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Article **The Ethnic Factor in the Timing of Family Formation in Nepal**

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Abstract Drawing upon theoretical and empirical studies, the main research hypothesis examined in this article is that ethnic group identification has a strong independent effect on the timing of family formation, or the female age at first marriage in Nepal. Multivariate results support the hypothesis. The effects of ethnicity on the timing of family formation are found to be independent of relevant socio-economic factors. The results show that ethnic groups, reclassified into nine groups for the purposes of this study, have four distinct levels of age at first marriage, ranging from 14 to 18 years. Other variables included in the multivariate analysis also affect the timing of family formation. It is likely that greater differentials in the timing of family formation by individual socio-economic characteristics will emerge as the pace of modernization quickens in Nepal. With modernization, the ethnic differentials may be somewhat reduced over time, but it is improbable that these differentials will disappear.

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