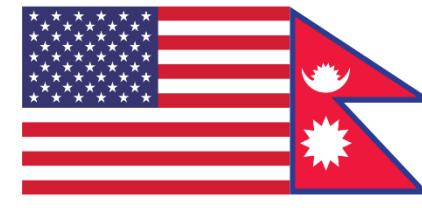


# Nepalese Population in the United States: a Demographic and Socioeconomic Analysis

Animesh Shrestha<sup>1</sup>, Yichuan Zhao<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Mathematics & Statistics, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA



## Abstract

This study examines the growing Nepalese population in the U.S., driven by aspirations for better education, careers, and quality of life. Using U.S. Census Bureau data, we analyze migration trends, education levels, occupations, income, and health coverage. The findings show a young, resilient community where education plays a key role in economic success. Despite challenges, Nepalese immigrants demonstrate adaptability in pursuing the "American Dream." The report also compares Nepalese migrants with other South Asian groups and briefly explores the Nepalese diaspora in Australia, offering insights for policymakers and stakeholders.

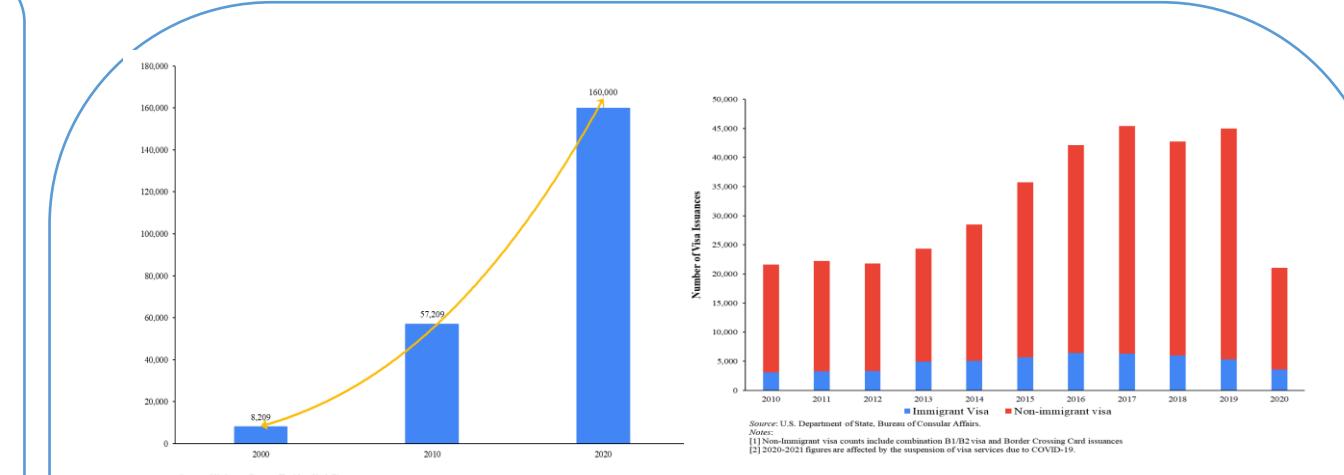
## Data

year	sample	serial	cbserial	hhwt	cluster	strata	gq	pernum	perwt	familyt	famsize
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	1	63	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	2	65	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	3	52	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	4	62	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	5	60	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	43731	894781	62	2007000437311	12104	Households under 15	6	61	1st family in househ	6
2007	2007 ACS	68566	14616	77	2007000685661	630006	Households under 15	1	75	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	68566	14616	77	2007000685661	630006	Households under 15	2	76	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	70751	36506	65	2007000707511	240206	Households under 15	1	65	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	75321	80810	46	2007000753211	130106	Households under 15	1	46	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	75321	80810	46	2007000753211	130106	Households under 15	2	41	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	75321	80810	46	2007000753211	130106	Households under 15	4	61	1st family in househ	4
2007	2007 ACS	104104	358855	276	2007001041041	210106	Households under 15	1	272	1st family in househ 1 family member per	1

