
6	Baitadi	2	250898	37338	14.88
7	Dadeldhura	2	142094	57224	40.27
8	Kailali	6	775709	427202	55.07
9	Kanchanpur	8	451248	393619	87.22
	Total	25	2417605	1058305	43.77

Source: CBS (2011) and MoFLD (2016)

Table 5 and figure 4 show the urbanization situation of Far-western Region by districts. As can be seen in this region the urbanization pattern is very uneven among nine districts. Kanchanpur district has 8 urban areas, Kailali has 6, Achham has 3, Baitadi and Dadeldhura has 2 and other four districts (Bajura, Bajhang, Darchula and Doti) have one urban area (Municipality) each.

Level of urbanization can be analyzed at district level. Out of 9 districts of this region, Kanchanpur and Kailali districts are more urbanized than other districts with more than 87% and 55% urban population in 2016 respectively. Bajhang district has low urban population in this region which is only 10.4% of the population living in the urban area.

Due to the size of urban population Kailali district has the highest population which is 427202 in 2016. Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Achham, Baitadi, Doti, Darchula, Bajhang and Bajura have the population of 393619, 57224, 57129, 37338, 26508, 20797, 20280, and 18207 respectively.

The share of Kanchanpur in urban population in FWDR is the largest which is 87.22%. Kailali has 2nd largest share of urban population which is 55.07%, Bajhang has the lowest share of urban population that is 10.4% of FWDR. From the above data it is notable that out of 9 districts of FWDR Kailali and Kanchanpur which are located in the Terai region, have 77.55% of the urban population. According to the data we can say Far western Terai (Kailali and Kanchanpur districts) is the hub of FWDR's urbanization.

### Ranking of Urban Area

The urban places of Far-Western Development Region of Nepal have been ranked by investigator himself on the basis of their population size. From the population view point the rank of urban areas has changed. In FWDR, change in the rank hierarchy of urban places since 1981 is shown table 7 below.

**Table 7: Change in Ranking of Urban Area by Population Size**

Ranking	1981	1991	2001	2011	2016
1	Bhimdatt	Bhimdatt	Bhimdatt	Bhimdatt	Dhangadhi
2	Dhangadhi	Dhangadhi	Dhangadhi	Dhangadhi	Bhimdatt
3		Dipayal	Tikapur	Attariya	Attariya
4			Dipayal	Lamki-Chuha	Lamki-Chuha
5			Amargadi	Tikapur	Ghodaghodi
6			Dasharathchand	Belauri	Tikapur
7				Punarbass	Belauri
8				Dipayal	Bedkot
9				Mangalsen	Punarbass
10				Amargadi	Jhalari-pepladi
11				Api	Dodharachadani
12				Jayaprithvi	Bhajani tresakti
13				Safebagar	Krishnapur
14				Dasharathchand	Parsuram
15					Depayal selgadi
16					Mangasen
17					Amargadi
18					Beldadi
19					Api
20					Jayaprithvi
21					Patan
22					Safebagar
23					Bademalika
24					Dasratchand
25					Kamalbazar

Source: CBS (1981 to 2011) and MoFLD (2016)

Bhimdattnagar ranked highest in the ranking of urban places of FWDR from 1981 to 2014. It continues to be in the first place in all censuses, whereas Dhangadi has always maintained the 2nd rank. Dipayal which ranked third in 1991 census gradually slipped in hierarchy between 2001 to 2014. In 2001 census, Tikapur took the rank of 3rd largest urban area of FWDR.

Among the 14 urban areas in 2014, 8 are new and 6 are older. The ranking of existing urban areas has also changed. Attariya and Lamki-Chuha have taken 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> rank respectively. Bhimdatt and Dhangadi have maintained the 1st and 2nd ranked in this region, while Dipayal, Tikapur, Amargadi and Dasharatchand urban areas have moved down.

It is notably that, out of 14 urban areas of FWDR, top seven urban areas (Municipalities) are located in Terai region. These urban areas are highly population concentration. Most of those urban areas are located along the east-west highway or at cross boarder are Nepal.

## Conclusion

Nepal is one of the developing countries of the world. Nepal's level of urbanization was low in terms of urban population and number of urban centers in 2011, but it has been increasing over the recent years.

The rate of urban growth in the country has also been faster lately.

During the last 35 years, Far-western Development Region has been experiencing a considerable rise in population, with increasing urban growth and urbanization. From 1981 to 2011, urban population and number of urban centres were gradually increasing but in 2016 the number of urban centers and urban population has rapidly increased. In 2011, 13 % of total population of this region lived in urban areas, but it is dramatic rise in 2016. The Government of Nepal has declared 10 additional urban centers in Far-western Region in 2016. The process of urbanization in this region is at acceleration stage.

The spatial pattern of urbanization has been uneven. Ecologically, Far-western Terai has remained higher level of urbanization. Terai Region is showing its dominance in terms of share of urban population and number of urban centers. Terai Region share 77.55% of the total urban population of this region. Out of 9 districts of this region, Kailali District has the largest urban population and Bajang District the lowest in 2016. But, the level of urbanization and numbers of urban areas is the highest in Kanchanpur District. Dhangadi (Kailali District) ranked highest in terms of population, and become a sub metropolitan. Kamalbazar Municipality (Achham District) ranked lowest in this context. The districts of Kailali and Kanchanpur, located in the Terai region have become the hub of FWDR's urbanization.

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