

THE DANISH  
INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
BETTER DATA  
AVAILABILITY AND  
USE ON INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES IN NEPAL

REPORT, NOVEMBER 2023



**INDIGENOUS  
NAVIGATOR**  
Data by and for Indigenous Peoples

## **PARTNERSHIPS FOR BETTER DATA AVAILABILITY AND USE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN NEPAL**

**REPORT, NOVEMBER 2023**

**Authors:** Saionara Reis, Team Lead, Data for Rights and Development  
Stinne Skriver Jørgensen, Team Lead and Chief Advisor, Data & Analysis

Report from workshop organized in the scope of the Indigenous Navigator project. Financed by the European Union.

**Photo credit:** Kishor Ghising, unsplash.com

**ISBN: 978-87-7570-214-5**  
**e-ISBN: 978-87-7570-215-2**

© 2023 The Danish Institute for Human Rights  
Wilders Plads 8K  
DK-1403 Copenhagen K  
Phone +45 3269 8888  
[www.humanrights.dk](http://www.humanrights.dk)

Provided such reproduction is for non-commercial use, this publication, or parts of it, may be reproduced if author and source are quoted.

At DIHR we aim to make our publications as accessible as possible. We use large font size, short (hyphen-free) lines, left-aligned text and strong contrast for maximum legibility. For further information about accessibility please click [www.humanrights.dk/accessibility](http://www.humanrights.dk/accessibility)

## ABBREVIATIONS

ILO	International Labor Organization
INC	Indigenous Nationalities Commission
IPOs	Indigenous Peoples' Organizations
LAHURNIP	Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NSO	National Statistics Office
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, we thank all 60 participants of the workshop for their commitment to improve the quality and availability of data on indigenous peoples in Nepal. Their honest and constructive inputs during the workshop helped to generate the proposal for collaboration outlined in this report.

Secondly, we share our appreciation for the Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP) and for the National Human Rights Commission for the trust in joining the co-organization of this workshop.

Finally, we thank the leadership and staff from LAHURNIP for supporting the logistical organization of the workshop and for the impressive convening skills to bring all the right actors in the room. Many thanks in particular to Manoj Aathpahariya for being our closest partner in the months which led to the workshop and for making it all possible.

# CONTENT

<b>BACKGROUND FOR THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 - DATA AVAILABILITY ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN NEPAL</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 The Indigenous Navigator	7
1.2 Census 2021	10
1.3 Data from international bodies and academia	12
<b>CHAPTER 2 - AREAS FOR COLLABORATION</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Validation of Indigenous Navigator data 2023	16
2.2 Review of methodology for future Indigenous navigator data collection	18
2.3 Improvement and utilization of official statistics	19
2.4 Advocacy and advice to government	20
<b>CHAPTER 3 - CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Recommendations related to the generation of data	22
3.2 Recommendations related to the use of data	23
3.3 Recommendations specific to the Indigenous Navigator	24



# INTRO

## BACKGROUND FOR THE REPORT

In august 2023, a workshop was held in Kathmandu to discuss and raise awareness to data on indigenous peoples in Nepal. Participants were introduced to and discussed opportunities and limitations of existing data, including official data and the citizen-generated data collected by indigenous peoples using the framework of the Indigenous Navigator.

The workshop was organized by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in collaboration with the Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The participants included representatives from national state institutions and civil society organizations with a stake in monitoring, protecting, and/or implementing the rights of indigenous peoples in Nepal, the European Union, the Danish Honorary Consulate, and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

The purpose of the workshop was to create a space for dialogue and interaction between representatives of the indigenous communities, data producers and policy makers to uncover the complementary value between existing data from traditional and non-traditional sources.

The workshop concluded that there is a significant gap when it comes to disaggregated data on indigenous peoples in Nepal, especially concerning their status on a wide range of development indicators within the fields of health, education, employment, landownership etc. The gap is not only a matter of data not being collected, but also a matter of the collected data not being trusted, processed and/or disseminated in a digestible format.