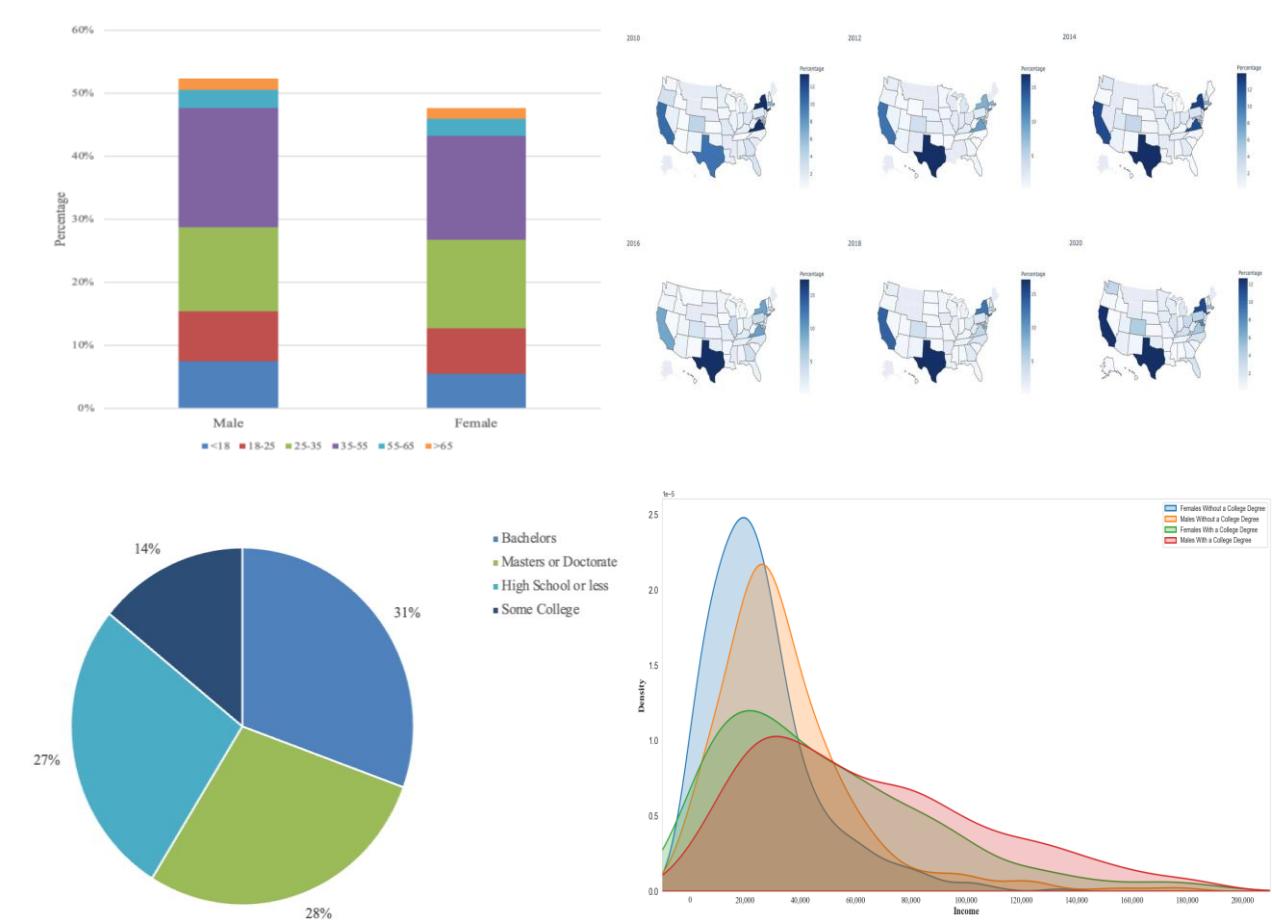
- 1 Accessed ACS data 
- 2 Cleaned the data 
- 3 Created sample by birthplace variable 
- 4 Used NumPy and pandas to do the analysis 

This analysis uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), a nationwide survey capturing social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics. The ACS samples about 3.5 million households annually, and data were accessed via IPUMS at the individual level for 2007–2020, using one-year estimates to capture year-to-year trends. The final dataset includes approximately 40 million individuals. Using the birthplace variable, we created two subsamples: one of 11,249 Nepalese immigrants (born in Nepal), and another of 358,594 immigrants from seven South Asian countries (Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan). This allows for a focused comparison of socio-economic characteristics between Nepalese immigrants and their South Asian counterparts in the U.S.

