

## MADHESH / TARAI : QUICK FACTS

**Location:** South Asia – Southern part of Nepal bordering India

**Terrain:** Plain low-lying land, includes some valleys

**Climate:** Hot and humid subtropical summer, mild winter

**Area:** About 23,068 sq. km

**Population:** About 12 million (2009)

**Language:** Madhyadeshiya  
(Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Maithili, Tharu etc.)

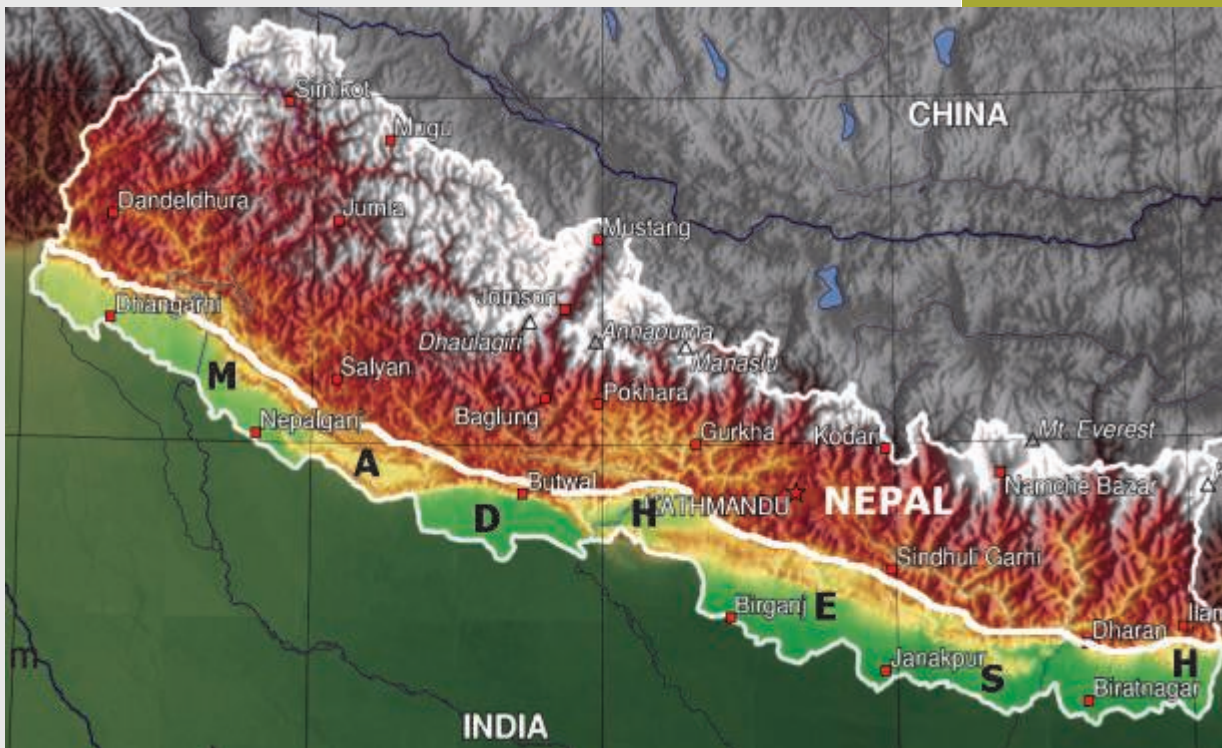
**Famous Places:** Lumbini (Birthplace of Buddha, UNESCO World Heritage Site), Janakpur (Hindu Pilgrimage Site)

**History:** Madhesh/Tarai handed over to Nepal by British in 1816 and 1860



# MADHESH / TARAI

## PROFILE



*Separate from Nepal even from sky: Satellite Image of Madhesh / Tarai  
(The low-lying land appears in green and yellow in the map.)*

## Geography

### Topography

Madhesh or Tarai (also spelt *Tera*) lies at the foothills of Himalayas. It is mostly the plain land on the southern side of Siwalik range in Nepal. It is situated in the Outer Himalayan Zone, and has been created by orogenic activity as well as by alluvial action in the Siwaliks and the Himalayan ranges (Spate and Learmonth, 1967). In addition to the plain land, it also includes some low lying inner valleys, north of Siwaliks, which is referred as 'Vitri Madhesh' (Inner Madhesh). Its total area is about 23,068 square kilometres.