To address the issues related to gaps, trust, quality, and use of data, there is need for establishing collaborations between the indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and key national institutions which attended the workshop, including with the National Statistics Office (NSO), the National Planning Commission (NPC), and the human rights Constitutional Commissions such as the NHRC, the Indigenous Nationalities Commission (INC), the Tharu Commission, the Language Commission, and other actors.

Four points for collaboration have been identified as a result of the workshop:

1. Validation of the existing data from the Indigenous Navigator
2. Review/co-development of methodology for future Indigenous Navigator data collection
3. Improvement and utilization of official data
4. Advocacy and advice to government

This report will (a) present the data available on indigenous peoples including government data, the data collected by the indigenous peoples themselves using the Indigenous Navigator and other relevant data sources (b) dive into the four action points and proposed areas of collaboration and (c) articulate the main recommendations from the participants of the workshop.

# CHAPTER 1

## DATA AVAILABILITY ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN NEPAL

This section will introduce some of the available data sources presented and discussed during the workshop, that can inform on the living conditions for indigenous peoples in Nepal. The main focus will be on data generated through the Indigenous Navigator framework and Census data. For both cases, opportunities and limitations will be discussed. At last, other data sources on indigenous peoples in Nepal will briefly be presented.

### 1.1 THE INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR

The Indigenous Navigator is a data collection framework and set of tools developed for and by indigenous peoples to systematically monitor the level of recognition and implementation of their rights. It is built over a set of human rights-based indicators<sup>1</sup> and includes questionnaires and a guidance-tool to facilitate data collection both at national and community levels.

The framework covers crucial areas impacting indigenous peoples' lives, such as cultural integrity; land and territories; self-determination; participation; education and health. It also connects the rights underlined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) with states' commitments put forward in the Sustainable Development Goals and in the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The methodology follows the standards for human rights indicators used by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Moreover, the Indigenous Navigator has been developed in response to the need for quality data that can be fed into existing human rights and sustainable development monitoring processes at local, national, regional, and international

---

<sup>1</sup> Structural indicators that reflecting a country's legal and policy framework; Process indicators that measuring a State's ongoing efforts to implement human rights commitments (e.g. programmes, budget allocation, training of personnel); Outcome indicators that measuring the actual enjoyment of human rights by indigenous peoples.

levels. The tool facilitates indigenous communities' own generation of quality data on their situation and simultaneously enhances their awareness of their rights.

Indigenous peoples' organizations in Nepal have collected data using the Navigator to assist in documenting important gaps in the implementation of their rights. In 2018, LAHURNIP in collaboration with IPOs, piloted the data collection using the Navigator in 8 communities: Santhal (Morang, Jhapa), Urau (Morang), Pahari (Lalitpur), Bote (Nawalparasi), Bote (Kalika), Chhantyal (Baglung), Majhi (Sindhupalchok and Kavrepalanchok) and Magar (Dailekh).

In 2023, a second and more robust round of data collection took place both at the national level and in 6 communities: (1) Kailari Rural Municipality, Kailali for Tharu Community, (2) DUNGESHWOR Rural Municipality, Dailekh two Magar Community, (3) Pathri Sanischare Municipality, Morang, Dhimal Community, (4) Suryadayo Municipality, Ilam, Lepcha Community, (5) Sivasatasi Municipality, Jhapa, Tajpuriya, and (6) Mechinagar Municipality, Jhapa, Meche Community.

The data collection at national level is mainly based on structural and process indicators, which means that it assesses the legal and policy framework of a country and measures States' ongoing efforts to implement human rights commitments through programs, budget allocations, etc. The "National Questionnaire" in the Navigator is thereby complementary to the "Community Questionnaire", which mainly measures the realization of rights as perceived by indigenous communities. In the national assessment, official data sources are used to inform the indicators (desk research on existing legal and statistical information and data), whereas the community assessments are based on focus group interviews.

### **Opportunities:**

The data collected through the Indigenous Navigator has two major advantages, namely (1) that it is built to measure the realization of rights of indigenous peoples and that it raises awareness to their rights in the process, and (2) that the community data represents the actual experiences of the indigenous communities in question.