## Results



The growth of the Nepalese population in the U.S. reflects rising visa issuances, with an average of 33,000 visas granted annually between 2010 and 2019. Most visas (85%) are non-immigrant, for purposes like study, tourism, or temporary work. Despite facing barriers such as wage gaps and delayed citizenship, Nepalese immigrants leverage education and networks to advance economically. Understanding these trends can help design policies for better integration and prosperity.



As of 2019, the Nepalese population in the U.S. is 53% male and 47% female, with most in the working-age bracket (Figure 1). A balanced mix of younger (under 35) and mid-career (35–55) individuals reflects migration for education and work, supported by visa policies without age limits. Geographically, Nepalese immigrants concentrate in states like Texas, California, New York, and Virginia (Figure 2). These patterns are shaped by affordability and strong social networks, as seen in other immigrant groups. Educational attainment is high: nearly half of Nepalese aged 25+ hold a bachelor's or higher degree, and master's degree attainment is steadily rising (Figure 3). Income levels are promising, with a median personal income of \$43,486 between 2018–2020, surpassing the U.S. average. However, disparities persist: Nepalese with college degrees earn significantly more than non-graduates, and a gender pay gap remains across education levels (Figure 4). These trends highlight both the successes and the challenges in the community's economic journey.

## Results



Income disparities among South Asian immigrants reflect differences in education and occupations (Figure 1). Indians lead in income due to dominance in high-paying sectors, while Nepalese earn less than Indians and Pakistanis but more than Bangladeshis and Bhutanese. Nepalese incomes are improving as more enter skilled jobs. Occupational patterns vary across groups (Figure 2); Nepalese work in both white- and blue-collar roles, from nursing and IT to cashiering and food service. In Australia, 90% of Nepalese arrive on temporary visas, mainly as students, making Nepali their third-largest international student source (Figure 3). Nepalese in Australia are younger on average than in the U.S., and their incomes are growing faster relative to locals (Figure 4), supported by rising minimum wages. Both countries show Nepalese economic mobility, but through different pathways.

## Conclusions

The expansion of the Nepalese population in the U.S. mirrors global migration trends, propelled by the pursuit of education, economic advancement, and permanent residency. Many Nepalese immigrants arrive as international students or through the Diversity Visa program, yet structural barriers such as wage disparities, occupational segmentation, and delayed citizenship persist. Despite these obstacles, the community demonstrates notable resilience, leveraging educational attainment and social networks to achieve upward mobility. Compared to other South Asian diasporas and Nepalese migrants in Australia, U.S.-based Nepalese workers occupy a broader spectrum of industries, from high-skilled professions to low-wage sectors. Recognizing these patterns is crucial for policymakers seeking to address persistent inequalities and foster inclusive policies that enable the long-term integration and prosperity of Nepalese immigrants.

## References

1. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *American Community Survey (ACS) and the decennial census*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/acs-and-census.html>
2. World Bank. (n.d.). *Population, total - Nepal*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=NP>
3. Ramesh K. Dhungel, "Nepalese Immigrants in the United States of America," *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, January 1999, p.120.
4. U.S. Department of State. (n.d.). *Diversity visa program statistics: Applicant entrants by country, 2019–2021*. <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Diversity-Visa/DVStatistics/DV-applicant-entrants-by-country-2019-2021.pdf>
5. Bartel, A. P., and M. J. Koch (1991). "Internal Migration of U.S. Immigrants." In *Immigration, Trade, and the Labor Market*. Edited by J. M. Abowd and R. B. Freeman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 121-134.; Bartel, A. P. (1989). "Where Do the New United States Immigrants Live?" *Journal of Labor Economics*, 7 (October): 371-91.