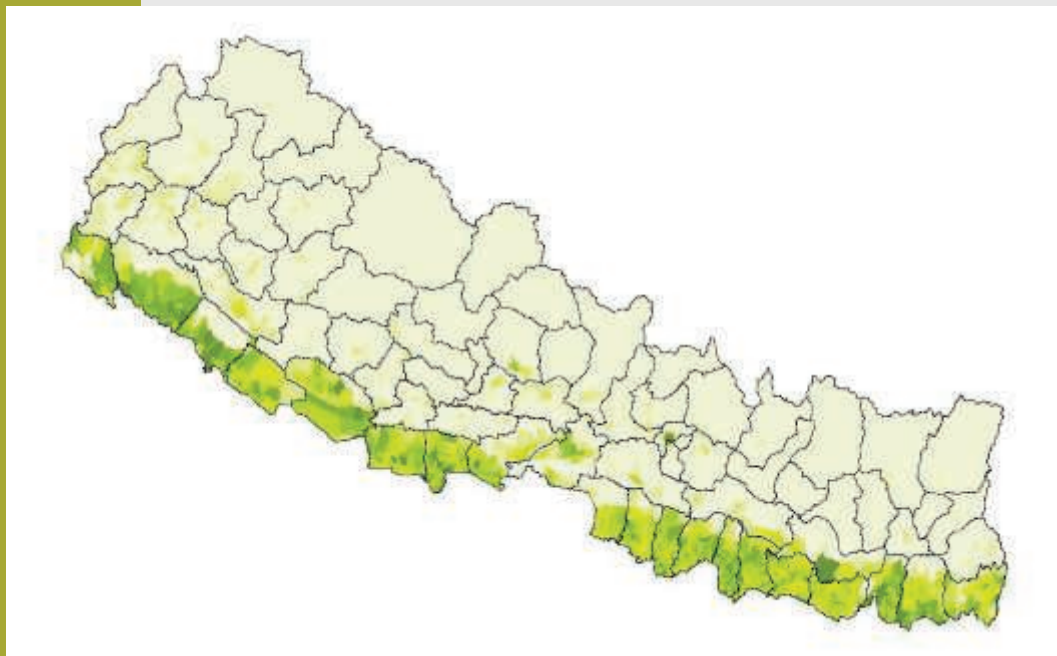
### Climate

The climate of Tarai is subtropical, similar to northern plains of India. The hot and humid summer lasts from March to June, and the monsoon from late June to late September. The winter from November to February is mild, though bouts of cold waves hit the region.

## Demography

The estimated population of Madheshis is 12 million (2009). Madheshi nation includes many indigenous people such as Tharus and Rajbanshis.





*Where do Madheshis live?*

## Economy

Madhesh has an agrarian economy, and once it was among the top exporters of rice in the world. However, due to the government's ban on import of fertilisers and seeds from nearby India, lack of irrigation systems, and apathy of the government towards the issues of Madheshi farmers, its traditional agrarian base is dwindling and the society is becoming more and more dependent on foreign remittances. Traditionally people used to go to various Indian states for work, mostly as farm labourers, but at recent times, some of them also go to the Gulf and East Asian countries. There are some industries in Biratnagar and Birgunj area, but they are under the control of the northern ruling class people.



## Language and Culture

### LANGUAGE

Madheshis speak Madhyadeshiya language, with a continuum of dialects as one moves from the east to the west (Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Bajjika, Maithili, Tharu etc.).

### FESTIVALS

Madheshis celebrate a large number of festivals around the year, including Holi, Jitiya, Sama Chakewa, Dashami, Bhardutiya, Judshital, Tila Sankrait/Maghi, Chhath, Eid and Muharram.

### ART

Mithila art is traditional distinct form of painting. The unique style of paintings made on house mud-walls is also a very remarkable feature of the Madheshi culture.

### CUISINE

The staple diet of the region is rice, *dal* (lentils soup) and curry. On festive occasions, people prepare a number of fried items of vegetables as well as many specialities. Fish is also popular in Terai.







*The Sculpture of King Salhesh, Siraha.*



*Janaki Temple, Janakpur*

## Visit Madhesh

### Getting There

The districts of Tarai are all connected by a single east-west highway, with its major towns linked by 20-50 km access roads. Buses travel between these towns regularly. Long route buses depart from Kathmandu to these towns too.

There are airports in Bhadrapur, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Birgunj, Bharatpur, Bhairahawa, Nepalgunj, and Dhangadhi, and flights depart regularly from Kathmandu. The airports on Indian side near border can be also used. The nearest ones are at Bagdogra (Siliguri), Patna, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur. There are over-land entry points for foreigners at Kakarbhitta (from Darjeeling, Sikkim and Kolkata), Birganj/Raxaul (from Patna and Kolkata), Nepalganj (from Lucknow), Bhairahawa (from Varanasi, Agra and Delhi), and Mahendranagar (from Delhi and Uttaranchal).