### **Measure and raise awareness to the rights of indigenous peoples**

The indicators are structured around 12 thematic domains reflected in the UNDRIP. They have been systematically developed with a solid foundation in the methodology for developing human rights indicators proposed by the OHCHR, and thereby they can also serve to pinpoint what to look for when monitoring the realization of indigenous people's rights. Moreover, the framework around



the Indigenous Navigator is quite comprehensive, and therefore it can serve as more in-depth knowledge in an area of interest, than what is possible with for example data from the census. In addition, the data collection process is used as an opportunity to raise awareness and strengthen the capacity of indigenous communities about the UNDRIP and their rights.

### Lived experiences

Community data is highly relevant to the specific geographic area or group it represents, and thereby it can inform decisions and policies that are specifically tailored to the needs and characteristics of a particular community. Moreover, collecting and using community data can foster community engagement and participation. When people see that their input and information are being utilized, they are more likely to get involved in community initiatives. Indigenous communities can use the data collected through the Indigenous Navigator to calculate and illustrate the levels of recognition and realization of their rights on the ground.

### Limitations:

The three key limitations when it comes to the use of data collected in Nepal using the Indigenous Navigator, are namely (1) the limited number of communities, (2) the limited possibilities to collect disaggregated data and to look at intersectionality at the individual level and (3) the limited documentation of the data collection method and process.

### Limited number of communities

For now, data has been collected on a limited number of communities, that is, covering only a very small fraction of the Indigenous peoples in Nepal. This calls for a need to engage more organizations and communities in the data collection process and for joint fundraising to expand the data collection.

### Data disaggregation and intersectionality at the individual level

The second limitation is related to the limits of the questionnaire. Since data is collected on community level and not on an individual level, the possibility to look at disaggregation that goes beyond for example gender is limited. To do this, microdata is needed, which goes beyond the scope of the framework.

### Documentation

The third limitation relates to the documentation of the data collected to address questions related to the validity of the data. For the data to be used for more official purposes, for instance within the national statistical system or embraced by the Constitutional Commissions, it can be beneficial to have readily available the thorough documentation of how exactly data was collected, how

the focus group that informed the community questionnaire was designed and chosen, how the guidance in the interview was used and formulated etc. These are important elements for the data to be reliable and valid, for example to make sure that the results of the questionnaire can be reproduced if the interviews were done again with a different group of people from the same community.

## **1.2 CENSUS 2021**

The latest National Population and Household census of Nepal was collected in 2021 (census 2021). The census contains a wide range of detailed demographic, social and economic data about the individuals and households living in Nepal. It was collected by the NSO and is therefore considered as “official data”. It can provide valuable insights into the access to services, possibility to exercise fundamental rights and into inequalities among the different groups of the society including indigenous peoples. The census is meant to be used for “accelerating sustainable and inclusive development”.<sup>2</sup>

The set up for the census 2021 was revised compared to previous censuses. Three modes of data collection were used to conduct the census 2021, namely paper based, computer-assisted personal interviewing, and web-based e-census. In contrast to the collected in 2001 and 2011, the census of 2021 contains full census enumeration for household and individual information and not just use of sampling<sup>3</sup>.

### **Opportunities:**

The 2021 census offer opportunities to explorer data in greater details and with more specific breakdowns on indigenous peoples both when it comes to thematic issues and intersectionality.

### **Thematic breakdown on ethnicity and geographic information**

The census data contains valuable information on the socioeconomic status of individuals in Nepal, that are particularly relevant in the assessment of achieving the sustainable development goals under the 2023 agenda. That includes information on ownership of house and land; information on housing materials and amenities, sanitation facilities and source of lighting and cooking; marital status; number of household members and age of household head; age of first marriage and birth of children; literacy and educational attainment; employment

---

<sup>2</sup> National Statistic Office, 2021, National Population and Housing census 2021 - National Report. Thapathali, Katmandu.

<sup>3</sup> Sampling is the process of selecting a (representative) subset of individuals from a larger population to make inferences or draw conclusions about the entire population.

status and economic activity (also by children); birth registration; fertility; and maternal mortality and child death.

It is therefore theoretically possible to disaggregate the data on ethnicity and geographic information to compare the status of different ethnic groups on these areas and thereby understand the challenges and gaps between population groups.

