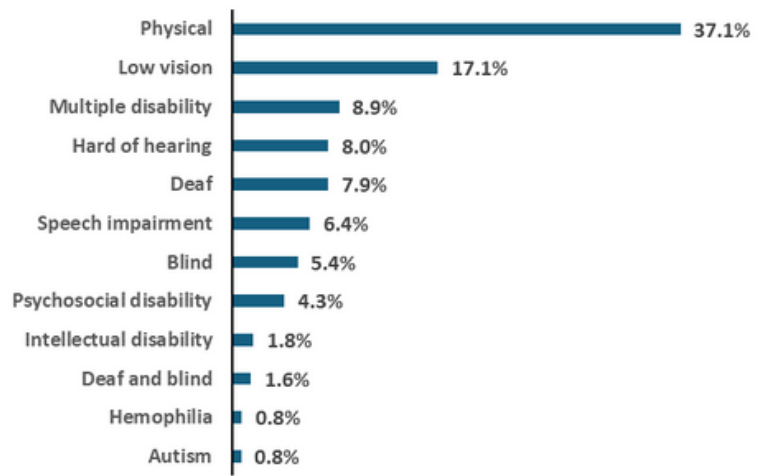


A snapshot of disability status from Census Nepal 2021

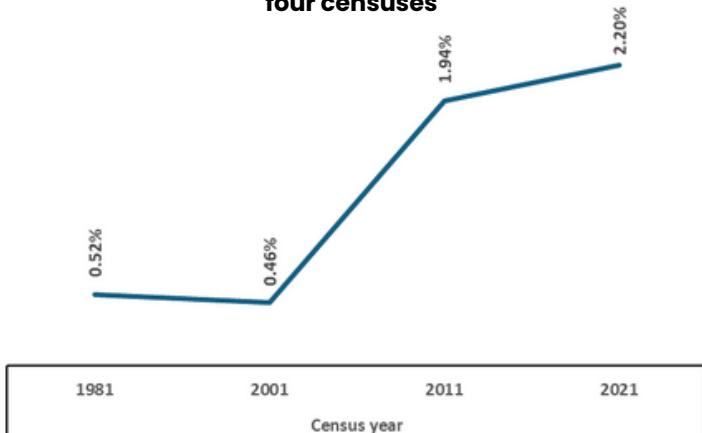
Despite having higher healthcare needs, people living with disabilities face many barriers in accessing health services, resulting in poorer average health outcomes than people living without disabilities. This includes mortality rates that are up to three times higher across all ages (WHO, 2021). In Nepal, more than six hundred thousand people, or 2.2 percent of the population, suffer from at least one type of disability. The distribution of disability is disproportionately skewed across gender, age groups, geographic area, and wealth quintiles. (NPHC, 2021).

Persons with disabilities can be described as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others (CRPD, 2006). 37.1 percent of persons with disability as identified by the 2021 Census are categorized as having physical disability, more than twice the second most prevalent category, which is low vision, or partial blindness. 8.9 percent of persons with disability are living with multiple disabilities, which makes access to adequate and timely care even more challenging.

Percentage of disability by type



Trend in disability as a percentage of the population across four censuses

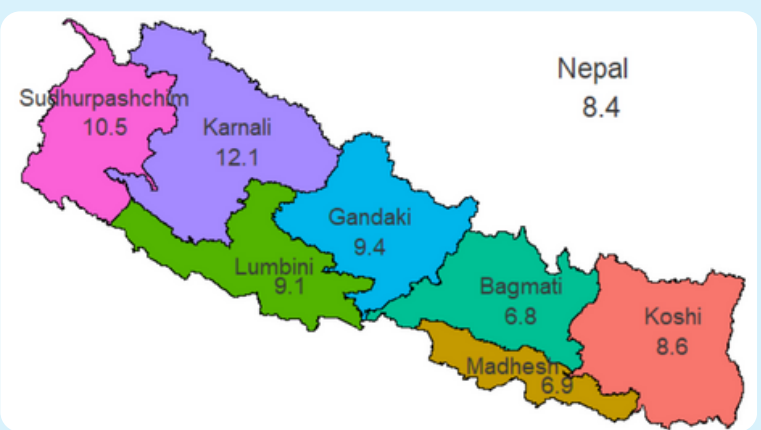


Over the last 40 years, the census data shows a sharp rise in the proportion of people living with disability among the general population

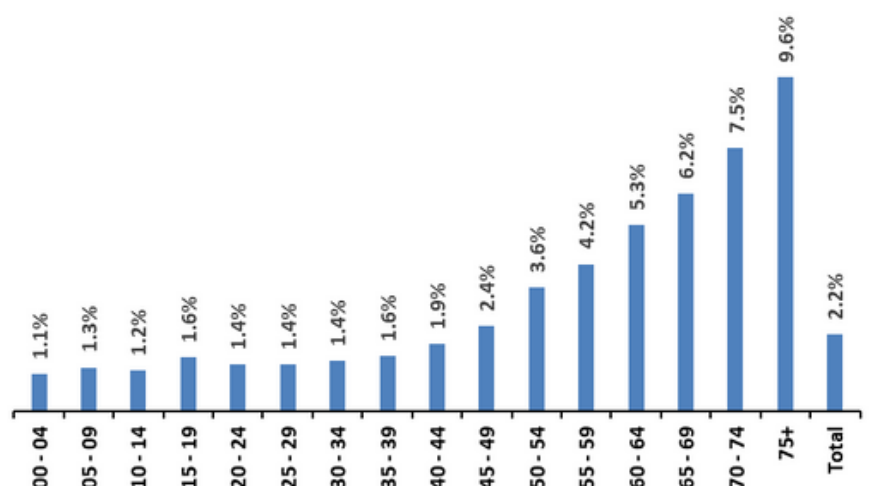
Disaggregated data shows an increase in persons with disability by age. While 1.1 percent of people aged 0-4 are categorized as having some form of disability, this number rises to 9.6 percent of people above the age of 75.