### Places

#### Lumbini

Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha. He was born in a garden in Lumbini in 563 BC. Mayadevi Temple, the exact spot where Queen Mayadevi of Kapilvastu gave birth to Siddhartha Gautam (Buddha), is a major attraction. The Ashokan pillar and the ruined foundations of ancient stupas and monasteries are also remarkable. Tilaurakot, about 25 km west of Lumbini, has the ruins of the palace, where Siddhartha Gautam spent the first 29 years of his life. It is a UNESCO world heritage site.

#### Janakpur

Janakpur is a Hindu pilgrimage site. It was the capital of King Janak and is the birthplace of Sita. The ideal time to visit the town is on the occasion of Hindu festival of Vivah Panchami around November-December.



### **Chitwan National Park**

Chitwan national park, with its 932 square km of reserve area, is home to one-horned Indian rhino, tigers, leopards and rare Gangetic dolphins. One can enjoy elephant safari in the park.

### **Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve**

The reserve, composed of grassland and several small islands around Koshi river, is home to thousands of species of birds. One can also enjoy watching fresh water Dolphins, wild buffalos called Arna, deer, wild boars, pythons and crocodiles.

### **Royal Bardia National Park**

This 968 square km of reserve accommodates Bengal tiger, one-horned rhinos, grey langurs, rhesus macaques, leopards, civets, hyenas, and sloth bears. It is also home to more than 250 species of birds.

### **Other Towns**

Biratnagar, Rajbiraj, Birgunj, Bharatpur, Bhairahawa, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi

*World Peace Pagoda, Lumbini*



## History

### Nomenclature

‘Madhesh’ is a morphological derivative of Madhyadesh (Sanskrit) or Majjhimadesh (Pali) and means the Middle Country signifying its location in the middle of the Indian Subcontinent.

Tarai (also written as *Teraī*) is presumed to be derived from Persian, meaning “damp”, and denotes the land at the foothills of mountains, often damp and swampy.

Madhesh and Terai, both have been in use indiscriminately and synonymously in general context, in present day Nepal, however, the former includes the connotation of the identity and culture of people living in the region, whereas the latter refers to the geographical feature or terrain characteristics of the region. The use of Terai was popularised during Nepali colonisation.

Madheshis are the residents of Madhesh sharing a correlated historical, regional, cultural and lingual space.

### Vedic Period

The nation of Madhesh (Madhyadesh) exists since the beginning of the human civilisation on the Indian Subcontinent. Vedas, Puranas, and other ancient texts have abundant descriptions of Madhyadesh. The boundary of Madhyadesh is precisely defined in the ancient texts of the Vedic era. For example, Manusmṛiti (circa 1500 BC, 2/21) defines Madhyadesh as the land between Himvat (Himalaya) and Vindhya Mountain and to the east of the river Vinasana (invisible Saraswati) and to the west of Prayag.

According to the Vedic Civilisation, the first significant king of Madhyadesh is said to be Ikshvaku or Okkāka, the son of Vaivasvata Manu and the grandson of Vivaswan. Thirty-four dynasties after him comes the much celebrated generation of Ram, and Sita, the daughter of King Janak whose capital is said to be at the current town of Janakpur in Madhesh. The descriptions of various ruling dynasties can be found in the ancient texts such as Purana, Mahabharat and various Smritis.

### 500 BC – 1400 AD

Around 500 BC, at the time of Buddha, the Buddhist texts call this ‘Middle Country’ Majjhimadesh in Pali, and define the region in Vinaya Pitaka as extended “in the east to the town of Kajangala, beyond which was Mahāsāla; on the south-east to the river Salalavatī; on the south west to the town of Satakannika; on the west to the Brahmin village of Thūna; on the north to the Usiraddhaja Mountain.” At the time of Buddha, the eastern limit of the Middle Country had extended nearly 400 miles eastward of Prayaga which was its eastern most point in the Manu’s time (Bhandarkar, 1918). According to Pali canon, Majjhimadesh was “three hundred yojanas in length, two hundred and fifty in breadth, and nine hundred in circumference” and it contained fourteen out of the sixteen Mahājanapadas (Kāśī, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji, Mallā, Cetiya, Vamsā, Kuru, Pañcāla, Macchā, Sūrasena, Assaka, Avantī). Madhesh was ruled by several great dynasties in ancient and medieval times, from Emperor Ashoka to King Salhesh (c.500-600AD) and King Harisinghadev (c. 1300AD).