### Intersectionality

By taking full advantage of the census coverage, analysis on intersectionality can be displayed and addressed, since data also contains information on for example disability and gender. This is a key aspect to address and monitor the principle of "leaving no one behind", that aims at ensuring that development efforts benefit all, particularly the most marginalized populations, including those experiencing double or multiple marginalization.

### Limitations:

Three main limitations are identified in the use of census 2021, namely (1) the definition and classification of the indigenous groups, (2) the limitation of indicators and (3) the priority of further analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the various ethnic groups in Nepal.

### Definition and classification of Indigenous Peoples

The questionnaires and manuals used for the census 2021 were revised and peer-reviewed by subject matter specialists, language experts and GESI (gender and social inclusion) experts, including people with disabilities, sexual minorities, women, elderly, ethnic communities. Nevertheless, a number of interest groups especially related to caste/ethnicity, religion and language have shown serious concerns on the census results in connection to the specification of ethnic groups in Nepal<sup>4</sup>.

Data in relation to caste-ethnicity, religion and language was collected in the census 2021. According to the census 2021, there are 142 castes/ethnicities and 124 mother tongues in Nepal. But there are concerns and disagreements on how to identify specific groups of ethnicities, and claims that the relevant stakeholders have not been involved sufficiently.

### Indicators

Though the census covers a broad range of themes, the nature of a census does not provide all necessary indicators to do thorough analysis on specific themes.

---

<sup>4</sup> National Statistic Office, 2021, National Population and Housing census 2021 - National Report. Thapathali, Katmandu.

One theme will in general only be covered by a very limited number of questions, for instance health related indicators only consist of maternal mortality and child death. To understand the area more in depth, additional data sources are needed.

#### **Missed opportunity on analysis of disaggregated data**

The third limitation relates to the missed opportunities to conduct further analysis on indigenous peoples from the wealth of data collected with the census 2021. According to the National Report<sup>5</sup>, the census should play a crucial role in informing policymaking on development challenges and gaps for marginalized ethnic groups. For this to happen, the topic needs to be prioritized by the government and sufficient resources need to be allocated. Moreover, the Constitutional Commissions needs to engage with the data processing and analysis, to get the most fruitful insights from the data.

All three limitations call for further collaboration both in relation to utilizing the information in the 2021 census and to improve the data in the next census, which is expected for 2031.

### **1.3 DATA FROM INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND ACADEMIA**

International organizations, research institutions and human rights mechanism have also provided, processed and/or disseminated data on indigenous peoples in Nepal. These analysis and data will be presented in this section.

#### **1.3.1 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) have conducted reports where data from various household surveys in Nepal have been used to shed light on the socio-economic situation for indigenous peoples.

ILO publish a report in 2019, where they look at the implementation of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples – Convention No. 169.<sup>6</sup> The report looks at indigenous peoples on a global level and highlights the need to accelerate the pace of inclusive and sustainable development by overcoming the “invisibility” faced by indigenous women and men in official data and research. The report focuses on inequalities faced by indigenous peoples in comparison to the non-indigenous society, including in the areas of social, cultural, economic and environmental transformations. Three data sources from Nepal are used in the

---

<sup>5</sup> National Statistic Office, 2021, National Population and Housing census 2021 - National Report on Caste/ethnicity, Language and Religion. Thapathali, Katmandu.

<sup>6</sup> ILO, 2019. Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future.

analysis: the Census from 2011, the Labour Force Survey from 2017, and the Demographic and Health Survey from 2015. The data is not displayed specifically on the situation of Nepal, but the report concludes that, globally, indigenous peoples lag behind on various socioeconomic parameters.

UNDESA has since 2009 published 5 different report to raise awareness to issues of importance for indigenous peoples. Each one has focused on different thematic issues: (1) on poverty, well-being and human rights, (2) on health, education and the implementation of UNDRIP and (3) on the right to land, territories and resources. These reports highlight the fact that statistics on the situation of indigenous peoples are not readily available because few countries collect data disaggregated by ethnicity. Nonetheless, it is possible to build a picture of indigenous peoples' social and economic development through the use of selected national and regional information. Data from Nepal used in these reports include indicators from the Human Development Index (HDI) and the National Demographic and Health Survey. Similarly to the ILO report, these also confirm that all over the world indigenous peoples face socioeconomic challenges.