Overall, 8.4 percent of households have at least one disabled member, the highest proportion of which are found in Karnali and Sudharpashchim Provinces. These include some of the poorest and most under-served areas of the country.

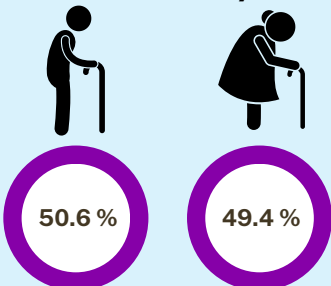
Percentage of households with disability by province



Percentage of disability among general population by age group

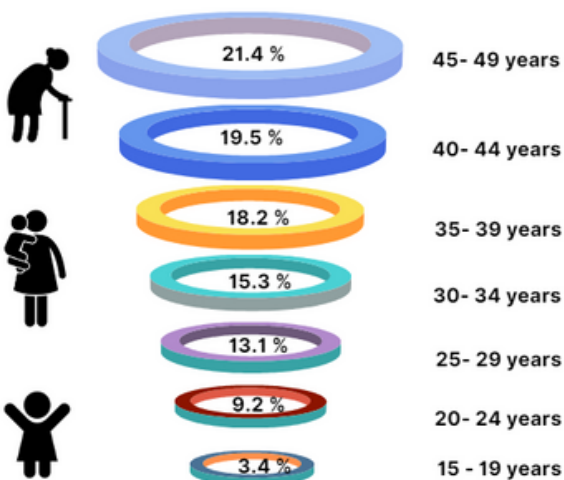


Percentage of people with disability aged 60 and above by sex



The census shows that of all people with disability, 31.8 percent are aged 60 or above. Of this group, just a little over half are male, with females making up 49.4 percent.

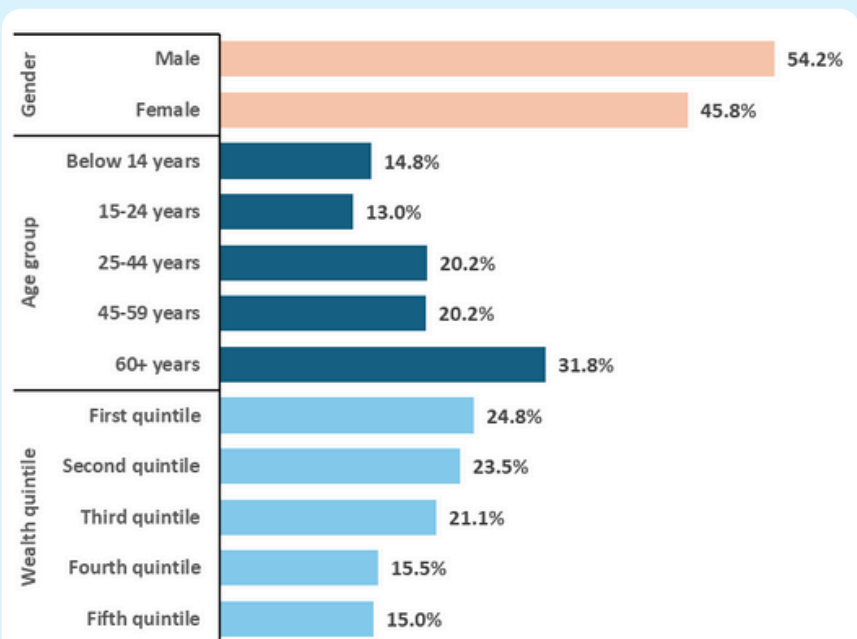
Distribution of women of reproductive age with disability by age group



Among women of reproductive age (15-49) with disability, the proportion of disability also increases with age. Almost 60 percent of women with disability in this demographic fall between 35 and 49 years of age.

When disaggregated by wealth, the first quintile, which has the lowest wealth index score, makes up almost a quarter of the total population of people with disability. In fact, the first and second quintiles account for 48.3 percent of all people with disability, which indicates that the poorest and most vulnerable populations bear the greatest burden of disability in Nepal.

Distribution of people with disability by sex, age, and wealth quintile



Key Messages

- The number of people living with disability is increasing in Nepal, and it disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.
- Disability increases with age, as people aged 60 or older make up almost one-third of all people with disability. This trend is also seen among women of reproductive age, as the majority of people with disability within this demographic are aged 35 or older.
- The first and second wealth quintiles, which have the lowest wealth index scores, make up almost half of all people with disability. Karnali and Sudharpashchim Provinces, which include some of the poorest, most unreachable, and most marginalized populations, also have the biggest proportions of people with disability.
- Access to quality care for disability is a fundamental human right as enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal. From the federal level to the local level of governance, it is crucial to draft and implement inclusive policies to meet the health service needs of people with disability. As the data from the National Census shows, segments of the population that are already vulnerable to poor health outcomes due to age, geographic area, and wealth quintile have the added vulnerability of disability to contend with, which must be taken into account when drafting evidence-based policies and planning health interventions.