Ashokan Pillar, Lumbini

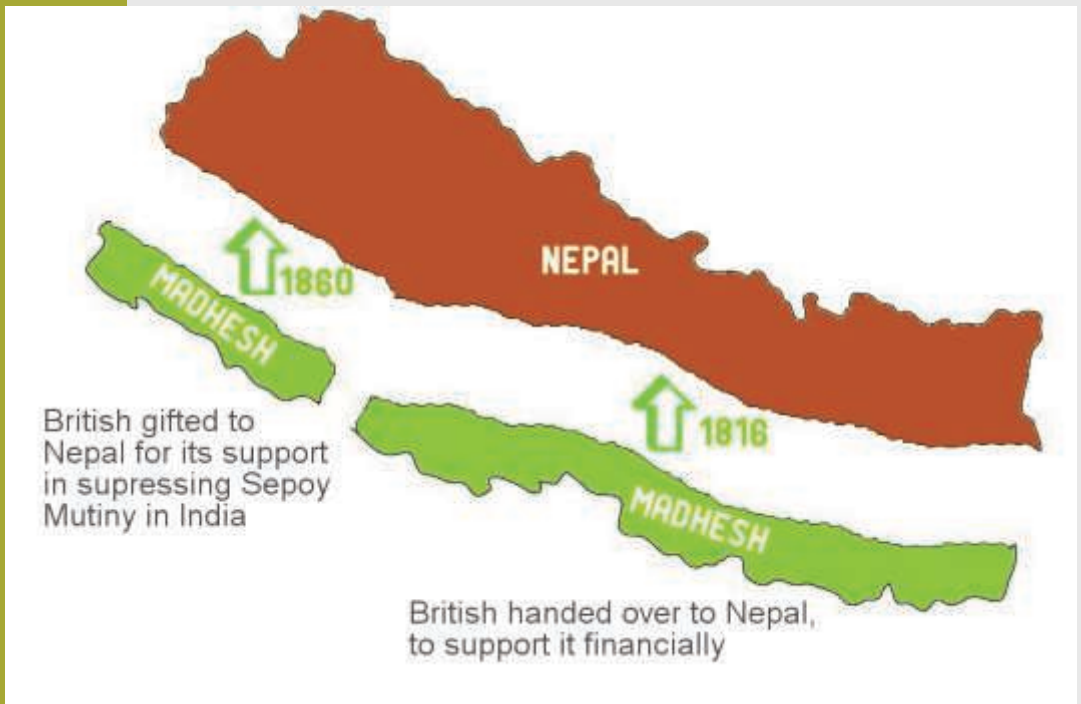


*"...the Rajah of Nipal agrees to refrain from prosecuting any inhabitants of the Terai, after its revertance to his rule, on account of having favoured the cause of the British Government during the war..."*

*- British-Nepal Treaty 1816*

*"...The British Government hereby bestows on the Maharajah of Nipal in full sovereignty, the whole of the lowlands between the Rivers Kali and Raptree, and the whole of the lowlands lying between the River Raptree and the District of Gorukpore..."*

*- British-Nepal Treaty 1860*



### **Muslim Rulers, British Empire, and Sen Kings (1300 AD – 1800 AD)**

Upon the arrival of Islamic rulers from the Mid East on the Indian Sub-continent, they also called the plains of “undulating former marshland” of the Middle Country as ‘Terai’, a word derived from Persian (तराई / ترائی ‘wetland’ from تر ‘wet’), meaning “moist land” (Encyclopedia Britannica). The British missionaries and the East India Company who came after Mughals also referred the region of Madhyadesh with this name or its variants. However they also continued to use Madhyades as well, for example, see Martin (1838), Elliot (1849), Muir (1873).

In 1325 AD, during the reign of Harisinghadev, Sultan Gayasudhin Tuglak attacked on the capital then at Simaraunagadh and destroyed it. Madhesh became part of Mughal Empire, and after that, it came under the East India Company. At the later stage of the British Raj, Madhesh was ruled by Sen Kings as suzerainty states and they paid taxes to Nawabs and the East India Company.

### **Under Nepalese/Gurkha Empire (1800 AD – )**

With the state expansion initiated by Gurkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah in the late 18th century, Gurkhas took control of many parts of Madhesh by paying tax to Nawabs and the East India Company. However, the part of Madhesh present today in Nepal is a result of the memorandum of 1816 and the treaty of 1860 with the East India Company.