### **1.3.2 ACADEMIA: NEPAL SOCIAL INCLUSION SURVEY**

The Central Department of Anthropology at Tribhuvan University has conducted research on the state of social inclusion in Nepal with focus on caste, ethnicity and gender<sup>7</sup>. The research builds on data from the Nepal Social Inclusion Survey from respectively 2012 and 2018.

The Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS) is a comprehensive survey among 17.600 households that seeks to understand social exclusion and track progress on social inclusion. The NSIS used a 'social sampling' approach, seeking a nationally representative sample of all caste and ethnic groups that are large enough to be captured by the survey. The current survey is based on 88 caste and ethnic groups.

The survey covers 8 dimensions: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) household assets, (3) health and social security, (4) work and livelihood, (5) language and education, (6) social, cultural and gender relations, (7) inclusive governance, and (8) women's empowerment and reproductive health. The study is interesting as it compares the socioeconomic conditions between ethnic groups in Nepal, and the results of the analysis can serve as inspiration of how to prioritize future data efforts.

---

<sup>7</sup> Y. B. Gurung, M. S. Pradhan and D. V. Shakya, 2018; State of social inclusion: caste, ethnicity and gender – Evidence from Nepal Social Inclusion Survey 2018

### 1.3.3 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

Data from the international human rights mechanisms refers to information gathered and documented by international organizations and bodies that are focused on monitoring and promoting human rights around the world. These mechanisms play a crucial role in assessing and addressing human rights violations, as well as in advocating for and promoting human rights standards and principles.

The recommendations produced by the human rights monitoring bodies offer qualitative information which can both indicate critical areas of concern as well as the solutions to address the problems from a human rights perspective. With the support of artificial intelligence, this data has been linked to rightsholder groups such as indigenous peoples, and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer is a database which displays the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review, UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures in their connection to the SDG targets and the rightsholder groups. By looking into the recommendations on indigenous peoples in Nepal it is possible to identify which human rights issues are most prevalent and which recommendations are most relevant for national SDG implementation.

These international mechanisms have given 63 recommendations<sup>8</sup> to Nepal that are connected to the rights of indigenous peoples. The most prominent issues, when connecting to the SDGs, are: SDG 4.5 (discrimination in education), SDG 2.3 (small-scale food production), SDG 10.3 (equal opportunities and non-discrimination) and SDG 16.7 (inclusive decision-making).

This data can guide the way for government actors to prioritize their interventions in fulfilling the rights of indigenous peoples and it can highlight the areas where more data is needed to inform and monitor the most prominent issues.

---

<sup>8</sup> Nepal Country report on the SDG - Human Rights Data Explorer is available at <https://sdgdata.humanrights.dk/en/sdg/report/country/930>



## CHAPTER 2

### AREAS FOR COLLABORATION

Collaborations between civil society organizations and state institutions such as the NSO and the Constitutional Commissions to improve availability and use of citizen data are rapidly becoming a trend. The challenges faced by most countries, for example, in monitoring the SDGs for marginalized groups have aroused to the need for innovative data approaches and partnerships.

As presented during the workshop, globally, the UNSD is leading a Collaborative on Citizen Data<sup>9</sup> which promotes and supports such collaborations. The initiative is attracting the attention of countries and institutions concerned with filling data gaps and which are open to building a bridge between the complementary knowledge hold by different data sources in society.

In Nepal, this workshop created an opportunity to operationalize such ambitions. Based on the discussions around the available data and the limitations and opportunities inherent to them, the participants deemed necessary to forge collaborations to increase the availability of data on indigenous peoples for a series of reasons, in particular because:

- **Information is the best guide for decision-making.** Quality and comprehensive data can lead the way for governments to meet the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples and their communities. For that, partners must act together to contribute to improving the pool of available data;
- It is essential to obtain **high quality official data which indigenous peoples can identify themselves in.** Collaboration between NSO and indigenous peoples can help identify what needs to be improved and build trust in the official data;
- It is important that indigenous peoples have the means to collect data themselves, and collaboration among them can create the conditions for **furthering the data collection by indigenous peoples and for indigenous peoples.**

---

<sup>9</sup> More information on the Collaborative on Citizen Data can be found at <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data>

The partnerships which are needed to fulfill these great ambitions are therefore of multiple nature:

#### **State-State collaboration**

For instance, so much can be achieved if state institutions such as the human rights Constitutional Commissions, the NSO and the NPC collaborate towards finding solutions for better data collection and better data use. Intra-state collaborations are also key in finding better methods for sharing their data on indigenous peoples between the three tiers of government. The expertise of these institutions is complementary and therefore their mandates should be used to reinforce and strengthen each other.

