



**Population:**  
 3,030 (2000)  
 3,750 (2010)  
 4,650 (2020)  
**Countries:** Nepal  
**Buddhism:** Tibetan  
**Christians:** none known

## Overview of the Northern Ghale

**Other Names:** Bhotte, Bhotte Ghale, Ghale, Bote Ghale, Bote, Lila, Bhingi, Galle, Galle Gurung, Ghale Gurung

**Population Sources:**  
 2,500 in Nepal (1991, H Smith)

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic

**Dialects:** 5 (Khorla, Ujiya, Jagat, Philim, Nyak)

**Professing Buddhists:** 95%

**Practising Buddhists:** 60%

**Christians:** 0%

**Scripture:** none

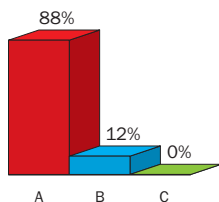
**Jesus film:** none

**Gospel Recordings:** Ghale, Ghale Gurung

**Christian Broadcasting:** none

**ROPAL code:** GHH

## Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel  
 B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians  
 C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity

Approximately 3,000 Northern Ghale people live in the Gorkha District of the Gandaki Zone in central Nepal. They inhabit villages throughout the Buri Gandaki Valley.

The Northern Ghale are one of three distinct Ghale language groups in Nepal. George van Driem notes, 'The Ghale are ethnically classed with the Gurung, who live to the west of them, and are also even called "Ghale Gurung". Traditionally, the Ghale constitute one of the four patrician divisions of the Gurung. Linguistically, however, the Ghale and Gurung are entirely distinct.'<sup>1</sup> This group do not refer to themselves as 'Ghale' but use the ethnic name *Lila*.<sup>2</sup>

The Ghale are considered the aristocrats among the larger Gurung group. They observe many ritual taboos that are similar to Brahman and other ruling caste rituals. For example, they do not eat the meat of chickens or water buffaloes, as other Gurung do.

The Northern Ghale vernacular is the most distinct of the Ghale languages. This is proven by linguistic research, which shows Northern Ghale shares just 65 per cent to 81 per cent lexical similarity with Southern Ghale, 45 per cent to 61 per cent with Kutang Ghale and 29 per cent to 37 per cent with Western Tamang.<sup>3</sup> The Northern and Southern Ghale speakers are able to hold simple conversations with each other, but they must use Nepali or Tibetan to communicate with the Kutang Ghale or the Gurung. Not many Northern Ghale people

have more than a moderate understanding of Nepali, however, making communication an arduous task.<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Ghale are the most isolated Ghale group in Nepal. Accordingly, their customs have been preserved better than the other groups. One writer notes, 'The young women and girls are notably flirtatious with young men and even strangers; they will make jokes and coy advances to the traveller passing through a village or by the fields where they are working, and they can be heard laughing and joking loudly among friends of both sexes while fetching firewood on the forested hillsides. They are

generally a very attractive people, with round faces, bright eyes and broad smiles.'<sup>5</sup>

The Ghale prefer to marry their second cousins, but they are not permitted to marry their first cousins for genetic reasons. When a boy chooses a girl, his parents send one of their friends or male relatives to the girl's parents' house with a present of one rupee and a bottle of liquor. 'The visitors are entertained with food and drink if the girl's parents accept the proposition, but are curtly dismissed if they do not. When the girl's parents have agreed, the boy can make arrangements to fetch the bride at his convenience.'<sup>6</sup>

Tibetan Buddhism is the religious stronghold of the Northern Ghale people. Hinduism has made little impact on them compared to the influence it has had on the Southern Ghale further down the valley.

Although in recent years some Christian organizations have tried to take the gospel to the Northern Ghale, they have yet to successfully penetrate into the society. There are no known Christians among this group.



Dwayne Graybill