Through the memorandum of 8 December 1816, the Company government handed the region west of Koshi and east to Rapti river to Nepal instead of paying two hundred thousands rupees per year as agreed previously on Nepal’s request for supporting living cost of its employees. The region west of Rapti and east of Mahakali came through the treaty of 1860 as a reward to Nepal for its support to the East India Company for suppressing Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 to 1859 in India, and it is also called Naya Muluk (“New Country”).

## Madhesh Movement

Madheshis fought against Gurkhali/Nepalese occupation since the first arrival of Gurkhas/Nepalese in Madhesh. In the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814-16, Madheshis fought on the side of British leading to an eventual victory over Nepal. But the British handed over the Madheshis and their land to the same enemy. However, in the memorandum of 8th December 1816, through which the British handed over Madheshis and their land to Nepal, they set a condition to ensure the safety of the Madheshis, stating, "the Rajah of Nipal agrees to refrain from prosecuting any inhabitants of the Terai, after its reversion to his rule, on account of having favoured the cause of the British Government during the war".

### 1950s-1960s

#### Tarai Congress

Vedanand Jha established Terai Congress in 1951. The party's objectives were (a) establishment of an autonomous Tarai state, (b) recognition of Hindi as a separate language; and (c) adequate employment of Tarai people in the Nepal civil service. (Gaige, 1975)

#### "Madhesh Liberation Movement" and "Madhesh Liberation Front"

Raghunath Thakur established Madhesh Liberation Movement in 1956 to end Nepalese occupation of Madhesh. He argued that Terai came under Section 73 of the UN Charter and it was an autonomous region. He later formed "Madhesi Jankrantikari Dal" to continue Madhesh Revolution. In 1960s, "Terai Liberation Front" was also established with a guerrilla war strategy. However, Nepal police and army killed its major leaders one by one, including Ramji Mishra, Raghunath Raya Yadav, and Satyadev Mani Tripathi.

#### Assassination attempt of King in 1962

Durganand Jha attempted to assassinate King Mahendra of Nepal in January 1962 in Janakpur to oppose imposition of the autocratic Panchayat Regime in 1961. He blasted a bomb targeting the car in which the king was travelling. He was shot to death in 1963. He was inspired from martyr Bhagat Singh of India.

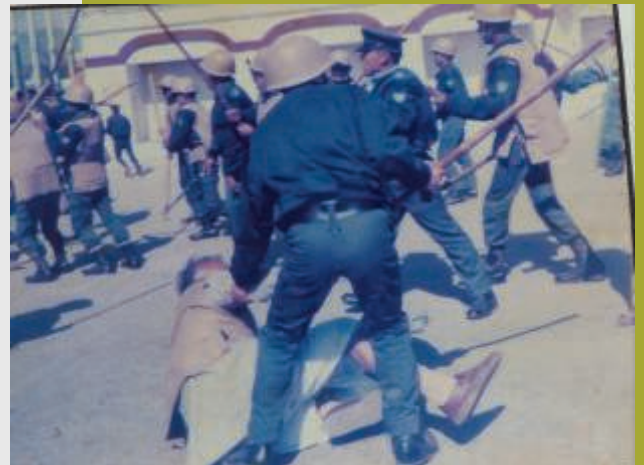
### 1980s-1990s

#### Ram Raja Prasad Singh's 1985 bombings

In 1971, Ram Raja Prasad Singh demanded that the country be declared republic. He was put behind bars for several years for that demand. In 1985, he blasted bombs in Kathmandu near the royal palace, at the deluxe Hotel de l'Annapurna owned by the royal family, and at the Singh Durbar. The bomb also exploded in Bhairahawa, Birgunj, Janakpur, Biratnagar and Jhapa. He was sentenced to death, but he managed to escape and live on an exile in India.

#### Sadbhavana Council and Party

Gajendra Narayan Singh established Sadbhavana Council in 1985 to fight for the issues of citizenship, language, dress, rights and interests of Madheshis. Sadbhavana Council turned into Nepal Sadbhavana Party in 1990.