#### **State-IPOs collaboration**

Likewise, partnerships between the state institutions and IPOs can help increase awareness of state actors to the rights of indigenous peoples, including on Free, Prior and Informed Consent. On the other hand, state actors such as the NSO can help increase data literacy in civil society and support their methodologies for data collection. At the same time, the Constitutional Commissions can engage with and support the recognition and use by public officials of data collected by civil society.

#### **Civic-Civic collaboration**

Equally relevant is the need for partnerships among IPOs to strengthen their own data collection and advocacy for their rights. As well as partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples civil society organizations to generate solidarity, learn from each other, and create a prosperous environment for co-existence.

From the discussions and recommendations regarding the scope for partnerships and potential roles for the actors engaged, four main areas of collaboration have been identified, as proposed below.

### **2.1 VALIDATION OF INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR DATA 2023**

In 2023, LAHURNIP, in collaboration with IPOs, coordinated the data collection at national and community levels using the Indigenous Navigator. At the

community level, 6 locations were covered: (1) Kailari Rural Municipality, Kailali for Tharu Community, (2) Dungeshwor Rural Municipality, Dailekh two Magar Community, (3) Pathri Sanischare Municipality, Morang, Dhimal Community, (4) Suryadayo Municipality, Ilam, Lepcha Community, (5) Sivasatasi Municipality, Jhapa, Tajpuriya, and (6) Mechinagar Municipality, Jhapa, Meche Community.

This data is stored at the Indigenous Navigator tool, which offers the possibility of making the data publicly available on the online platform. When it is safe for organizations to publish their data, this can contribute to both the national and global pool of available data on indigenous peoples and their communities.

For a dataset to be publishable, it requires that all data must be thoroughly reviewed. The process of reviewing the data includes verifying that the information collected is accurately registered in the tool and assuring that there are no personal information at risk of becoming public.

When the review is conducted by a third party, for example, by IPOs which have not been involved in the data collection or by a state institution such as the NSO or the Constitutional Commissions, it increases the confidence in the data. The review process also creates an opportunity to dive into the data and better understand the methods and context in which it has been generated. In addition, it opens a space for dialogue about the data, to address doubts and concerns, and also to generate awareness.

LAHURNIP is therefore inviting partners to undertake the review of the indigenous navigator data, both for the National and the Community Questionnaires.

**Scope of collaboration:** to review the latest data collected with the Indigenous Navigator in 2023 (national and community questionnaires).

**Recommended partners for the collaboration:** LAHURNIP and volunteer organization(s) from state institution or IPOs.

## 2.2 REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY FOR FUTURE INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR DATA COLLECTION

Given its comprehensive scope and anchorage in human rights standards, the Indigenous Navigator has the potential to complement the data landscape on indigenous peoples in Nepal. Nonetheless, building trust in the data collected with this tool requires strengthening the trust among the stakeholders in the data ecosystem and creating the environment for the development of a transparent and collaborative process.

One common barrier to creating trust in data is the lack of transparency about how the data is collected and which methodologies have been used to collect that data. The methodology concerning the design of the Indigenous Navigator tool, the selection of indicators, and its opportunities and limitations are openly available online<sup>10</sup>.

Yet, there are opportunities for collaboration between the Indigenous Navigator partners in Nepal, the NSO, and the Constitutional Commissions to review the current methodologies used in the data collection and strengthen it where necessary for future data collection. This collaboration can also include building the capacity of the Indigenous Navigator partners to ensure the adequate documentation and transparency of the data collection process. The outcome of such collaboration could be a set of guidelines and/or checklist for the data collection, which will help streamline and empower other organizations to collect data, while supporting the capacity development of the enumerators.

The co-development of methodologies can benefit all parties in the collaboration:

- The Indigenous Navigator partners will have a validated and well-documented methodology for their data collection, which in addition to bringing higher quality and more transparency to their data will facilitate expanding the data collection with other IPOs;

---

<sup>10</sup> The Indigenous Navigator methodology is available at <https://navigator.humanrights.dk/methodology>

- The Constitutional Commissions will understand the methodologies and therefore be able to trust, refer to, and use the data from the Indigenous Navigator in their work with other State actors; and
- The NSO will be exposed to the traditional knowledge and principles used by indigenous peoples in data collection on themselves, which can generate lessons for future collection of official statistics and thereby increase trust in the NSO data.

**Scope of collaboration:** review existing methodology of the indigenous navigator and address shortcomings and areas of improvement. Develop guidelines with the agreed methodology for future data collection and the template for documentation, and train partners and enumerators.

**Recommended partners for the collaboration:** primarily LAHURNIP (as the official Indigenous Navigator partner) and NSO. The collaboration can also include other IPOs and members of the Constitutional Commissions - in particular the NHRC, INC and Tharu Commission.

## 2.3 IMPROVEMENT AND UTILIZATION OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Experience has shown that when the NSO engage in close collaboration with the rightsholders, the official data collection can also benefit from it. In Bangladesh, for example, this interaction led to the inclusion of ethnic identity question in the census of 2022, increasing visibility to the indigenous peoples in the country. Similarly, in Kenya, engagement with the civil society and the national human rights commission has led to the recognition of intersex people for the first time in the 2019 census.

The lack of disaggregated data on indigenous peoples, as with all groups, hides the disproportionate impact that certain groups carry in society due to legislations, policies and practices in all areas of life. It also makes it harder to advocate for and develop the adequate solutions to reduce the inequalities in how groups experience the realization of their rights.

While it is important that indigenous peoples have the tools and capacity to collect data themselves on their population, these efforts are generally localized and underfunded. Therefore, it is also important to strengthen the official data collection on this population where there are opportunities to improve.

A partnership between the NSO, the Constitutional Commissions, the Indigenous Navigator partners and other IPOs, can help identify key areas and opportunities for improvement of data collection. For example, to discuss and agree on how to define the different indigenous groups in the census questionnaire. Moreover, for improved data disaggregation or better coverage of issues that are critical for indigenous peoples in national censuses and surveys. It can also help find solutions for processing and analyzing the official data that is already being collected on indigenous peoples, but is not yet in use.

**Scope of collaboration:** Discuss and agree the methodology, classification, disaggregation and gaps on indigenous peoples data in the census, surveys and other official data collection. Seek the means to further process and analyze the official data on indigenous peoples to extract its value.

**Recommended partners for the collaboration:** NSO, IPOs, Constitutional Commissions - in particular the NHRC, INC and Tharu Commission, and potentially the NPC.

## **2.4 ADVOCACY AND ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT**

Finally, the fourth area of collaboration emerging from the Indigenous Navigator workshop is to strengthen partnerships for advocacy with and advisory to the three levels of government. That means:

- Ensuring coordinated efforts among the IPOs themselves, including through their networks, to affect change at the local levels, where the community data from the Indigenous Navigator can add great value to the understanding of human rights risks, priorities and needs for indigenous peoples;
- Collaboration between the IPOs and the Constitutional Commissions to support the development of strong recommendations and reports to the international bodies, which well reflects the perspectives of the indigenous peoples, the lessons from the indigenous navigator data, and the standards of human rights instruments.

A practice of strong collaboration can strengthen the cause of indigenous peoples and the institutions promoting and protecting their rights.



**Scope of collaboration:** Produce joint advocacy messages, knowledge products and activities, and develop recommendations based on human rights standards to raise awareness, bring accountability and build evidence for officials at the three levels of government to implement the rights of indigenous peoples.

**Recommended partners for the collaboration:** IPOs and networks, and the Constitutional Commissions, in particular the NHRC, INC and Tharu Commission.