*Gajendra Narayan Singh attacked by police. The ruling class mob pelted stones and beat Madheshis in their first ever mass gathering in Kathmandu, Khula Manch.*



## 2007-2008

**Madhesh Movement 07/08**

In December 2006, Nepalese (Pahadis) attacked violently on Madheshis peacefully protesting against the interim constitution failing to address their issues. The ruling class people supported by the local police and administration went on rampage for days and beat Madheshis everywhere. They also burnt houses and shops of Madheshis. Similar riot took place in Lahan too, flaring the movement all over Madhesh. The vigorous movement lasted for three weeks. Then, on and off, it continued to the next year. During the movement, the government deployed a large number of armed police forces, and imposed curfews for several weeks. United Nations reported “an excessive use of the force” and “the forces taking quick action against individuals violating curfews in an excessive and unnecessary way” during the movement. More than fifty-three Madheshis were killed and thousands of them were injured in the movement.

**Martyrs of Madhesh Movement 2007/08**

Kamal Giri	Kari Thakur	Dipendra Sah
Ramesh Mahato	Shiv Shankar Yadav	Mahabir Sah
Bechan Yadav	Manish Jha	Koili Koiri
Md. Anish Rain	Shyam Sundar Mehta	Khahre Goriya
Pramod Sada	Hari Lal Mehta	Mulram Tripathi
Bijay Sahani	Dindayal Mandal	Kashiram Harijang
Sunita Mahato	Shekh Abdul Asarf	Mataprasad Barma
Md. Mudasin	Babunarayan Yadav	Dilram Yadav
Jitendra Marwaita	Pawan Kumar Sah	Birbal Mukhiya
Rajesh Yadav	Ashish Ali Mikrani	Gulzar Khan
Bhagwati Mandal	Dinesh Ray Yadav	Rajesh Thakru
Ram Swarup Mehta	Ram Narayan Sah	Gulten Das
Ramanand Mehta	Ram Ekwal Ray	Tabaru Paswan
Sadanand Yadav	Jivdharai Ydava	Sutar Mukhiya
Rajkumar Kamat	Binod Ray	Biscut Miya
Nirmal Kumar Rajbanshi	Sanjay Kumar Yadav	Chandrika Yadav
Tallu Harda	Manjil Alam Ansari	Abdul Kayum
Rajesh Thakur	Zamir Alam	



## Timeline

- (Vedic/Mythical Period)	Ikshyaku or Okkāka becomes the first significant king of Madhyadesh (Madhesh)
- (Vedic/Mythical Period)	King Janak rules, capital at Janakpur Sita, the heroine of Ramayan, born (after 34 generation of Ikshyaku)
c. 1500 BC	Manusmriti (2/21) defines the boundary of Madhyadesh (Madhesh)
563 BC	Siddhartha Gautam (Buddha) born in Kapilvatthu, Majjhimadesh (Madhesh)
268-231 BC	Emperor Ashoka rules
249 BC	Emperor Ashoka visits Lumbini, tax reduced and entitled to the eight-part only.
c. 353-373 AD	Emperor Samudragupta rules
c. 500-600	King Salhesh rules, capital at Mahisautha, Siraha
c. 1300	Harisinghadev rules, capital at Simraunagadh
1325	Sultan Gaysudhin Tuglak attacks Simraunagadh
1513 - 1774	Sen Kingdoms in Palpa, Makwanpur, Chaudandi, Bijaypur, Morang
1526	Mughal Empire established
c. 1764	British East India Company gains control over many parts of Madhesh
1768	Gurkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah attacks Kathmandu Dismisses 12000 Tirhutia (Madheshi) armies of King Jay Prakash Malla
1774	Prithvi Narayan Shah attacks Makwanpur
1814-16	Anglo-Gurkha War Madheshis fight on the British side



1816	British-Nepal Treaty on 8th December; British hands over Terai region west of Koshi and east of Rapti river to Nepal.
1846	Kot Massacre takes place; Jang Bahadur becomes prime minister.
1860	British-Nepal Treaty; British gifts Terai region between Rapti and Mahakali rivers to Nepal for its support to the East India Company in suppressing the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857-59 in India.
1911	King George V of Britain visits Terai and hunts 21 tigers, 8 rhinos, and a bear.
1923	Dec 21, Nepal changed from a British protectorate to an independent nation.
1934	Jan 15, An 8.4 Richter scale earthquake kills thousands of people in Nepal/India.
1950-51	Ranas fall; King Tribhuvan regains control; interim constitution promulgated.
1951	Terai Congress formed by Vedanand Jha
1952	King Mahendra ascends throne
1952	Nepal Citizenship Act promulgated
1955	Nepal admitted to the United Nations
1956	Nepalese government starts malaria eradication
1956	Raghunath Thakur establishes Madhesh Liberation Movement
1957	Imposition of Nepali as sole language for education sparks protests
1958	End of visa provision for Madheshis to enter Kathmandu
1960s	Terai Liberation Front established
1962	King Mahendra issues constitution unfavourable to Madheshis