## CHAPTER 3

# CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Nepal, like most countries, face a shortage of data on the living conditions and experiences of indigenous peoples vis-à-vis their national and internally recognized rights. Improving the quality and availability of data on this group is not a light task. Yet, progress can be made if state actors such as the NSO, the human rights Constitutional Commissions and the IPOs share a seat on the table and work together towards this goal.

The Indigenous Navigator workshop showed that, despite the challenges, data from civil society organizations have the potential to complement the void left by official statistics, particularly on what concerns community-level data and qualitative data. At the same time, it discussed the challenges and opportunities of the official data from the NSO, including to seek further disaggregation in data that is already collected for example through the national census.

During the two days of workshop, the participants listened to one another and bridged some knowledge about each other's contributions (effective and potential) to the data landscape on indigenous peoples in the country. Their discussions and insights gave life to the proposed areas of collaboration described on Chapter 2. The areas of collaboration are built on and try to contribute to the implementation of the main recommendations proposed by the workshop participants. These recommendations are organized in the following areas:

### 3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE GENERATION OF DATA

- a. **Take stock of available data and existing gaps**, including to identify which data exist but is not being processed, and what is necessary to collect and/or process them.
- b. **Improve data disaggregation** on indigenous peoples including geospatial, gender, age, cast and ethnicity, disability, representation in politics and army at local and federal levels, nomadic groups.

- c. **Expand data collection to fill gaps** regarding employment, mortality, health, including mental health, hunger, poverty, (loss of) traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, impact of and vulnerability to climate change, migration and internal displacement, recognition of IPs customary law, budget allocation, land ownership, languages.
- d. **Implement the human rights-based approach to data** in data collection on indigenous peoples, that is, ensuring their right to self-determination in their response, to participate in the data collection process, to data disaggregation, to transparency and accountability re data collection and use of their data, and to confidentiality.
- e. **Leverage the power of women for data collection** on indigenous peoples and work with them to capture their knowledge and access to female, young and elder members of the community.
- f. Use the data collection process to **raise the awareness of indigenous peoples about their rights**.
- g. **Seek resources (staff and budget) and political buy-in** for the Constitutional Commissions and the NSO to collaborate and increase availability of data on indigenous peoples.

### 3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE USE OF DATA

- a. **Conduct data analysis** (extract the value from the data) to **uncover the intersectional ways** that different groups of indigenous peoples experience the realization or their rights.
- b. Use the data to **generate accountability of duty bearers** vis-à-vis their domestic and international obligations towards indigenous peoples and use e.g. the Voluntary National Review and reports to International Human Rights Mechanisms as an opportunity to bring to light and address the living experiences of indigenous peoples.
- c. **Establish a mechanism for partnerships on citizen data**, in this specific case on indigenous peoples, for the partners to meet on a regular and predicable schedule, to coordinate efforts, to plan for joint fundraising, and for advocacy.

### 3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR

- a. Work towards the **recognition of the Indigenous Navigator data by the Constitutional Commissions** to promote further data collection and bring the data to the attention of other authorities.
- b. Initiate a **collaboration between the Indigenous Navigator and the NSO** to better understand the existing data and to support future data collection by building capacity on methodology to create trust in the data.
- c. Formalize a space for **collaboration between the NFDIN and the indigenous peoples associations to further the generation of data** using the Indigenous Navigator in as many as possible locations.
- d. Map how the Indigenous Navigator can help to **fill the existing data gaps**, particularly at local level (community questionnaires) and at federal level on indicators which are not covered by traditional statistics (structural and process indicators).
- e. Work with the Indigenous Navigator consortium to improve the levels of **disaggregation in the Indigenous Navigator** questionnaires where possible.
- f. Leverage the power of and **access to local governments** to bring the Indigenous Navigator data to the planning and enactment of policies and programmes which affects indigenous peoples lives.

Implementing these recommendations will require a commitment from the partners to continue building trust and to collaborate in the areas proposed above. The workshop was a first and important step to build a bridge across the sectors and actors. Moving forward, these actors are expected to contribute their share for a solid data partnership to flourish and for data on indigenous peoples to be improved.



**THE DANISH  
INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