1963	Nepalese Police kills Ramji Mishra, the leader of Terai Liberation Front
1964	New Citizenship Act makes it harder for Madhesis to acquire citizenship
1964	"Land Reformation Act" promulgated; massive land seized from Madheshis.
1967	Royal Nepalese Army kills Raghunath Raya Yadav, the leader of Terai Liberation Front
1969	Chairman of Terai Liberation Front Satyadev Mani Tripathi killed
1972	King Birendra ascends throne
1981	June 21: Raghunath Thakur dies
1983	Nepal Sadbhavana Council formed under Gajendra Narayan Singh to raise Madheshi issues
1989	Nepal's failure to renegotiate trade and transit treaties with India; India imposes sanction across "open border".
1990	New constitution promulgated following the agitations
1994	Dhanapati Upadhyay Commission finds 4 million people without citizenships
1996	Maoists launch insurgency
1997	Supreme Court voids 30 thousands citizenship certificates of Madheshis
1998	March 18: Supreme Court bans the use of Maithili (local) language in Rajbiraj and Janakpur Municipalities
2000	Maoists set up Madhesi Rashtriya Mukti Morcha (MRMM) under Jai Krishna Goit in Siliguri, India.



2000	Dec 26: Racial riot against Madheshis begins all over the country, following a rumour that Hrithnik Roshan, an Indian film star, allegedly spoke of his dislike for Nepal. At least 4 people killed.
2002	Supreme Court mandates people to get work permit in the lack of citizenship certificates. Many Madheshis out of work.
2004	Jay Krishna Goit forms Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha (JTMM)
2006 Apr.	Following nineteen-day mass movement, king announces reinstatement of parliament.
2006 Dec.	Nepalgunj Riot; 26 Dec: Pahadis attack on a Madheshi gathering and the racial riot begins; Madheshis houses and shops burned, Madheshis attacked; police and administration found supporting the attack. 30 Dec.: Ian Martin, special representative of the UN Secretary-General, voices his concern about violent activities.
2007 Jan.—Feb.	Madhesh Movement; 19 Jan.: Maoists clash with Madheshi activists in Lahan, killing student Ramesh Kumar Mahato. 20 Jan.: Curfew imposed. 21 Jan.—7 Feb.: Movement picks up against the government, with huge public support and mass defiance of curfews; clashes between police and protestors; Almost 40 killed.
2008 Jan.	Madhesh Movement; Massive protests against the government. A series of bomb blasts kill and injure dozens.
2008 May	Nepal becomes a republic.
2011 Jan.	UN peace monitoring mission ends.
2011 Mar.	Mar. 31: Historic meeting of Madheshis took place in Kathmandu after 22 years. Dr. C. K. Raut appeals for a stronger coalition to take the Madhesh Movement to the global level.
2011 May	May 21: Alliance for Independent Madhesh (AIM) announces its manifesto and plans.
2012 May	Prime Minister Bhattari dissolves the parliament.

## Issues

### COLONISATION

Madhesh or Tarai was annexed to Nepal only in 1816 and 1860. British handed over the eastern part of Madhesh to Nepal in 1816, instead of paying two hundred thousands rupees per year. British gave the western part as a gift to Nepal for its support to the East India Company for suppressing the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857-59 in India. Thus Madhesh became the colony of Nepal. Some of the remarkable features of the Nepali Colonisation are: abolition of Madheshi army and ban on the entry of Madheshis into Nepal Army; establishment of Nepali Army barracks and check posts throughout Madhesh; heavy and unfair taxation; seizing of land from indigenous people and distributing to the ruling class landlords, retired army and police staffs; planned migration of ruling class people from the north; requirement for a visa to enter Kathmandu (until 1958); imposition of Nepali language and dress on Madheshis.

### RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The racism and the hatred of Gurkhas/Nepalis against Madheshis, the "emphatic contempt of Madhesias" and their non-tolerance to "black-folks", existed since they first came into Madhesh. Brian Hodgson, the British Resident for Nepal in 1816, wrote of Gurkhas: "I conceive that their gallant spirit, emphatic contempt of Madhesias [people of the plains], and unadulterated military habits, might be relied on for fidelity." Similarly, Philip Mason (1974) quotes, "...around the time of the Mutiny Gurkhas asked to be allowed to pitch their tents with British soldier, not with 'the black folks'. That racism ballooned as the Nepali state became stronger. In recent times, not only Madheshis are treated based on the colour of their skin and discriminated for rights including job, payment, and facilities, but they frequently become victims of racial attacks and riots.

### SLAVERY

Once the government eradicated malaria in the region and made the land less dreading to the ruling class in 1950s, the government officials and ruling class people seized land from tens of thousands of indigenous Madheshis and made them "bonded labourers", on their own ancestral land. Those indigenous Madheshis worked essentially as slaves, under their masters, and the slavery passed from generation to generation. They are called Kamaiyas and Kamlaris. They do not only have to do menial work since the early age of four or five, but they are also the victims of sexual exploitation from their masters.

### DISPLACEMENT

The government's so-called "land-reformation" and "resettlement" programmes seized land of indigenous communities and settled the ruling northern people in the south, sometimes with the aid of foreign governments. The US, Australian and Israeli governments funded several of these projects. This caused displacement of indigenous communities like Tharus, Rajbanshis and Satars in many districts, prominently in Jhapa, Chitwan, Navalparasi and western districts.

### ETHNIC CLEANSING AND RIOTS

There have been many organised efforts for "Nepalization of Terai" (Gage, 1975), demographically, culturally, and linguistically. The worst form







has been direct physical attacks on Madheshis, burning of their villages, shops, and industries and so on. There are several violent groups for ethnic cleansing of Madheshis such as Khukuri Group and CBES. They frequently attack and force Madheshis to leave their land and go into exile. Sometimes, the government, administration and police have been found to be directly involved in supporting these racial riots. Some of the recent racial riots include Hrithik Roshan Scandal (2000), Nepalgunj Attack (2006), and Kapilvastu Incidence (2007).

### **DENIAL OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

Many Madheshis have been traditionally denied several fundamental rights such as citizenship, ownership of land, access to government jobs, access to local natural resources, and freedom to open business or migrate to other places. Madheshis lack freedom of expression to much extent, as they are subjected to banishment, harassment, torture and even firing from the jobs by the administration.

### **ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION**

Land, water, and forest of Tarai are being exploited by the government. Taxing, custom duties and trade regulations are unfairly targeted at Madheshis. The control over local forests of the region has been given to the people from the north. The unfair pricing, ban on exports, and curbing of markets for the produces of the region are all exploiting in nature.

### **CULTURAL IMPERIALISM**

Madheshis are the victim of the 'one language, one dress' policy and cultural purification initiated by the ruling class. The government prohibited the use of other languages in education, administration and broadcasting. It halted FMs broadcasting in languages other than Nepali. The Supreme Court banned the use of local languages in Tarai. The state adopted the policy of: "No other languages should be taught even

optionally...Other language will gradually disappear". It enforced the dress of the northern people on Madheshis.

## **UNFAIR LAWS**

'Muluki Ain' (The Law of the Land) ensured a superior status of the northern people and made Madheshis second-class citizens or subjects of the ruling class. There were separate laws and provisions for Madheshis. They were fined or punished heavily for the same crime compared to the ruling class people. They were taxed in a larger portion, and yet giving no or less rights. Even today, laws regarding citizenship, land, language and culture, movement, assembly etc. are unfairly targeted at Madheshis.

## **BORDER AREAS TORTURE**

Madheshis have cultural and family ties across the current Indo-Nepal border for millennia. Recognising this, even the 1950 India-Nepal treaty allowed an open border without which Madhesh would not have been annexed to Nepal. But Madheshis are often tortured by armed police forces and government officials in border areas. They are harassed, their properties are often confiscated, and they are beaten on several occasions.

## **EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS**

In 2010, the United Nations published a report on extra-judicial killings of at least 57 persons in the region. Similarly, THRD published a report of 1131 cases of imprisonment in 8 districts of Terai during a four year period, many among them claimed to be fake and misuse of the Arms and Ammunition Act to eliminate Madheshi activists and human-rights defenders in Tarai. The government forced the closure of UNMIN and UN OHCHR offices in the region, and with the absence of human-rights monitors, the case of extra-judicial killings and encounters have surged largely.

## **LACK OF DEVELOPMENT**

The region has one of the lowest human-development index in the country. Literacy rate is much lower compared to the northern part, and without much access to government jobs, the unemployment rate is towering. Rather than establishing industries, hospitals, education centres and schools, the government has closed even the existing ones and it is in the process of migrating the remaining to the north. Madheshis suffer from poverty and malnourishment. A majority of women in the region suffer from anaemia. Child mortality rate is several times higher than in the north.

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